Paving the way for a digital world

How LAPP navigates the future

Stuttgart (Germany), 16 February 2022 – Digitalisation, customisation, miniaturisation and automation are the major trends in the industry. LAPP, the leading German supplier of integrated solutions and branded products in the field of cable and connection technology, is also facing up to these future challenges. "Innovative is one of LAPP's values. But we have recognised that we need to work and think differently today if we are to drive innovations creatively and efficiently. This includes having to think outside the box and striving to offer solutions and services that go beyond the further developing cables and connectors in the future", asserts Georg Stawowy, Member of the Board for Innovation and Technology at Lapp Holding AG.

LAPP has now presented a new solution for predictive maintenance in the Smart Factory. ETHERLINE® GUARD is a stationary monitoring device that uses patented predictive maintenance algorithms to assess the momentary performance of data cables subject to particular stress. ETHERLINE® GUARD thus contributes to realising a "digital twin" within production facilities. "For LAPP, this is a paradigm shift, as it involves embedded software and programming an algorithm. This is something completely different to developing a cable", Georg Stawowy stresses and adds: "Creating a digital picture of the physical world is a mega trend that we have also embraced in the field of connection solutions".

LAPP presented a prototype of ETHERLINE® GUARD in its futureLab at the Hannover Messe 2019. This was an initial laboratory model based on a new, agile innovation process, called Innovation for Future, which, for the first time, also enables the systematic framework for radical and disruptive innovations. Unlike the classic Stage-Gate process, the Innovation For Future process will be carried out if the intended product is not yet clearly defined at the outset. For this reason, an initial functional prototype has to be developed in sprints for series production and with regular customer feedback. LAPP has defined three

prerequisites here: An initial prototype must be in place, this prototype must have been assessed for added value by at least one customer, and an initial idea for the business model must have been developed. The Innovation for Future process gives us the freedom to drive forward innovations outside our core business.

The early introduction of ETHERLINE® GUARD to potential customers was extremely helpful for LAPP in the development process. As early as 2020, ETHERLINE® GUARD was used by three pilot customers from the medical technology, automotive and intralogistics sectors, as well as in the LAPP service and logistics centre in Ludwigsburg. Thanks to direct customer feedback, it was possible to prevent the innovation from being developed without clearly focusing on the market. So, simple operation yet complex functionality were particularly important to customers. The fully marketable product was finally launched three months ago. ETHERLINE® GUARD is in particular demand from customers for whom a malfunction or repair of a cable would be particularly critical and costly. LAPP envisions applications in the process industry, the automotive sector, medical technology and critical supply infrastructure.

ETHERLINE® GUARD and the associated evaluation of a cable's performance data for predictive maintenance is just the first step for LAPP. In the future, LAPP is looking to use this digital lifecycle of a cable in much more diverse ways and also to directly offer customers such performance profiles for developing new machines and systems. "The software and algorithm allow us to represent the behaviour of a cable in the digital twin. This means that a machine tool's operation under load can firstly be simulated with a purely virtual method. We can digitally represent the entire production process. This enables wear, design improvements and maintenance intervals to be taken into account during the development process. This is the future", says Georg Stawowy.

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Images

Digital images in printable resolution are available for this press release. The photos may be used without charge, provided the source reference "Photo: LAPP" is given. Graphic editing is not permitted.

European Headquarters
ETHERLINE® GUARD is a stationary monitoring device that uses patented predictive maintenance algorithms to assess the momentary performance of data cables subject to particular stress.

More pictures on request.

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About LAPP

Headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, LAPP is a leading supplier of integrated solutions and branded products in the field of cable and connection technology. The company's portfolio includes standard and highly flexible cables, industrial connectors and screw technology, customised system solutions, automation technology and robotics solutions for the intelligent factory of the future, as well as technical accessories. LAPP's core market is in the industrial machinery and plant engineering sector. Other key markets are in the food industry, logistics, as well as the energy and the mobility sector.

The company was founded in 1959 and is still fully owned by the founding family to this day. In the 2020/21 financial year, it generated a consolidated turnover of EUR 1,423 million. LAPP (including its non-consolidated companies) currently employs approximately 4,586 people across the world, produces at 21 international sites and has over 44 sales companies. LAPP also cooperates with around 100 international offices.

Further information on the topic can be found here:
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