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## Bandwidth: ABB Measurement & Analytics agile in responding to coronavirus

By Stephen B. Harrison | 17 August 2020

**The coronavirus pandemic has impacted how we live, work and do business on so many levels. Like most other industries, the industrial gases business has had to adapt to a new business climate and particularly the curtailment of once routine travel commitments.**

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, Division President Sabine Busse and her team at ABB Measurement & Analytics have needed to work across their available bandwidth to find additional opportunities for growth. **gasworld** spoke exclusively with Busse to discuss the lessons learned.

**Sabine, you have just reached five years at ABB this week, including a year at the helm of the Measurement & Analytics Division. What have been the defining moments?**

The sudden and dramatic Covid-19 related crude price collapse must be the key point here. It has put a temporary stop to investment in the US upstream sector which is a core market for our gas analysers, instrumentation and services.

To keep our business in good shape, my team has brought forward growth initiatives that we had in the pipeline in other sectors and geographies. Innovative gas analysers for oxygen measurement on ASUs and CEMS gas analysers for environmental protection in Asia, for example.



Source: ABB Measurement & Analytics

**How has the Covid-19 situation changed the way your teams do business?**

Working our way through the pandemic has taught us some important lessons. We now engage regularly with customers by video conference. In many places around the world, especially in Asia and the US, we have experienced tremendous cultural acceptance for this new way of communicating.

**Do you think you will go back to the 'old' way of working?**

In some cultures, we are likely to continue this digital customer communication approach. For example, our team in India has responded in a very

positive and pragmatic way. In such a large country, video calls are cost-effective and environmentally sustainable. And it means we can be there for more of our customers more of the time.

**Minimising the environmental impact of your business seems to be important to you. Is that so?**

For sure it is. In the Measurement and Analytics business, we have a wide portfolio, ranging from instrumentation as well as analysers focusing on environmental solutions. Our comprehensive range of CEMS gas analysers and supporting services is just one example. I'm proud that ABB plays a key enabling role in these environmental management sectors.

**CEMS – that's about air pollution control, right?**

Yes. The wellbeing of our natural environment and the respiratory health of the public rely on clean air. I'm thrilled that our CEMS products, services and digital solutions give operating companies in the hydrogen, chemicals and power generation sectors information they need to monitor and minimise their emissions to air.

**And it's a heavily regulated sector too, we believe...**

Indeed, it is. In some countries, the requirement is that CEMS gas analysers are measuring data with 98% up-time. That means there is very little room for planned downtime for maintenance and certainly no space for equipment failure. Our CEMS products and services are designed to meet these high reliability standards.



Source: ABB Measurement & Analytics

**How do you help operators with those stringent emission monitoring requirements?**

It begins with having the very best gas analysers. Then, it moves on to our team of more than 600 expert, certified service technicians around the world who can support customers when the need arises. Then, we come into the digital solutions. Some of these can predict when instrumentation will need intervention. We can do remote condition monitoring to prevent problems before they result in an emissions reporting compliance concern.

**Talking about the ‘best possible gas analysers’, I believe ABB launched a new oxygen analyser?**

Correct. We introduced the new Magnos28 recently with its new solid-state digital microwing. That’s a core product in our range of process control gas analysers. It is already helping many ASU operators to improve energy efficiency and maximise argon recovery. Environmental and economic benefits go hand in hand.

**It sounds like your team is fully aligned with the recently announced ‘Next Generation EU’ policy: ‘Investing in a green, digital and resilient Europe’**

Yes, it is – but we are applying that mantra worldwide, not just in Europe. One of the strengths of our business model is sectoral and regional diversity. If there is a downturn in one segment in one part of the world, we still have great opportunities to serve other geographies and other industry sectors as they focus on environmental issues.

**How do you find the bandwidth to balance the short-term issues, such as your response to Covid-19 and the long-term vision?**

Watching the quarterly numbers to assess the immediate impact of our plans is of critical importance. But I also want to look beyond the short-term and ensure that we are building a resilient business for the future. Beyond using smart communications to stay safe during the pandemic and developing digital solutions for customers are key for the future.

**Where do your long-term ideas for digital innovation come from?**

Innovation must start in the market. Customers must guide the way. Our local sales teams and channel partners are our eyes and ears. They feedback customer needs to our regional product managers. These regional teams talk to the global R&D specialists who distil the individual requirements into broader market needs and get busy to develop solutions. Then, we use the process in reverse to cascade an idea that originated in one country to our customers worldwide.



Source: ABB Measurement & Analytics

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**Do your innovations always travel internationally?**

Often, they do but I am passionate about recognising local needs. We encouraged the team in China to develop a solution based on the concept 'developed in China, to be made in China for use in the Chinese market'.

The products they conceived are getting pull from other regions who also want to have access to these value-engineered solutions. In the past, innovation flowed from our traditional centres of excellence in Europe and the US. They still have an essential role to play and additionally, ideas are now flowing from Asia into these established markets. We are becoming a truly inter-dependant global team.

**Sabine, before we close, please share some insights into the future.**

When I think of CEMS and process control gas analysers, the potential for our Measurement & Analytics business line is enormous. And, for ABB as a company, there will be boundless opportunities to contribute with clean energy, intelligent power management and sustainable solutions.