

# Finding opportunities for growth during the Coronavirus pandemic

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COVID-19 and the recent crude oil price collapse prompted a sudden downturn in the US upstream sector – one of the core markets for ABB Measurement & Analytics. Division President, Sabine Busse and her team took a 360° look around to see how they could react to the challenges. Fortunately, their product portfolio supports sustainable operations across various industries and geographies. This diversity is helping them to ride out the storm.

This interview was conducted by Stephen B. Harrison, sbh4 GmbH.

**Sabine, with one year as MD, and now one month as President of ABB Measurement & Analytics Division on top of five years at ABB, tell us how you have been making an impact.**

Time has flown and it's been all about applying my passion for innovation and putting customer and market needs at the centre of our activities.

**And then we hit the Covid-19 situation. That must have been a game changer.**

Yes, it was. And it hit the US upstream oil and gas sector especially hard. But, 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. For example, as they deepen their focus on environmental issues.

**What kind of changes have you made to your operations in response to the pandemic?**

One example is communication. Travel restrictions and good hygiene practices have speeded up a trend that was already developing at ABB for digital communication. For example, customer sales engagements by video conference.

In some cases, we have gone further. In India we recently supported the commissioning of some instrumentation by arranging carefully controlled remote access between the customer and our experts.

At times like this, it becomes clear to us how fortunate we are to have a range of digital solutions, including augmented reality and remote monitoring. These enable ABB experts to see exactly what the end-user has in front of them so that they can work together to get instrumentation online as quickly as possible.

**Do you think you will continue this remote way of working?**

Yes, in cultures where there is a high level of acceptance, we will continue to use this digital

customer communication approach as a part of our communications approach. It's cost-effective and means we can multiply our impact. We are there for more of our customers, more of the time.

Also, I have made a personal commitment to fly less in the future, and together with my management team we will cascade this philosophy through our division. We can save money and avoid carbon dioxide emissions at the same time. Economic and environmental benefits will go hand in hand.

**Air quality seems to be important to you.**

Indeed, it is. And I'm delighted that continuous emissions monitoring systems (CEMS) gas analysers are core products in our instrumentation, analyser and force measurement portfolio.

**CEMS – that's about refinery stack emissions 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 gas analysers, services and digital solutions give operating companies the information they need to monitor and minimise their emissions to air. As an example, our CEMS gas analyser range includes the ACF5000 FTIR which can monitor up to 15 pollutant gases simultaneously.

In the downstream sector, refinery emissions must be controlled if we are to make a difference to the environment. That applies across the board, whether the refinery is a world-scale, modern fully integrated refinery and petrochemicals site in India or smaller low complexity refinery in Western Europe.

**And CEMS is a heavily regulated sector too, I believe.**

Spot on. Regulatory developments also drive these markets forward. The 'Blue Sky' initiative in China and the emerging CEMS requirements in India will result in tremendous improvements in air quality and public health. Our global reach is important to support these regulatory changes and with offices around the world, we can stay up-to-speed on the gas analysis requirements and help our customers respond.

There is no room for guessing when it comes to measuring and reporting environmental emissions data. 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 calibration or maintenance and certainly no space for equipment failure. Our CEMS products and services are designed to meet these tough requirements.

**How do you help refinery operators with those stringent up-time requirements?**

It begins with having the very best hardware. Reliability is essential. 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 apply condition monitoring to address problems before they result in a reporting compliance concern.

**Where do the ideas for your digital innovations come from?**

Innovation starts in the market. Our local sales teams and channel partners are our eyes and ears and they provide feedback on customer needs around the world.

At the same time, our global R&D specialists work with our global product managers to develop

solutions to share worldwide. It is a continuous process. We also work with partners and we appreciate the innovation many of them bring to the benefit of our customers.

### **Do new product and service innovations always travel internationally?**

Often, they do. In the past, innovation flowed from our traditional centres of excellence in Europe and the US. These regions still have an essential role to play and, additionally, ideas are now flowing from Asia into these established markets.

### **Sabine, before we close, can you share any insights that inspire others as they work through the Coronavirus pandemic?**

We must be bold enough to embrace transformational innovation. The mindset applies equally to digitalisation, automation, services, products and the markets we choose to serve. I am convinced that the rewards are out there, for those who are brave enough to seek them.

Read the article online at: <https://www.oilfieldtechnology.com/special-reports/11082020/finding-opportunities-for-growth-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

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