

PPMA and UKIVA Join Forces!

On the 3rd August 2009, directors of the Processing and Packaging Machinery Industry (PPMA) and UK Industrial Vision Association (UKIVA) directors signed a Memorandum of Understanding about the amalgamation of UKIVA into the PPMA as a special sub-group. This follows a similar amalgamation of the British Automation & Robotics Association (BARA) earlier this year. PPMA CEO Chris Buxton said of the proposed amalgamation; "... it was combining and consolidating the strengths of all three parties." The decision to pursue this amalgamation was agreed unanimously by UKIVA members at their AGM in March, and it is anticipated that it will be ratified at an EGM on 15th September.

UKIVA Chairman, Mark Williamson, said of the alliance; "This is a real opportunity to strengthen both UKIVA and PPMA. The combination is much more than the sum of the parts. Vision technology is taking a more important role in many applications served by PPMA and BARA members. Combined, UKIVA, BARA and PPMA members now have a wider network of resources (people, financial and knowledge), background and profile to be able to make a real difference to UK industry".

"The initiative will be of great benefit to both parties", explained Chris Buxton. "With ever increasing pressure to respond to the global market and the inexorable growth of the low overhead economies, the need for UK machinery suppliers to innovate and differentiate themselves from what is now world-wide competition has evolved from being a preferred option to one that has become essential".

The presence of UKIVA as an integral part of the PPMA, though retaining its own identity, represents a positive move by the two associations to recognise current market trends and it will augment the PPMA membership to provide a community of like minded members better equipped to address the challenges that face them whether they be, technological, political or environmental. Members from both associations will have opportunities to engage with their new colleagues and take advantage of the new events that this initiative brings; many existing members of PPMA are users or prospective users of vision systems, and the association between robots and machine vision goes back to the late 1960s.

Any new or existing PPMA member may become a part of the UKIVA-led vision and imaging subgroup free of charge. They will have their own council of representatives and there will be a new PPMA: UKIVA board director with a portfolio for vision and imaging. The current economic climate is slowly making the government realise that SMEs are the backbone of the economy. The union between PPMA and UKIVA can only strengthen this voice and position in this constant battle to improve the lot of UK industry.

In one sense this amalgamation is going full circle because the UKIVA was administered by PPMA from its formation in 1992 to the end of 1994, though as a totally separate entity, and indeed the UKIVA Memorandum and Articles of Association were based, with full agreement, on those of the PPMA. From 1995 to the present the UKIVA has been administered by one of its founding members, Don Braggins, who will continue to provide technical advice as an accredited consultant to PPMA.

Another significant benefit of this initiative is the incorporation of the UKIVA Academic members, who are leading University Departments or other not-for-profit organisations, within their sector and who have a particular interest in the industry. PPMA will continue to accommodate these Academic members.

“Whether they are simply interested in exploring the world of automation for the first time or are well established users of this technology, existing PPMA and UKIVA members will find a warm welcome from their new colleagues. This is both a market and member driven initiative which will do much to further the interests of the industry and will significantly enhance the benefits of PPMA membership”, concluded Buxton.

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About the PPMA

Founded in 1987, the PPMA is the national trade association for suppliers of processing and packaging machinery to the UK market and now represents over 350 member companies. Recently co-joined with the British Automation & Robotics Association, (BARA), its principle objective is to promote sales of machinery and robotics, both at home and abroad, through various projects and services of mutual benefit to both members and their customers. In addition, the PPMA plays a pivotal role in helping to progress the overall standing and importance of processing and packaging machinery and automation & robotics technology within the many industries served by its members.

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