

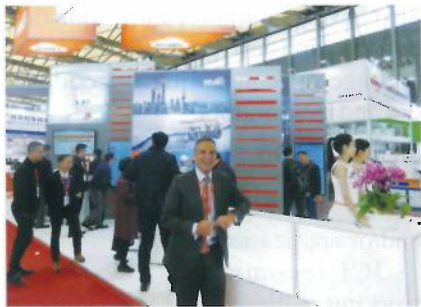
Top Interview

Belimo Leads Innovation in the HVAC Market

During the China Refrigeration Expo 2017 held in April, JARN interviewed Gary Economides, president of Belimo Asia Pacific. He introduced Belimo's profile, business performance, and its product highlights.



Gary Economides,
President,
Belimo Asia Pacific



Gary Economides, president of Belimo Asia Pacific, at its booth

JARN (J): First, could you tell us about your company?

Gary Economides (E): Belimo has a 42-year history, which started with damper actuators. The founders of the company had a target to develop a product which would be world class and innovative within the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) industry. What came out was our first direct coupled damper actuator.

Over the last 42 years, Belimo has sustained a history of innovation leadership, developing damper actuators for fire and safety applications, being the first to launch the Characterized Control Valve (CCV), followed by Pressure Independent Characterized Control Valve (PICCV), the six-way valve, the Electronic Pressure Independent Valve (EPIV), and the Energy Valve (EV) for managing low Delta T syndrome and improving efficiency in chilled water systems.

There is also a lot of innovation inside the product which you don't see that ensures a high level of reliability, a long life, and the lowest possible power consumption. We invest close to 7% of revenue in research and development. We are always striving to be the innovation leader in the marketplace.

J: Can you tell us about business for you in Asia last year?

E: Last year was a very good business year for us. We achieved our sales plan. We had double-digit growth in China and across the Asia Pacific region. India experienced very high growth, as well as Korea and Hong Kong. Macau was also very good for us because of the casino projects. Southeast Asia also had double-digit growth. We had double-digit growth throughout most of the region except in the more mature markets like Australia and Singapore, but these markets were still good; they performed according to plan and we were very satisfied with our results in Asia Pacific.

J: Globally, what percentage of your business in Europe, the United States, and Asia?

E: We do about 48% of our business in Europe, 40% in the Americas, and 12% in Asia Pacific. Our market share in Europe and the Americas is quite high. It is quite amazing how high our market share is in the Americas, given that we are a European company.

In Asia, our market share has a lot of space to grow. For example in China, we estimate our market share to be about 10%, giving us a lot of opportunity for growth. The markets are quite different in Asia, with a few dominant companies that are well established. We face a situation where we have to educate the market and promote our products to gain market share.

J: In Asia, which area do you expect to have the most growth?

E: For sales, definitely China is delivering the most in absolute growth. China accounts for about 40% of our Asia Pacific revenue. China's growth has slowed down, but the growth rate is still attractive and we are putting a lot of attention on China as you can see from this exhibition.

India is growing fast, and it is time now to put more investment into India. We achieved 19% growth in India in 2015, more than 20% in 2016, and this year we plan for more than 20% and are on track. In the past, Australia was a strong number two after China in sales, but now India has taken over in sales revenue and has become our second-largest region in Asia Pacific.

J: Besides damper actuators, valves are also a core product.

E: We have damper actuators for fire and safety as well as for air conditioning control. And then we have control valves. Our line of control valves includes standard valves for fan coil units up to large sized butterfly valves for central plants. We



Newly released Belimo sensors displayed at CRH 2017

also have pressure independent valves in the range. We have a small range of mechanical Pressure Independent Control Valves (PICV) up to DN25 for terminal units. Unlike our competitors we also have a complete electronic range of PICVs that measure the true flow with an ultrasonic sensor and therefore maintain a much higher accuracy in performance. Then we've added another range of products just launched this year – we're now offering sensors. With our global sales organization and operational excellence, we believe we can take a leading position in the sensor market for the HVAC industry.

J: Can you tell us the highlights of your new products at this show?

E: For this show, we have four new product ranges: ZoneEase VAV, advanced butterfly valves, Energy Valve version 3, and sensors.



Belimo staff introducing the ZoneEase VAV to visitors

ZoneEase VAV is a Variable Air Volume (VAV) pressure independent actuator with integrated flow sensor using Near Field Communication (NFC) technology for human-initiated connection to the cloud. It has been designed to simplify installation and commissioning as we recognized this to be a challenging process in the field and not normally done correctly. We made significant investments in creating a cloud data base to hold, capture, and transfer configuration parameters to ease and facilitate an error free fast commissioning process. It allows for two or more people to be on site and working in different zones, each understanding where the other is in terms of the level of completion of work and field diagnostic data. The consultant's individual VAV configuration parameter data is entered into an Excel file and uploaded to the Belimo Cloud. Then with your mobile phone and app, you connect to the cloud, get the data, and transfer it to the product in the field. Simultaneously you can get a visual

on the commissioning progress and everyone's contribution of the whole site from the cloud. You don't have to use any special tools, just a normal smartphone.

Then we have our new advanced butterfly valve, designed specifically for the HVAC industry. It contains intelligent self-adjusting end stops, with a low torque patented butterfly valve body design. With this design, we are able to bring energy savings of 80% on the power consumption when compared to conventional butterfly valves. It also contains NFC technology for setup and diagnostics.

Furthermore, we have our new Energy Valve series, which we promote very strongly in the marketplace. The Energy Valve acts as a control valve, a balancing valve, a shutoff valve, energy meter, and a Delta T Manager. The most important element for energy savings is this Delta T Manager, which solves the low delta T syndrome commonly experienced in buildings which are performing sub-optimally. When delta T is too low, excess water pumped through the coils of the air handling unit is having a minor effect on the cooling capacity. It's wasted energy. The coils have reached a saturation point which we term the waste zone. Once the saturation point is reached, the Energy Valve will take control to reduce the flow to maintain the design delta T, and cut back what is needed as cooling capacity from the central plant.

We are exhibiting the Energy Valve version 3 here. The interesting thing about the Energy Valve 3 is that if our customer connects it to the Internet and allows us to access the data in the cloud, we will automatically generate a performance report every month which will be emailed to them. Furthermore, we will send a message when there is low delta T and ask the customer if they would like us to activate the Delta T Manager. To motivate customers to take us up on this offer, we extend the warranty of the product from five to seven years and offer lifetime access to the data.

Finally we are offering a range of sensors as the perfect complement to our actuators and valves. With this range you get the standard five year warranty, and sensors which conform to NEMA 4X and IP 65 requirements.