



Liqiang Liang (53),
Managing Director of Beckhoff China

Interview with Liqiang Liang,
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10 years of Beckhoff China

Beckhoff China celebrated the 10th anniversary of its founding on May 26th, 2011. In an interview with the PC Control editorial team, Managing Director Liqiang Liang gives his opinions on the anniversary and on the subsidiary's growth rate.



Kai Ristau, Head of International Sales and Business Development, congratulates Liqiang Liang, Managing Director of Beckhoff China, on the 10th anniversary of the founding and on the great economic success at the anniversary celebration.

PC-Control: Mr. Liang, you have accompanied the impressive development of Beckhoff China from the outset. What have you and your team achieved in the past 10 years?

Liqiang Liang: Ten years have passed since Beckhoff opened its first representative office in Beijing in 2001. After the establishment of further offices in Shanghai and Guangzhou in 2003 and 2004, we opened the new head office of Beckhoff China in Shanghai in May 2007. We are now represented in 12 locations.

At the beginning there were only two people on staff; we now have over 100 employees. The turnover growth figures have also increased constantly: starting with 100,000 euros in 2001, we broke the 50 million euro mark in 2010. We have constantly extended our market share and influence in the hard-fought Chinese automation market. This development has also attracted much attention in the world of automation, resulting in several awards from industrial associations, authorities and media.

The high-performance PC-based control technology from Beckhoff has also proven itself in China and won over many users. What are the primary markets and fields of application for Beckhoff technology?

The biggest achievement of Beckhoff China in the last 10 years has been that we gained the confidence of the Chinese customers in our modern PC- and EtherCAT-based control concept. That was real grass-roots work at the beginning. Today, our technology is widespread in the most diverse industries and has proven itself, for example, in the traditional markets of mechanical engineering, metal forming, as well as in the photovoltaic, semiconductor, plastics, packaging and printing industries, in tobacco production and in intelligent building automation. We are particularly successful in the field of wind turbines.

How do you explain this success in the wind energy sector?

Our control technology is perfectly suited to the operation of wind turbines. With our scalable and flexible control technology, we offer the optimum solution for operational management, pitch control and farm networking in terms of both price and performance. Five of the ten largest Chinese wind turbine manufacturers are customers of ours. Around 5500 wind turbines, equivalent to 8.5 GW, were constructed in China with Beckhoff controllers in 2010 alone.

How has Beckhoff China been able to attain the dynamic growth, which has been a two-figure percentage each year?

How did you succeed in gaining customers and market share?

Our success is based on our technological and innovative strength, with which we have been and are continually bringing new products onto the market – keeping one step ahead of the competition as a result. However, the extent of our product range along with its modularity and scalability has strengthened our reputation for being able to offer a solution for virtually any task. A big plus is the convincing performance of our PC Control, with which we can control extremely fast and highly precise machines on the one hand (eXtreme Fast Control) and integrate an increasing number of automation functions on one PC platform on the other (Scientific Automation). In China we have developed from what was initially a component supplier into a system supplier. For all important core industries we have local specialists who support our customers with their applications.

How did you succeed in making the Beckhoff brand known in China – a country with over 1.3 billion inhabitants?

Apart from the establishment of a nationwide network that enables us to provide sales and support in customers' immediate proximity, a further cornerstone



Our employees' know-how and enthusiasm for technology are among the most important success factors. Our priorities are therefore to commit new talent and specialists to the company from all sectors who are fascinated by automation technology," says Managing Director Liqiang Liang.

The wind industry is one of the mainstays of Beckhoff China's turnover. Around 5500 wind turbines, equivalent to 8.5 GW, were constructed with Beckhoff controllers in China in 2010 alone.



The employees from Beckhoff China at the anniversary celebration.

Ten years after its establishment, the Chinese subsidiary employs over 100 people at 12 locations.

of our growth and brand strategy has been a dedicated marketing concept. We placed great importance on marketing from the outset and invested in advertising, PR and trade fairs. Last year we were represented at 17 trade shows altogether. In addition, we use the possibilities of the Internet in order to reach our customers with newsletters as well as online videos and seminars, etc. On top of that we regularly organize seminars and roadshows at various locations. This way, we convey a deep understanding of our technology and our products to our customers, even before they decide on Beckhoff as their supplier.

How do you assess the development potential of the Chinese automation market?

In principle there is a close connection between the global development of automation technology and the development in China. Due to the economic growth and the strong sponsorship of technical innovation in China, demand is growing for a high-quality manufacturing industry and, accordingly, for progressive automation technology. That offers us, as a technology company, favorable framework conditions for further growth. Nowadays, automation technology will play an important role for technical innovations in the future, scientific findings will in turn drive the development of automation technology onward. Having grasped this trend in advance, Beckhoff has created a new extended concept of automation technology with its "Scientific Automation," solution which encompasses Condition Monitoring, measurement technology and robotics in addition to PLC and visualization.

What are your objectives and what measures will you take to continue the current success story?

Our rapid development in recent years naturally represents a big challenge with regard to the future growth outlook. Based on that we will continue to

expand our activities in China. The most important pillars of our success in the future will remain the technical and innovative strength of Beckhoff and the development of sustainable solutions. At the end of this year, for example, we will introduce the new software generation TwinCAT 3 onto the Chinese market which, in keeping with the "all-in-one" concept, encompasses all important programming languages of the automation and IT world and will simplify software engineering considerably. Our growth strategy is directed not only more intensely toward industrial research and the OEM business, which we want to advance further, but also toward new markets. At present, the wind industry is the mainstay of our sales. However, in order to gain a foothold as a solution provider with corresponding industrial expertise in other growth industries, we will continue to expand the industrial expertise of our employees. Their know-how and their enthusiasm for technology are among the most important prerequisites for our current and future success. Our priorities are therefore to commit new talent to the company and to gain specialists from all sectors who are fascinated by automation technology, as well as to expand our sales network even further. Our goal is to develop Beckhoff China into a renowned and internationally operative high-tech automation company.

Beckhoff China www.beckhoff.cn