

Terumo wins Factory of the Future Award for its sustained innovation

14 March 2022, 01:00

Jan Kempeneers
Walter Auwers

At the Factory of the Future Awards ceremony on February 17, our country was granted with six new Factories of the Future. With this Award, the initiators want to designate the most future-oriented manufacturing companies in Belgium. We are pleased to introduce you to one of the winners: Terumo, a medical equipment manufacturer based in Haasrode, near Louvain.

In Haasrode, where Terumo's European headquarters are located, approx. 800 million syringes or injection solutions produced each year, in addition to catheters and other required accessories. The site is part of a Japanese group that boasts 100 years of experience in this field. In Europe, the multinational has been active since 1971 and employs some 1,500 people, including 750 in Haasrode.

Customised products

In the past, Terumo focused mainly on the production of generic products for the hospital industry. However, in order to remain relevant as a European production site, Terumo changed its strategy in recent years. It deliberately focused on the B2B market, with the development of specific

products. Today, it has entered the B2B market with products tailored to customer’s needs and requirements through end-to-end engineering.

To allow for this far-reaching customisation, the company has invested in flexible machinery, combining automation and extensive data capture.

Innovation at various levels

In order to achieve its long-term strategy, Terumo has chosen to implement some technical feats, such as cobots and the digital link between the machines and a new machine platform. This technological machine platform proved to be quite a challenge. Not only because it had to make the machines flexible, but also because the way the machines are developed and installed, had to be reconsidered. The innovation consisted of connecting the machines so that all important parameters were centralized and available in a data lake.

In order to increase resilience in production, internal structures and processes were also reviewed, with employees being given much more personal responsibility. For instance, the workers in the teams on the production floor are responsible for organising their own workflow. Priority is given to the realisation of the defined objectives based on the current position, as well as to internal communication, through cross-functional and self-managing teams. Digital tools are widely used for dashboards and overviews, and to support employees in their training. The human factor is therefore at the heart of Terumo.

Factories of the Future drive sustainable prosperity

The long-term strategy that Terumo was able to implement thanks to flexible automation and extensive data capture, was one of the reasons why the company recently won the title of Factory of the Future. The Factories of the Future project, launched in 2015 by Sirris and Agoria, aims to support manufacturing companies and ensure that the technology industry contributes as much as possible to a prosperous and sustainable society. In order to achieve this, Sirris and Agoria collaborate with various partners, including essenscia, the Belgian federation of the chemical industry and of life sciences. This collaboration has proved successful: a survey shows that the 48 title holders achieved more growth in productivity, turnover and jobs than the rest of the manufacturing industry between 2015 and 2020.

On 17 February 2022, six companies were granted the award for the first time. For Flanders, construction company Stas in Waregem, West-Flanders, Terumo Europe’s medical products production site of in Leuven, Limburg panel builder P&V Panels in Heusden-Zolder and ZF Wind Power in Lommel. Wine cork company Vinventions from Thimister-Clermont in Liège and pharmaceutical company Takeda Belgium from Lessen in Hainaut for Wallonia. The winners were handed their awards by the Flemish and Walloon vice-ministers Hilde Crevits and Willy Borsus.

Eight other manufacturing companies extended their titles: Lavetan and E.D.& A. in Turnhout, BMT Aerospace and TE Connectivity in Oostkamp, Duracell in Aarschot, Van Hoecke in Sint-Niklaas, Stas in Doornik and AISIN Europe (previously AW Europe) in Saint-Ghislain. In total, the Factories of the Future group now consists of 48 companies.

Factory of the Future Roadshow 2022

What can you learn from a Factory of the Future like Terumo? A virtual visit to this medical equipment manufacturer is sure to inspire you to make your own innovations! You can engage in an open and honest dialogue with the host company and an important partner of theirs which helps them to accomplish the transformations. Seize this opportunity and register for the virtual visit to Terumo on 17 March, from 13:00 to 16:00. You will receive a Team link a few days before the event.

Take a look inside Terumo:

Accept marketing-cookies to watch this video. For FireFox users, disable the 'Enhanced tracking protection' of your browser to view this video.

Click here for more information on the Award winners.

Authors



Jan Kempeneers



Walter Auwers