Interview with Leendert Remmelink, quartermaster Smart Industry Netherlands (Northern part) at FME

Where are we now as with Smart Industry in the Netherlands? What are the current challenges?

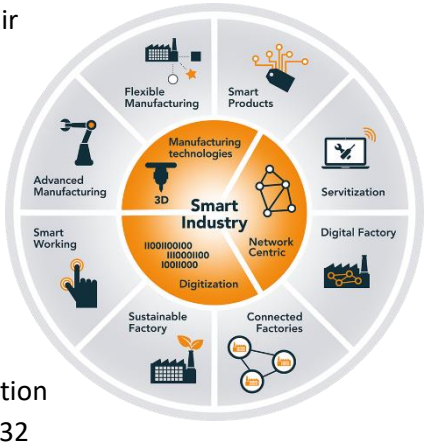
Leendert Remmelink: A fourth industrial revolution is taking place. This revolution is driven by giant leaps in ICT innovation and promises to radically alter the face of the industry in the coming decades. Automated production systems using advanced robotics increasingly communicate with each other on detailed aspects of production, joining up hitherto fragmented manufacturing processes. By linking all steps in the value chain, a world of possibilities opens for companies, old and new. The Dutch ambition is to join the frontrunners and gain a strong position within that group. The Dutch industry has every chance to succeed in this challenge, and further action to support this will be aligned with the top sector policy. The Dutch business community – large and small – holds all the keys to engage with this promising development and to join forces with the frontrunners. The Netherlands have a strong tradition of collaboration in networks and clusters.

Add to this world-class ICT infrastructure and 93% internet penetration in households, and it becomes evident that the Netherlands are poised to play a leading role in Smart Industry. The Smart Industry report defines and explains Smart Industry in the Dutch context. Smart Industry should be a cross-cutting theme within the top sector policy in which a broad coalition of companies, knowledge institutions and government should be involved. The approach was formalised in an Action Agenda in November 2014. The Action Agenda is an enhancement of the current top sector policy and the Technology Pact. The aim is to make the industry more competitive through faster and better utilisation of the opportunities ICT has to offer. And not just for the business community itself. A strong and innovative industry provides growth and jobs. That is the higher goal. Until now more than 600 companies are engaged within the program and more than 15.000 participants.

What is your sketch of the future, concerning technology, personnel, business models, organisations for Smart Industry within SME's?

Remmelink: Digitization, robotization and alternative ways of production are developing exponentially. Companies will have to embrace these new technologies and determine how they can implement them in their current production and their business models. They will also have to make it a common thought of the employees implementing these developments.

Why and what is the role of smart industry NL and what are the goals?



Remmelink: Smart Industry is challenging companies to think of their future and to participate in Smart Industry programs suitable for them. Smart Industry sees eight industry transformations, driven by three major changes; digitisation, big data, new materials and production technologies and new ways of co-operation / new networks. To support companies, eleven acceleration programmes have been developed for companies to participate. A good example is the network of Smart Industry Fieldlabs where companies, employees, knowledge institutes and students work together on future challenges. E.g. Production technologies, application of new materials, predictive maintenance etc. There are more than 32 Fieldlabs in The Netherlands.

How does Smart Industry NL achieve these goals? What is your role in this?

Remmelink: Smart Industry Netherlands is an enthusiastic community of people from Companies, national and regional Government, Knowledge and Research Institutes and Industry Associations whose aim it is to work closely together on the challenging topics the Dutch technological companies SMEs as well as Industry – are facing. Addressing these topics in a practical way especially for SME's is very important. Within Smart Industry I am one of the regional representatives to coordinate the programme with the national team vice versa especially when it comes to availability of stimulation funds and regional strengths. One of the successful regional projects is "TechnoSpitsen" ("TechForwards"). Companies were asked about their (technological) challenges for the future (meet them where they are) and a bundle of meet-ups, lessons on specific topics, innovations is organised to help them with their questions and challenges (bring them where they want to be). One of the benefits is that companies and the people they employ become a community, learn from each other and start new co-operations. One of the advantages is that they are also working together now on engaging new technical personnel and educating existing employees on topics they want to know more about, e.g. Big Data, Data processing, Robotization, Maintenance and New Materials.

What is your opinion about SMeART project and meeting the project partners in Alkmaar?

Remmelink: The advantage of an international project is an inspiration. Within every country, different challenges occur and in many times “lessons learned” by others can be very helpful. By meeting you, I got inspired personally. I saw some very nice examples of topics we can also use in The Netherlands.

You received the first report "Learning and business consultant needs of Europe's SME's in Smart Engineering", what is the most striking insight for you?

Remmelink: It is encouraging to read that many participants in the survey recognise Smart Industry challenges and the urgency to do something with these challenges. One striking element is the cyber secure collection, implementation and smart use of Big Data. Many companies struggle with the ocean of information and data provided. For them, it is a challenge to select and use the right data to improve service, service models and their business model. There is a huge need for support in that field. The next industrial revolution challenges are already peaking; the use of Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality.

This Interview was conducted by Parbleu

Mr Leendert Remmelink (FME) receiving the first official WP2 report “Learning and business consultant needs of Europe's SME’s in Smart Engineering” from SMeART by Viola Vandelanotte (VOKA Vlaanderen) in Alkmaar (during the project meeting of SMeART project partners, November 2018)

Further Information

Dutch Smart Industry organization:
www.smartindustrie.nl

Entrepreneurial organization for the technology industry
www.fme.nl

Network of 35 machine builders in Noord-Holland.
www.TechnoSpitsen.nl