

# Why MDA Matters



**Most of you probably think you know what IMTS is about—machine tools, cutting tools, and various manufacturing processes.** And if you stick to the North, South and West halls, you'll be mostly right. But there's a substantial group of exhibitors in the East building that are dedicated to automation, motion control and mechanical components.

At IMTS 2012, the show organizers introduced the first installment of Industrial Automation North America (IANA), a show-within-a-show that significantly expanded the scope of the overall offerings at IMTS.

This year, that scope has been expanded even further, with the addition of the Motion, Drive and Automation North America show (MDA). Like IANA, MDA is brought to you by the Deutsche Messe Group, the same people who produce the Hannover Fair in Germany.

Because of its strong machine tool focus, IMTS has always attracted a number of exhibitors who sell various mechanical power transmission and motion control components. These manufacturers of ball screws, bearings, machine spindles, linear slides, servomotors and so forth were there mainly to sell to the other exhibitors. After all, the entire machine tool industry comes to IMTS, and machine tools are a prime application for precision motion control components.

But IANA and MDA are beginning to change all that—to attract an audience of their own. MDA adds a specific focus on gears, gear drives, bearings, couplings, brakes, lubricants, fluid power and electric motors—categories that have wide applications in industries far beyond just machine tools.

Don't get me wrong. This show has a long way to go before it rivals Hannover Fair as a show for mechanical components. You won't see a lot of big gearboxes, motors or couplings. In fact, you won't see many exhibitors specializing in large, heavy-duty applications—at least not yet. There is still a decidedly machine tool and automation focus to what's on display here. But the focus has grown enough that many other industries should start to take notice. Designers and developers of packaging machinery, medical equipment, vehicles and factory automation should have plenty of technology to explore.

I expect—and hope—that the visitor profile will also begin to change. In addition to the high volume of dedicated manufacturing professionals that IMTS already attracts, MDA and IANA should begin to attract design engineers, maintenance managers, purchasing professionals and more.

And that's the real reason I think MDA matters. Its addition to the IMTS lineup makes the show more relevant to readers like you.

If you're at the show, we hope you'll come and see us. We'll be at booth #N-7214. Please stop by to renew your subscription or chat with our editors and staff. When you visit the East building, we hope you'll take advantage of the free cell phone and tablet charging station outside the MDA and IANA pavilions. You'll see our name there, along with a QR code you can scan to quickly and easily renew your subscription.

I'll be spending a lot of time walking the aisles at MDA and IANA. If you happen to see me, please stop me to say hello. I'll be very interested in hearing your take on the changing face of IMTS.

