

Wood Group expands into process industry operations management systems with acquisition of Ingenious

In April this year, the Houston-based Wood Group acquired Ingenious Inc., a supplier of proprietary software and consulting services to the global chemical, oil & gas, and energy industries, from its executive leadership team. The acquisition provides a strong manufacturing operations management (MOM) systems capability that builds upon and diversifies the capabilities of Wood Group Mustang's automation and control business, within which it will operate. Ingenious' software products consist of remote performance monitoring, production planning and scheduling, and training, including e-learning and training simulators for the process industries.

Founded in 2000 by Mr. Vibhu Sharma and Mr. Bharat Kamdar, Houston-based Ingenious provides consulting and engineering services to support software sales and non-software-related services such as process engineering, design and simulation, and process safety management. Ingenious also has an office in Mumbai that supports regional customers, executes international projects and assists in software development.

In this e-interview with *Chemical Weekly*, Mr. Mark

House, President, Wood Group Mustang Automation and Control, dwells behind the rationale of the acquisition, how it will be integrated into the Group's businesses and plans for the future.



Mr. Mark House

How does the suite of products on offer from Ingenious fit into the overall Automation and control service line of Wood Group?

Mark House: Ingenious' suite of software is complementary to the automation and control product offering. It completes our integrated dynamic simulation and operating training simulator solutions. The ProDyn and Pro-

“We have an enviable suite of technology solutions that can enable intelligent operations for the manufacturing industry”

Learn software fits perfectly alongside our VP Link product and Virtuoso, simulation and control offerings.

We now have the capability to provide large-scale simulations in the

downstream and upstream markets, including full offshore asset simulations; from the ocean floor, to the production platform, to the beach and beyond.

The ProPlan and ProSched software provides rigorous non-linear modeling and Gantt charts, allowing a single model to be used for both production planning and scheduling. The ProRPM real-time performance modeling package allows customers to visualize, analyze, and explore data in real-time across all of their assets from CEO level to operator level.

We were first introduced to Ingenious when looking for an enhanced front end for our environmental data management software, ENVision. It is now embedded in that software offering.

What are the synergies and benefits for clients from this expanded portfolio?

It increases the breadth of our overall offering and allows us to provide more value-adding, complimentary solutions to our clients. Wood Group can now take overall responsibility for delivery; avoiding contracting multiple entities and lowering risk for our clients.

We have an enviable suite of technology solutions that can enable intelligent operations for the manufacturing industry and make us a player in the world of IIOT (Industrial Internet of Things).

What are some of the key trends in the automation and control industries and how does the acquisition address these?

The acquisition was driven largely by two developing trends: an increased focus on operations assurance and data analytics, and a major component of operations assurance is operator competency. The Ingenious products for training and learning, coupled with our learning and competency assurance practices, create an unrivaled learning program. This is balanced against a backdrop of an ever-increasing amount of information diluting the pertinent information required by senior operations personnel and executives to truly understand the health of their assets.

Our expertise in data analytics and key performance indicator development, coupled with the strong ProRPM performance monitoring product, provide a real value-add to our clients.

How will Wood Group leverage the infrastructure and manpower of Ingenious, especially in India?

The automation and control business in Wood Group has developed a strong global engineering capability through centers of excellence and high value engineering centers. Our solution in the Western hemisphere is robust, but our offering in the Eastern hemisphere has room to grow. We are also pleased to tap into the entrepreneurial spirit of the Ingenious founders, and will apply their expertise in this region when building this service capability.

What will change for Ingenious India - manpower, corporate structure, industry focus?

Acquiring Ingenious is a positive move for the business and Wood Group. We are looking to grow and develop our resource pool, focusing on project execution work.

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As Ingenious becomes integrated into the Wood Group business, we hope to further increase the focus in India to support automation and control and other services capabilities across the Group.

How is Wood Group currently engaged in India and what are future plans?

Wood Group has several service lines with a presence in India, including automation and control, clean energy, subsea, process simulations, and operations and maintenance. We envisage our India presence growing to support both domestic and international work.

What are some key industries that Wood Group is focusing on globally in the automation and control capability? What has been the impact of the oil price crash on business prospects?

The oil price has obviously impacted our traditional oil and gas work, but Wood Group's diverse service offering has given us the opportunity to look at small opex work within the downstream sectors, including refining, gas processing, petrochemicals and renewables, as well as our traditional oil and gas offerings.