

Building Technologies Newsletter

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10 million OpenAir damper actuators

In September 2013, the Siemens Building Technologies division manufactured the ten millionth damper actuator in its OpenAir series. This is a milestone in a success story that began in 1990 with a considerable amount of difficulty.

"Today, we can be proud of the fact that we have manufactured 10 million OpenAir damper actuators," Johannes Milde, CEO of the Siemens Building Technologies said in early September during the anniversary celebration. "We launched OpenAir as a bold yet far-sighted project over twenty years ago, and since then we have managed to overcome all difficulties and meet all challenges. We have invested a great deal in continuous enhancements, and our efforts have paid off. Today, our OpenAir damper actuators are still state of the art and meet the market requirements. We making every effort to ensure that they continue to do so."

In 1990, when the project was officially launched, it was not yet clear that the OpenAir line would turn out to be such a success. As one of Building Technologies' first product families, OpenAir was developed and manufactured for the global market from the very beginning. Two project and development teams were involved, one in Zug (Switzerland) and one in Buffalo Grove (United States). This distributed approach to developing and manufacturing a globally uniform product was revolutionary at the time – and it involved some uncertainty. How can a damper actuator comply with the market requirements, standards and, not least, the practices that vary from country to country? How can a functioning product simultaneously and jointly be developed in different facilities with their individual cultures and work mentalities, and do this within a reasonable period of time? Diversity and globalization were not common concepts in the early 1990s. Thanks to the initial work carried out in the OpenAir project and others, these and similar aspects are no longer an issue today.

The first OpenAir damper actuators with and without spring return were launched on the European and American markets in 1997. Just four years later, the product line included three platforms with different functionalities and applications. By 2002, when the third production facility in Gimpo (South Korea) was opened, two million OpenAir actuators had already

been made and sold. The next milestone was reached in 2007 when the fourth product platform was created in the Gimpo plant. In the meantime, actuators for fire and smoke protection dampers had been added to the OpenAir product range in 2005. Fast-running actuators followed in the spring of 2011, and communications-enabled VAV compact controllers with KNX technology were added in the fall of 2011.

Today, the OpenAir family includes four platforms for all areas, from HVAC applications and use as air volume controllers to fire and smoke protection dampers. The actuators are available in both linear and rotary versions and feature a robust design as well as a uniform installation and wiring concept. Siemens pays great attention to compatibility between new models and their predecessors.

"The OpenAir actuators offer excellent investment protection thanks to their backward compatibility. For us, this is a high priority during ongoing development," says head of OpenAir product management Bruno Kamm. "Our stated objective is to continue offering our customers robust, long-lasting and precise damper actuators with an outstanding price-performance ratio. We are already on our way to the 20-million mark."

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Caption: More than 10 million damper actuators from Siemens' OpenAir family had left the factories in Zug (Switzerland), Buffalo Grove (United States) and Gimpo (South Korea) by September 2013.



Caption: The OpenAir family includes four platforms for all areas, from HVAC applications and use as volumetric flow controllers to fire and smoke protection dampers.