

## Machine Vision China

### Interview with François Bertrand

1. First, thank you very much for taking this interview. The leader plays a very important role in a company across the company's development. Finally, would you please make a short self-introduction and we believe that Chinese readers must be very interested.

Mr. François Bertrand joined Matrox in 1986 after graduating from Montreal's prestigious Ecole Polytechnique where he studied Engineering Physics. Hired as European Sales Manager, he secured a large contract with a French company trying to design a beer bottle inspection system. That company is now known as i2S and distributes Matrox Imaging products in France and Belgium. Bertrand left Matrox in 1992, but returned four years later as the new Director of Sales & Marketing. Under Mr. Bertrand's leadership, Matrox Imaging has seen dramatic increases in revenues that resulted from a diversified product line that responded to market trends and customers' needs across a spectrum of industries: automotive, robotics, semiconductor inspection, medical, pharmaceutical, and security.

2. As the earliest and biggest machine vision media in China, the China Vision Web is always paying close attention to the markets, companies, technologies about machine vision in many countries of the world. We know it is more than 10 years that your company enters China market. Then, would you please give Chinese readers a brief introduction of your company? About the future of America's machine vision markets, do you have some particular opinion?

Matrox was founded by two engineers, Lorne Trottier and Branko Matic, in 1976. Today, the company has three separate division that serve the video display, video broadcast and editing, and imaging industries, respectively, and remains a private company. Matrox's first imaging products were developed as early as the 1980s, when machine vision was virtually unheard of. Today, Matrox Imaging offers frame grabbers, vision processors, imaging platforms, smart cameras, and development software products for machine vision, image analysis, medical imaging, and video surveillance. It's true that we are currently facing the toughest economic climate in recent years. The world's companies, not just those in North America, will face challenges. However, companies still need to be competitive; investing in machine vision systems that can inspect more units in less time will be very attractive.

We have been active in the Chinese market for 15 years now. In the 1990s we had two distributors, Microview and Lingzhi. In 2004 they merged into one company.

3. American machine vision markets develop early and keep ahead in technology, at the same time, its companies are much bigger than those in China in machine vision. Machine vision in Canada is also powerful, so would you please introduce machine vision market in your country generally? For example, which industries machine vision used more widely in Canada.

[bruno.] As an industrialized nation, Canada, like the US, uses machine vision in a vast number of applications and fields. Because of our vast natural resources (oil, wood, pulp and paper, mining) many people tend to associate vision with these markets. While it is true that Canadian companies and research centers have developed innovative solutions for those sectors, vision is now an integral part of other industries such as pharmaceutical, medical, general manufacturing, high-end security, and others. It is also worth noting that Canada to two of the better known vision companies: Matrox Imaging and Dalsa. There are also several other camera manufacturers who call Canada home. Major universities have been teaching vision

and robotics for years. As a result, our vision industry prospers from a well-educated workforce that is capable of business around the world.

4. We find out that your company has very strong superiority at the districts of picture card and software. In 2008, Matrox also took out smart camera products. Then can you tell me what technological your company expert in ? Comparing with your competitors, what is your company's best superiority? It's true that imaging hardware is part of Matrox Imaging's legacy. A considerable of sales and revenues comes from frame grabbers. The success of our software ties into that specialty, as well. In the early days of machine vision, each frame grabber required its own software. Our Matrox Imaging Library changed all that; by offering a common application programming interface (API) across all Matrox Imaging's hardware platforms, developers needed only one tool, and had to change a few lines of code when they used different hardware. We've taken a different approach with our new smart camera software. We believe by offering a "non-programming" vision software tool, we could reach more users, particularly those that don't have programming knowledge. But what's really important here is that our smart camera software is built upon the same algorithms as MIL – they are just presented differently for the smart camera.
5. We learn about your company from your website that Matrox has many sellers in many countries of the world. In China, you own a long partner all the while. Acrossing cooperating with it, how do you think about machine vision in China in your eyes? What superiority do Chinese machine vision industries have? For the most part, our products have been used in very high-end applications, like military and aerospace. There is great potential for machine vision in China, because the market is very comfortable with automation. General manufacturing is the sector that will benefit most from machine vision inspection systems, but there are issues that create challenges. First, the majority of inspection systems are used in plants that manufacture for export; the domestic market does not demand higher-quality products. Second, while there is a good understanding of automation, there is not as much awareness of how vision fits into automation. The software engineers and the mechanical engineers don't have the experience of how to connect vision with a mechanical process. That's where systems integrators fit in; specialized companies who understand how to configure assembly lines with cameras and software. We're working with our distributor to find and train systems integrators in China to better serve their domestic market. It's a challenge for us.
6. How much do you learn about China's machine vision companies? We know that a lot of foreign companies have already bought parts even system equipments from China. May you choose Chinese products to your machine vision products if you need in future? We have been using Chinese components in our hardware products for some time, and expect to continue.
7. Are you interested in China? Do you plan to work together with more and more Chinese corporations, and then enter China market if possible? Matrox Imaging operates on a manufacturer-distributor business model. It's worked very well for us in the past because it creates long-term relationships. With the distributor model, the pre-sales discussions, ordering, and post-sales support are conducted in the customer's native language; we have Chinese-speaking employees at headquarters who can provide additional services if necessary. This 'small footprint' also means that when the economy is

less active, we can still maintain our services and fully support our customers; it means we don't have to close offices.