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MOCK ME IF YOU WILL



I hate summer. My friends think that's ridiculous and tease me quite often. But I'm like a polar bear — give me 20°F and snow on the ground anytime. I simply hate being hot. Nowadays, central air conditioning is my BFF.

However, there are some hot things I like. Cocoa. Bubble baths. Brad Pitt. And manufacturing and IT convergence.

My friends now will mock me for liking manufacturing and IT convergence, but that's because they don't understand it. Convergence helps manufacturers improve overall visibility throughout the enterprise so anyone in the business office and on the plant floor can see what's going on in real time to make better business decisions faster. How can you not like that?

It helps companies to cut costs by joining the plant-floor and business office operations onto a single control platform. People, processes and technology work in unison, which helps uncover new competitive opportunities. Convergence also helps quickly move information between supply chains, distribution chains, the plant floor and the company's decision-makers.

"Islands of automation and information on the plant floor have stood in the way of progress, alongside cultural and organizational gaps between IT and controls engineering," Chet Namboodri, director of Manufacturing & Energy Industry Solutions at Cisco Systems, Inc. told me.

"Customers demand more than ever before, and proliferation in SKUs drives more complexity to the production process. Sound information flow, at low cost, between plant and enterprise is crucial. It's not a matter of whether to converge; it's one of how quickly and how effectively," he said.

Learn more starting on page 16. And think of me as I muddle through the hot, humid days of August. Until next time ...



Theresa Houck, Executive Editor

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