

# THE COBOTS ARE COMING... THE COBOTS ARE COMING...

"We've seen astounding growth in the sale of Universal Robots in Michigan. Just last year, Universal Robots' sales grew by 72%, and there's no end in sight. The majority of the applications are simple pick-and-place jobs, although, increasingly, we see collaborative robots used in fabrication and quality inspection. More than 90% of the UR cobots sold have been to small and medium sized manufacturers. Cobots help address the skilled talent shortage, enhance quality control in production, and offer safety and ergonomic benefits, all while providing rapid payback on investment." Mike Folster – Robotics Product Manager with Behco-MRM

## The leaders in collaborative robots – Universal Robots has exceeded 22,000 units sold

Since Universal Robots (UR) sold its first commercial collaborative robot (cobot) in 2008, the company has grown exponentially. Behco-MRM ([www.behco.com](http://www.behco.com)) is a key partner for Universal Robots, and the leading UR distributor in Michigan. With offices in Hudsonville and Madison Heights, Behco-MRM has helped customers deploy dozens of UR cobots in a wide variety of applications, with an average payback period of 9 months or less. Not only are UR cobots less expensive and easier to install and operate than traditional industrial robots, they offer several other key benefits, such as:

## Productivity enhancement – "the Plant's productivity grew by 6-8% thanks to its new cobots" said Carl Beckwith, IAC President North America

Research has shown that collaboration between a human operator and a robot is 85% more productive than if either were working independently from one another. This increased productivity can be achieved almost immediately after deployment. UR cobots are working in all manufacturing sectors, especially

the Automotive, Aerospace, Medical and Furniture industries in Michigan. Behco-MRM's highly-skilled cobot team is experienced at coaching customers to ensure that applications are feasible, the technologies align, the implementation is successful, and key staff are trained. Once the first project is running successfully, subsequent cobot deployments may take only a few days.

## Employment and ergonomic benefits – "focused on tasks that are dirty, dull and dangerous" said Tom Swartz, IAC Director of Manufacturing Engineering

UR cobots are designed to carry out tedious, repetitive and strain-inducing tasks. UR cobots improve the working environment for employees by reducing their exposure to musculoskeletal disorders and potential workplace hazards, allowing the skilled workers to focus on craftsmanship, quality and continuous improvement.

## Reductions in errors and waste – "the UR+ platform has many products available to optimize quality in the application" Mike Folster, Behco-MRM Robotics Product Manager

The precision and accuracy of UR cobots have led to a notable decrease in human error and waste in the manufacturing process. Even for simple, repetitive tasks, there is potential for humans to make mistakes. Installing a UR cobot in critical points of the process can reduce this human-related risk, optimize the use of materials and avoid costly product recalls.

## Flexibility – "moving the cobot from machine to machine is practical, and in many cases the best way to get value" Mike Folster, Behco-MRM Robotics Product Manager

UR cobots can be re-programmed quickly and easily to switch between different tasks in a manufacturing process,



reducing production downtime, significantly, and boosting overall profitability. As a new generation of lightweight collaborative robots, UR cobots are as portable as they are durable. These devices can typically work with payloads between 3-10 kilograms and be integrated with a growing number of sensors, grippers and other tools. Behco-MRM is a stocking supplier of key complementary technologies that facilitate successful collaborative robotic implementations. Sensors, end-of-arm tools, mounting hardware and high-level software can be engineered and deployed with Behco-MRM's full-service Application Engineering department.

## Safety matters – "Robots could also help reduce one of the plant's most common and costly medical issues: repetitive strain injuries" IAC Engineering Manager

Traditional, high-capacity industrial robots are not only expensive, they may present safety risks. With 15 built-in safety functions, a UR cobot can work safely, side-by-side with human operators, eliminating the need for expensive and space-eating guarding. This is of course subject to an application specific risk assessment. Behco-MRM's cobot team can assist customers with the safety audit process, aligning support as needed.

## Programming made easy

Their intuitive, easy-to-program interface makes lightweight UR cobots perfect for small-volume production as well as highly repetitive tasks. Behco-MRM's team of engineers can help customers address their programming questions and challenges. In most cases, customers quickly learn to take command of the cobot and lead their own changes and additional deployments.



Want to learn more? Contact us to help you get started with a UR cobot project.

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\*\*IAC Quotes from Detroit News Sunday October 29, 2017 Page 6A