The 4.0 Industry in France

France is becoming a leader in the 4.0 Industry, competing with countries such as the United States, Germany, or Japan. In 2017, France had more than 700 businesses in the 4.0 industry worth 6.8 billion euros in revenue, of which 50% were export sales. The five prominent sub-sectors being: Industrial Internet, Additive Manufacturing, Simulation, Robotics, and Cybersecurity. U.S. firms interested in looking for export opportunities may look for strong partnerships in this growing market.

Robotics in France

The French robotics industry is growing, despite the lower total number of companies operating in the space as compared to the above leading nations France ranked 18th in the world in terms of robot to employee ratio. France has 132 robots per 10,000 employees, compared to Germany which ranked 3rd with 309 robots per 10,000 employees. The United States is ahead of France, yet behind Germany, ranking 7th with 189 robots per 10,000 employees. Other countries ahead of France in Europe include Sweden, Denmark, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Slovenia, and Slovakia.

Staubli is the largest robot manufacturer in France. While technically a Swiss company, their robot manufacturing site is in Faverges (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes) in France. This company focuses on industrial automation by producing their “SCARA,” a six-axis robotic arms and collaborative robots. The second largest French company is Sepro which has a strong European presence and has started expanding to the U.S. They offer three, five, and six armed robots for sale. Another promising company is Isybot which promotes their cobots, with three-axes with operating modes: assistance, restitution, parallelization, tele-operation. Other companies that it is worth mentioning are: Effidence (robotic trolleys and autonomous navigation systems), Balyo (Robotic Trucks), AeroSpline (Aeronautical Robots), Gebe2 (Industrial Robotics), and MIP Robotics (4-axis arm).

France offers opportunities for American companies despite strong competition from French and other European countries. The biggest names in Germany include B+M Surface Systems GMbh (production and painting robots), Kuka (six-axis robots), Durr (industrial robots), and Schunk. Other European competitors are Comau Robotics (industrial production robots) from Italy, Universal Robots (industrial production robots) in Denmark, and Wittmann Battenfeld Group (molding robots) in Austria.

A few American companies have operations or are selling in France, including Automation Anywhere, a robot automation software specialist that developed a partnership with DataRobot; Epson Robots which has a subsidiary in France specializing in factory industrial robots and IGM, which specialists in industrial welding robots has a large presence in France and across Europe.
It is to be noted that the Robotic Process Automation (RPA) sector is expected to grow very fast and might represent opportunities for companies with the right technologies and solutions.

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