On December 14-17, 2009, Professors Kevin Craig, Phil Voglewede, and Mark Nagurka assembled 40 elite Procter & Gamble (P&G) and Rockwell Automation (RA) engineers at the P&G Corporate Engineering Technology Laboratory in Cincinnati, OH, for a one-of-a-kind workshop focusing on mechatronics, i.e., modern multidisciplinary systems engineering, and the urgent needs of both companies in this area vital to innovation for both companies.

Today, every company’s challenges are getting harder, broader, and deeper and are multidisciplinary in nature. Basic engineering skills have become commodities worldwide. To be competitive, companies and their engineers must provide high value by being innovative, integrative, conceptual, and multidisciplinary. Rockwell Automation and P&G understand this very well. RA engineers make motors and electronic drives and P&G is one of RA’s largest customers, as P&G engineers make the machines that make the consumer products we are all familiar with. Mechatronics deals with the integrated and optimal design of any physical system, including sensors, actuators, electronic components, and embedded digital control system, from the very start of the design process. Performance, reliability, low cost, robustness, efficiency, and sustainability are absolutely essential. A mechatronic approach to design gives each company a significant competitive advantage in the global marketplace.
The Mechatronics Workshop was not a class or lecture; it was a real workshop. Its purpose was to foster innovation and collaboration now and in the future for both companies. It was interactive and participant-focused; participants learned from each other. It was all about insight. The Marquette professors presented a little, discussed a lot, and listened always. They gave new views, new concepts – always with the intent to enhance understanding and insight!

This is the second mechatronics workshop organized and delivered by Marquette Engineering Professors Craig, Voglewede, and Nagurka for RA and P&G. The first workshop was held in August 2008 at Marquette. A mechatronics workshop is planned for May 2010 in Italy between RA and Tetra Pak, another RA customer, with Marquette Engineering leading the way!