

# BACnet International

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# Journal

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## Factory Mounted Controls Help Ensure Quality

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The question, what the Factory Mounting Controls division of OEMCtrl (Original Equipment Manufacturers Control) actually does, often arises in connection with in-house training requests. This particular division specializes in the manufacture, sale, and support of factory mounted Direct Digital Controllers to equipment manufacturers. These training classes, usually populated with controls contractors tasked with installing field applied control solutions, often want to know what motivates producers of mechanical equipment to develop and apply a factory mounted controls solution. The motivations vary by customer obviously, but conversations generally revolve around a few key points.

Meeting Specifications is probably the most straightforward reason. Intelligent, communicating factory mounted controls are simply being specified more and more often. Manufacturers are driven to provide controls to meet this requirement. This is often the initial motivator that drives equipment manufacturers to explore a factory mounted control solution.

### Quality

Equipment manufacturers who own their controls solution are able to maintain a higher standard of quality. Factory mounted controls help to ensure that no quality issues arise from field applied products supplied from a variety of unknown sources. The operation of mechanical equipment is dramatically impacted by the controls

and inconsistent or poorly applied solutions can erode customer perception of the factory's brand. Ownership of the controls solution also allows for the development of programming standards that promote consistency in the integration of mechanical products into Building Automation Systems.

### Product differentiation

As we all know, fierce competition exists between the suppliers of mechanical equipment. Ownership of the controls solution allows for additional customization and enhancements that provide separation from competitors in the market place. For example, the option of providing power consumption data to a front end via an open protocol can easily be added as a feature to an existing mechanical product.

### Intellectual property

As the demands of the already competitive marketplace increase, the development and protection of intellectual property becomes even more important to manufacturers of mechanical equipment. Sophisticated algorithms designed to optimize performance, add differentiating features, and ease integration complexity become increasingly important. In some cases, these algorithms are patented and vigorously protected by their creators.

A factory mounted controls solution enables equipment manufacturers to meet specifications, enhance quality, differentiate product, and develop and protect intellectual property. All of these factors help drive equipment sales and revenue which at the end of the day is the ultimate motivator for the producers of mechanical equipment. ■

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