

[Home](#) » [Results of our 2006 Readers' Choice Awards](#)

## Results of our 2006 Readers' Choice Awards

Value rises above the rest as readers make known their choices among automation suppliers. Check out which companies they recognize for providing the best technology values, services and support.

ControlDesign.com



By **Joe Feeley, Editor in Chief**

**HOT AIR** sometimes isn't a good thing. That's particularly true when it comes to exaggerated claims of product performance that machine control designers would be wise to steer clear of.

For six years now we've trusted you to tell us—with your votes—which of the vendors provide the best value for you, based on your experiences using those products—not the distracting descriptions.

It's those evaluations that make some automation suppliers' products rise above the rest. After the usual careful consideration, Control Design's readers told us how they rate the technology value of suppliers in 54 product categories.

Our model for this balloting remains unchanged from its 2001 origins. This summer, we sent ballots to about 15,000 Control Design subscribers who tell us they have influence over the purchase of industrial automation and control products for industrial machines.

The vendors themselves aren't eligible to vote, and we didn't knowingly let any supplier get a ballot. If we did come across a vendor in the responses, we gleefully deleted it. This voting is for our machine builder and system integrator readers and no one else.

The ballot again was what's known as an unaided survey. We don't include a dropdown list of vendors or product brands to choose from. We listed the hardware and software categories and asked participants to name the company that provides the best value for the products they work with. We received responses from more than 250 readers.

As they voted for the best technology value providers, we also had them rate the service and support they receive from these companies on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Our published results include only those companies that received at least a 5% share of the vote in their category.

### **Change Is Good**

While we report results in four additional categories this year, the number of companies making the cut this year climbed significantly to an even 100, up from 82 companies in the 2005 results. That's a hopeful indication of increasing competition. We found 25 companies joining the elite list for the first time or returning after at least a year's absence. Voters dismissed seven companies that were listed in 2005.

As happens every year, many companies are easy winners in their category. This year 34 of the 54 (compared with last year's 34 of 50) categories had winners with margins of greater than 10 percentage points. Among that group, eight companies received a 50% majority vote in their category, down slightly from nine last year.

Another indication of increased competition: the number of close races decided by a margin of 5 percentage points or less increased again to 12, compared with 10 in 2005. Five of the races ended in statistical dead heats between two or more companies, one more than last year.

Eight companies won in multiple-categories. Ever-present Rockwell Automation won or tied for first place in 21 hardware and four software categories. Other multiple winners include Emerson Process Measurement with four category wins; General Electric/GE Fanuc won three times, while Hoffman, Honeywell, National Instruments, Parker, and Pepperl+Fuchs each won twice.



**2005 Readers' Choice Awards**  
**2004 Readers' Choice Awards**  
**2003 Readers' Choice Awards**

## Service Is Sizzling

Of the 100 distinct companies that appear in the category results, you chose to award 82 of them with service and support scores of 4.0 or better (very good-to-excellent performance as measured on a scale of 1-5). In contrast, last year you gave service kudos to 67% of the listed companies.

While you chose to put more companies on the service kudos list this year, you awarded your highest praise (4.5 or higher) to just one company—Schneider Electric—compared with seven companies last year. But you largely duplicated the number of times you awarded at least 4.3 scores compared with last year.

Any company finding itself on the service and support list should be pleased to receive this vote of confidence, and some of the companies achieved terrific service marks more than just once. The Service and Support table (p.46) lists those companies that readers identified as providing service with ratings of 4.0 or better.

Voters awarded 28 companies (compared with 23 last year) a service score of 4.0 or better in at least one category. Rockwell Automation achieved this in 30 product categories. Siemens received 4.0 or better ratings in seven categories, AutomationDirect, National Instruments and Schneider Electric each were honored six times, while Bosch Rexroth and Phoenix Contact made the grade five times.

Emerson Process Management and Turck were given service honors in four categories, while Banner Engineering, Beckhoff, Endress+Hauser, and Invensys were named three times. B&R Industrial Automation, Baldor, Danaher, Hoffmann, Honeywell, IDEC, ifm efector, Omega Engineering, Omron, Parker Hannifin, Pepperl+Fuchs, **Red Lion Controls**, STI, Wago, and Yaskawa all were honored twice.

Here, with products listed alphabetically, is this year's "all-star team." As always, we welcome your analysis and thoughts about the outcome.



## Sixth Annual Readers' Choice Awards

(\*Differences of less than 3% are not statistically significant)

### Alarm/Annunciator

1. Rockwell Automation – 20%
2. Ametek Panalarm – 15%
3. Edwards – 8%  
Ronan – 8%  
\*Federal Signal – 6%

### Ball Screw/Lead Screw

1. Danaher – 21%
2. Nook – 15%  
\*THK America – 13%
4. Bosch Rexroth – 8%  
NSK – 8%

### Controller, CNC

1. GE Fanuc – 30%
2. Rockwell Automation – 13%  
Siemens E&A – 13%
4. Haas Automation – 9%  
\*Galil Motion Control – 7%

### Controller, Loop

1. Honeywell – 21%
2. **Red Lion** – 13%  
\*Siemens E&A – 12%
4. Omega Engineering – 10%  
\*Rockwell Automation – 9%
6. Invensys – 7%  
Omron – 7%

### Measurement, Temperature

1. Emerson Process – 22%
2. Omega Engineering – 18%
3. Honeywell – 8%  
\*Pyromation – 6%
5. Endress+Hauser – 5%  
Watlow – 5%

### Measurement, Vibration

1. GE Energy--Bently Nevada – 26%
2. Rockwell Automation – 15%
3. Omega Engineering – 6%

### Motor, Industrial Electric

1. Baldor – 48%
2. Regal Beloit – 17%
3. Rockwell Automation – 12%
4. General Electric – 5%

### Motor, Linear

1. Rockwell Automation – 30%
2. Danaher – 18%
3. Baldor – 7%

### Motor, Servo

1. Rockwell Automation – 30%
2. Danaher – 14%
3. Yaskawa – 11%
4. Bosch Rexroth – 8%

**Controller, Motion**

1. Rockwell Automation – 41%
2. Galil Motion Control – 9%
  - \*Bosch Rexroth – 7%

**Controller, PLC**

1. Rockwell Automation – 62%
2. AutomationDirect – 13%
3. Schneider Electric – 5%
  - Siemens E&A – 5%

**Data Acquisition System**

1. National Instruments – 33%
2. Rockwell Automation – 25%
3. Invensys – 6%

**Data Recorder**

1. Honeywell – 17%
  - \*Yokogawa – 15%
3. Invensys – 10%
  - National Instruments – 10%
5. Astro-Med – 6%

**Encoder/Resolver**

1. Rockwell Automation – 24%
2. BEI – 17%
3. Danaher – 12%
4. Encoder Products – 7%
  - \*Heidenhain – 5%

**Hydraulic System Controls/Components**

1. Parker Hannifin – 43%
2. Bosch Rexroth – 18%
3. Eaton/Vickers – 8%
  - \*Enerpac – 6%

**Industrial Computer**

1. Rockwell Automation – 32%
2. Advantech – 14%
3. B&R Industrial Automation – 6%
  - Dell – 6%
  - \*Beckhoff Automation – 5%
  - \*Pro-face/Xycom – 5%

**Industrial Electrical Connectors/Cordsets**

1. Turck – 29%
2. Woodhead Connectivity – 12%
3. Tyco/AMP – 9%
  - \*Phoenix – 7%
  - \*Rockwell Automation – 7%

**Industrial Electric Motor Drive**

1. Rockwell Automation – 41%
2. Lenze/AC Tech – 10%
3. Yaskawa – 7%
  - \*Baldor – 6%
  - \*Bosch Rexroth – 5%

**Industrial Enclosure—Metallic**

1. Hoffman – 63%
2. Saginaw Engineering – 9%
  - Rittal – 9%
4. Hammond – 6%

**Industrial Enclosure—Non-Metallic**

1. Hoffman – 58%
2. Rittal – 10%
  - \*Bud Industries – 9%

**Industrial Enclosure/Housing Purge System**

1. Pepperl+Fuchs/Bebco – 44%

\*Parker Hannifin – 6%

**Motor, Stepper**

1. Rockwell Automation – 21%
2. Danaher – 17%
3. Oriental Motor – 14%
  - \*Parker – 14%

**Motor Starter**

1. Rockwell Automation – 58%
2. Schneider Electric – 15%
3. Siemens E&A – 7%

**Operator Interface Terminal**

1. Rockwell Automation – 39%
2. AutomationDirect – 11%
3. EZAutomation – 5%
  - GE Fanuc – 5%
  - Maple Systems – 5%
  - Phoenix Contact – 5%
  - Red Lion Controls – 5%
  - Siemens E&A – 5%

**Panel Meter**

1. Red Lion Controls – 26%
2. Simpson Electric – 18%
3. Omega Engineering – 5%
  - Precision Digital – 5%
  - Rockwell Automation – 5%

**Pneumatic System Controls/Components**

1. SMC – 27%
2. Numatics – 16%
3. Festo – 12%
  - \*Parker – 12%
5. MAC Valves – 5%

**Power Supply**

1. Sola/Hevi-Duty – 27%
2. Rockwell Automation – 11%
3. IDEC – 7%
  - Phoenix Contact – 7%
  - \*Acopian – 6%
  - \*AutomationDirect – 5%
  - \*Lambda – 5%
  - \*Power-One – 5%
  - \*Puls – 5%

**Presence Sensing**

1. Banner Engineering – 23%
2. Turck – 20%
3. ifm efector – 12%
  - \*Rockwell Automation – 11%
5. Schneider Electric – 6%

**Programmable Safety Controller**

1. Rockwell Automation – 40%
2. Pilz Automation Safety – 18%
3. Siemens Automation – 13%

**Relay**

1. Rockwell Automation – 35%
2. Idec – 22%
3. Omron – 9%
4. Schneider Electric – 6%
  - Tyco/Potter&Brumfield – 6%

**Safety Network Components**

1. Rockwell Automation – 33%
2. Pilz Automation Safety – 11%
  - STI – 11%

2. Hoffman – 19%

### **Industrial Network Components (Wired)**

1. Hirschmann – 14%  
Rockwell Automation – 14%
3. Phoenix Contact – 10%
4. Cisco Systems – 7%  
Siemens E&A – 7%  
Turck – 7%

### **Industrial Network Components (Wireless)**

1. Phoenix Contact – 16%
2. Hirschmann – 9%
3. Accutech – 5%

### **Industrial Network Hubs/Routers/Switches**

1. Cisco Systems – 26%
2. Hirschmann – 23%
3. Linksys – 7%  
\*N-Tron – 6%  
\*Phoenix Contact – 5%  
\*Siemens E&A – 5%

### **Input/Output Systems**

1. Rockwell Automation – 51%
2. Phoenix Contact – 7%  
\*Opto22 – 6%  
\*Wago – 6%  
\*AutomationDirect – 5%  
\*Beckhoff Automation – 5%

### **Intrinsic Safety System/Component**

1. Pepperl+Fuchs – 24%  
\*Rockwell Automation – 22%
3. Turck – 14%
4. MTL – 8%  
R.Stahl – 8%

### **Linear Actuator/Slide/Guide**

1. PHD – 10%  
\*Parker Hannifin – 8%  
\*THK – 8%

### **Machine Vision System**

1. Cognex – 47%
2. Banner Engineering – 16%
3. Keyence – 8%
4. National Instruments – 5%

### **Measurement, Flow**

1. Emerson Process – 30%
2. Endress+Hauser – 9%
3. Sierra Instruments – 6%  
\*ifm efector – 5%

### **Measurement, Level**

1. Emerson Process – 14%
2. Endress+Hauser – 11%
3. Honeywell – 6%  
Magnetrol – 6%  
Omega Engineering – 6%  
\*Danaher – 5%  
\*Schneider Electric – 5%  
\*Siemens E&A – 5%

### **Measurement, Load Cell/Weighing System**

1. Mettler-Toledo – 19%
2. Omega Engineering – 10%  
\*Hardy – 8%
4. Honeywell – 5%

### **Measurement, Pressure**

4. Banner Engineering – 7%  
Siemens E&A – 7%

### **Safety Relay**

1. Rockwell Automation – 40%
2. Pilz Automation Safety – 18%
3. STI – 8%  
\*Banner Engineering – 7%  
\*Schneider Electric – 6%

### **Single-Board Computer**

1. Rockwell Automation – 18%  
\*Advantech – 16%

### **Software, CNC**

1. GE Fanuc – 18%
2. Rockwell Automation – 10%  
Siemens E&A – 10%
4. MasterCam – 6%

### **Software, Data Acquisition**

1. National Instruments – 27%
2. Rockwell Automation – 17%
3. Invensys – 10%  
GE Fanuc – 9%

### **Software, Electrical CAD (E-CAD)**

1. Autodesk – 70%
2. ECT Intl. – 7%  
\*Solidworks – 5%

### **Software, HMI**

1. Rockwell Automation – 28%
2. Invensys – 18%
3. GE Fanuc – 7%  
\*AutomationDirect – 6%  
\*Parker – 5%  
\*Siemens – 5%

### **Software, Motion Control**

1. Rockwell Automation – 50%
2. B&R Industrial Automation – 5%  
Beckhoff – 5%  
Bosch Rexroth – 5%  
National Instruments – 5%  
Schneider Electric – 5%

### **Software, PC-Based Machine Control**

1. Rockwell Automation – 29%
2. National Instruments – 19%
3. Phoenix Contact – 12%
4. Beckhoff – 7%

### **Software, PLC Programming**

1. Rockwell Automation – 67%
2. AutomationDirect – 12%
3. Schneider Electric – 6%  
\*Siemens E&A – 5%

### **Stack Light Tower**

1. Rockwell Automation – 47%
2. Patlite – 10%  
\*Eaton Electrical – 9%  
\*Schneider Electric – 8%
5. Federal Signal – 5%

### **Terminal Blocks**

1. Rockwell Automation – 29%
2. Phoenix Contact – 24%
3. Wago – 12%
4. Weidmüller – 8%

1. Emerson Process – 29%
2. Endress+Hauser – 8%  
Omega Engineering – 8%
- \*Invensys – 6%
5. Honeywell – 5%  
ifm efector – 5%  
Schneider Electric – 5%

\*AutomationDirect – 7%

#### **Wire & Cabling**

1. Belden – 48%
2. Lapp USA – 8%  
\*Alpha Wire – 7%
4. Annixter – 5%

**2005 Readers' Choice Awards**

**2004 Readers' Choice Awards**

**2003 Readers' Choice Awards**



## **The 2006 Readers' Choice Service and Support Leaders**

*The readers tell us these companies provide very good (4.0) to excellent (5.0) service in these categories. Only companies that received the minimum 5% vote share were considered.*

### **4.5**

Schneider Electric Programmable Logic Controller

### **4.4**

AutomationDirect – HMI Software  
AutomationDirect – PLC Programming Software  
AutomationDirect – Programmable Logic Controller  
AutomationDirect – Terminal Blocks  
Banner Engineering – Safety Relay  
Emerson Process – Level Measurement  
Emerson Process – Temperature Measurement  
Endress+Hauser – Flow Measurement  
Endress+Hauser – Pressure Measurement  
Mettler Toledo – Load Cell/Weighing System  
National Instruments – Data Recorder  
National Instruments – PC-Based Machine Control Software  
Parker – HMI Software  
Rockwell Automation – Presence Sensing  
Rockwell Automation – Programmable Safety Controller  
Schneider Electric – Motion Control Software  
Turck – Industrial Electrical Connectors/Cordsets  
Turck – Intrinsic Safety System/Component  
Turck – Presence Sensing  
Yaskawa – Industrial Electric Motor Drive

### **4.3**

Acopian – Power Supply  
Baldor – Industrial Electric Motor Drive  
Banner Engineering – Machine Vision System  
Banner Engineering – Safety Network Components  
Beckhoff – Motion Control Software  
Beckhoff – PC-Based Machine Control Software  
BEI – Encoder/Resolver  
Bosch Rexroth – Motion Controller  
Bosch Rexroth – Servo Motor  
Bud Industries – Industrial Enclosure-Non-Metallic  
Dell – Industrial Computer  
Emerson Process – Pressure Measurement

Hoffmann – Industrial Enclosure-Metallic  
 ifm efector – Presence Sensing  
 Invensys – Pressure Measurement  
 National Instruments – Data Acquisition Software  
 National Instruments – Motion Control Software  
 Numatics – Pneumatic System Controls/Components  
 Opto22 – Input/Output Systems  
 Phoenix Contact – Industrial Electrical Connectors/Cordsets  
 Phoenix Contact – Power Supply  
 Phoenix Contact – Terminal Blocks  
 Puls – Power Supply  
 R.Stahl – Intrinsic Safety System/Component  
**Red Lion Controls – Operator Interface Terminal**  
 Rittal – Industrial Enclosure-Non-Metallic  
 Rockwell Automation – Data Acquisition Software  
 Rockwell Automation – Data Acquisition System  
 Rockwell Automation – Encoder/Resolver  
 Rockwell Automation – HMI Software  
 Rockwell Automation – Industrial Electric Motor  
 Rockwell Automation – Industrial Network Components (Wired)  
 Rockwell Automation – Input/Output Systems  
 Rockwell Automation – Loop Controller  
 Rockwell Automation – Operator Interface Terminal  
 Rockwell Automation – PLC Programming Software  
 Rockwell Automation – Programmable Logic Controller  
 Rockwell Automation – Vibration Measurement  
 Rockwell Automation – Terminal Blocks  
 Schneider Electric – PLC Programming Software  
 Schneider Electric – Safety Relay  
 Siemens E&A – CNC Software  
 Siemens E&A – Operator Interface Terminal  
 STI – Safety Network Components  
 Turck – Industrial Network Components (Wired)

#### 4.2

AutomationDirect – Operator Interface Terminal  
 B&R Industrial Automation – Motion Control Software  
 Beckhoff – Industrial Computer  
 Belden – Wire & Cabling  
 Bosch Rexroth – Industrial Electric Motor Drive  
 Bosch Rexroth – Motion Control Software  
 Emerson Process – Flow Measurement  
 Enerpac – Hydraulic System Controls/Components  
 EZAutomation – Operator Interface Terminal  
 Festo – Pneumatic System Controls/Components  
 Galil Motion Control – Motion Controller  
 GE Fanuc – CNC Software  
 Hirschmann – Hubs, Routers, Switches  
 Hoffman – Enclosure/Housing Purge System  
 Idec – Power Supply  
 ifm efector – Flow Measurement  
 Invensys – Data Recorder  
 Krohne – Flow Measurement  
 Magnetrol – Level Measurement  
 National Instruments – Machine Vision System  
 N-Tron – Hubs, Routers, Switches  
 Omega Engineering – Level Measurement  
 Omega Engineering – Load Cell/Weighing System  
 Parker Hannifin – Linear Actuator/Slide/Guide  
 Patlite – Stack Light Tower  
 Pepperl+Fuchs – Enclosure/Housing Purge System  
 Pepperl+Fuchs – Intrinsic Safety System/Component  
 Phoenix Contact – Industrial Network Components (Wired)  
 Precision Digital – Panel Meter  
**Red Lion – Controls Loop Controller**  
 Rockwell Automation – Alarm/Annunciator  
 Rockwell Automation – Industrial Electric Motor Drive  
 Rockwell Automation – Motion Control Software  
 Rockwell Automation – Motor Starter  
 Rockwell Automation – Power Supply  
 Rockwell Automation – Relay  
 Rockwell Automation – Safety Relay  
 Schneider Electric – Relay  
 Siemens E&A – CNC Controller  
 Siemens E&A – HMI Software

Siemens E&A – Programmable Safety Controller  
Simpson Electric – Panel Meter  
Wago – Terminal Blocks  
Weidmüller – Terminal Blocks

#### 4.1

Advantech – Single-Board Computer  
Alpha Wire – Wire & Cabling  
Baldor – Industrial Electric Motor  
Bosch Rexroth – Ball Screw/Lead Screw  
Cognex – Machine Vision System  
Danaher – Stepper Motor  
Eaton/Vickers – Hydraulic System Controls/Components  
Federal Signal – Stack Light Tower  
Hammond – Industrial Enclosure-Metallic  
Invensys – Data Acquisition System  
Lambda – Power Supply  
Lapp USA – Wire & Cabling  
National Instruments – Data Acquisition System  
Phoenix Contact – Operator Interface Terminal  
Pilz Automation – Safety Safety Network Components  
Power-One – Power Supply  
Rockwell Automation – Industrial Computer  
Rockwell Automation – Motion Controller  
Rockwell Automation – PC-Based Machine Control Software  
Rockwell Automation – Servo Motor  
Rockwell Automation – Stack Light Tower  
Schneider Electric – Level Measurement  
Siemens E&A – Programmable Logic Controller  
Sierra Instruments – Flow Measurement  
Sola/Hevi-Duty – Power Supply  
STI – Safety Relay  
Wago – Input/Output Systems

#### 4.0

Ametek Panalarm – Alarm/Annunciator  
Astro-Med – Data Recorder  
AutomationDirect – Input/Output Systems  
B&R Industrial Automation – Industrial Computer  
Danaher – Encoder/Resolver  
Edwards – Alarm/Annunciator  
Endress+Hauser – Temperature Measurement  
Hardy – Load Cell/Weighing System  
Heidenhain – Encoder/Resolver  
Honeywell – Level Measurement  
Honeywell – Temperature Measurement  
IDEC – Relay  
NSK – Ball Screw/Lead Screw  
Omron – Loop Controller  
Omron – Relay  
Oriental – Motor Stepper Motor  
PHD – Linear Actuator/Slide/Guide  
Pro-face/Xycom – Industrial Computer  
Pyromation – Temperature Measurement  
Regal Beloit – Industrial Electric Motor  
Rockwell Automation – CNC Controller  
Rockwell Automation – Safety Network Components  
Rockwell Automation – Stepper Motor  
Saginaw Engineering – Industrial Enclosure-Metallic  
Siemens E&A – Loop Controller  
SMC – Pneumatic System Controls/Components  
Watlow – Temperature Measurement  
Yaskawa – Servo Motor

[2005 Readers' Choice Awards](#)

[2004 Readers' Choice Awards](#)

[2003 Readers' Choice Awards](#)



[\*\*Related Information\*\*](#)