



**RAPID CONTROL**  
**FACTORY AUTOMATION EXPERTS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

21 July 2022

## **WEST MICHIGAN AUTOMATION COMPANY OFFERS COLLABORATIVE ROBOT SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS WORKFORCE SHORTAGES**

**Grand Rapids, MI – 21 July 2022** – West Michigan employers across all industries continue to face crippling labor shortages that impact productivity and profitability. Individual companies can't do much to address logistical issues or material shortages, but Grand Rapids based automation supplier **Rapid Control Service** has partnered with Santa Barbara, CA based **Productive Robotics** to offer a solution that can help: OB7 Collaborative Robots – OB7, OB7-Stretch, MAX 8, and MAX 12 – which are the only cobots on the market designed and made in the USA.



Cobots – short for Collaborative Robots – differ from traditional industrial robots in that they have engineered safety features to limit force and speed. Thanks to these safety features, OB7 can be deployed without fencing or physical barriers; OB7 can work together with a human operator, as an assistant.

OB7's biggest strength is its simplicity. Since "easy programming" is only truly easy for programmers, OB7 learns its tasks through "show-and-tell," with no coding or programming required. You "show" OB7 what where to go by manipulating its arm in learn mode, and "tell" it how to communicate with its operator, or external devices using a simple touchscreen tablet interface.

Most industrial robots and cobots have a total for six axis movement, but OB7 has seven. This allows OB7 to reach around corners or obstacles, making it far more flexible for challenging applications where a six axis robot would obstruct access to the human operator, such as CNC machine tending.

Thanks to OB7's simplicity, flexibility, and mobility (with available cobot stands and worktables), it can be seamlessly integrated into existing production lines much more quickly than traditional industrial robots. Re-tasking OB7 is as simple as moving it to the new

workstation, making a few simple electrical connections, and selecting or teaching the new job. OB7 can be up and running in a new workstation in as little as 15 minutes.

What about jobs, though? Job displacement due to automation has been a concern since the Luddite Rebellion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Modern day workers have little to fear, however, since OB7 enables redeployment and “upskilling” of current employees, moving them from tedious, physically taxing work to higher-skilled tasks such as welding, finishing, quality inspection, or even becoming a robotics technician.



Finally, OB7 is a perfect fit for small business who are not traditional users of automation but are struggling to meet record breaking demand and can't find workers. OB7 helps these businesses meet demand by enabling lights-out production during former off hours, without having to find more, already scarce, workers.

"What excites me most about the OB7 cobots is how easily they can be deployed outside of traditional manufacturing environment. This truly makes automation attainable for a wide variety of small businesses" says Mitch Dennison, Operations Manager at Rapid Control.

The Rapid Control team will be pleased to introduce you to their OB7 – “Stretch” – at the **Advanced Manufacturing Expo** in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Stretch will be in **booth 816**, along with Rapid's other lines of automation products, at the DeVos Place from 8-4 Aug 11 and 8-1 Aug 12.

OB7, OB7-Stretch, MAX 8, and MAX 12 are IN STOCK and can be delivered in as little as 1-2 weeks, depending on the application.

Rapid Control Service provides industrial automation components and equipment throughout West Michigan. For more information, to place an order, or for a hands-on demonstration with OB7, please contact:

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