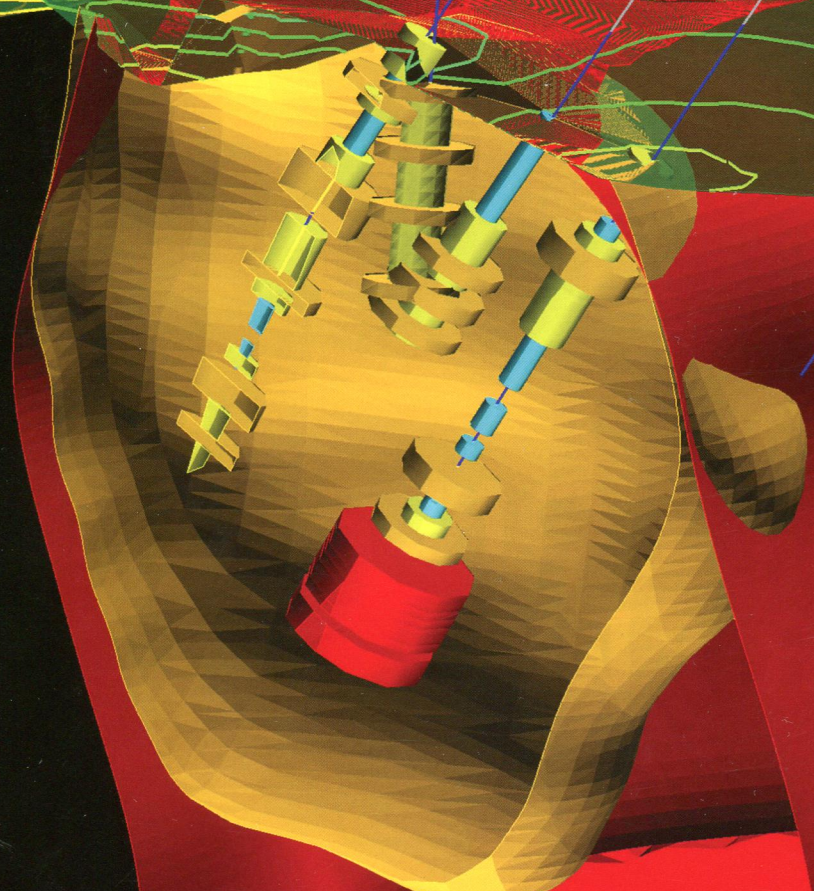


Mining industry's leading magazine

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Mining Magazine



Copper mining

Update on two of the world's biggest producers, Chile and North America, including current projects, expansions and the outlook for 2014-15

Heap leaching

From best practice to new irrigation equipment and pad designs, a round-up of hot topics

Mine security

A topical examination of the issues associated with artisanal mining and worker strikes

Marine mining

A look at the current state of the deep-sea mining industry, including environmental, legal and operational challenges

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Dark horse

With the arrival of yet another “Hexagon acquires...” press release in my inbox last week, I decided it was time to do some homework – just who is Hexagon and why so many acquisitions of late? I’m sure I’m not the only one who has noticed that the Swedish giant has been quietly but steadily buying up mining-technology providers.

Hexagon, which describes itself as a “leading global provider of integrated design, measurement and visualisation technologies”, was founded in 1992. The company now has close to 14,000 employees in 40 countries and net sales of about €2.4 billion (US\$3.3 billion).

Hexagon first came to my attention in October 2013 with the announcement that it had bought Brazilian firm Devex, a leading player in fleet management and automation solutions for open-pit and underground mining. There was a note at the end of the press release stating that the company also owns Leica Geosystems, a specialist in machine control and tracking solutions, a move that involved a buy up of shares and eventual de-listing during 2005.

Then came the announcement in February this year that Hexagon had purchased Aibotix, a manufacturer of intelligent multicopter systems for aerial applications. Hexagon stated that this particular move would strengthen the existing solutions offered by Leica. And then, in mid-March, Swiss company SAFEmine, which provides traffic safety (read collision avoidance/proximity detection) solutions for vehicles operating in open-pit mines, was snapped up.

So where is all this going? It seems that Hexagon is no stranger to the acquisition process. In fact, it is something of a serial dealmaker. The company racked up seven – yes seven, imagine the paperwork – acquisitions (including Devex) across its business units in 2013.

And the more I dug, the more obvious it became that this is a key part of the company’s growth strategy; 2013 was not an unusual year, almost every other press release on the Hexagon website over the past 5-6 years relates to a purchase of some sort. It turns out that it also owns Jigsaw, Pixis and communications company NovAtel, and has technology agreements with Locata Corp and Topcon among others.

Hexagon, whose key markets include the infrastructure, manufacturing and technology sectors, has for years owned technologies that have cross-selling opportunities in the mining sector. For instance, its other business units offer meteorological tracking, laser scanning and global satellite-navigation systems. But the company now seems to be taking a more direct stance toward the sector.

The question is, who will be next? If Hexagon has truly has got the mining industry in its sights and its track record of growth through acquisition rather than organic pathways is anything to go by, then we can expect to see more of the same in 2014.

Looking upstream, its current suite of communications, automation, surveying and fleet-management solutions would integrate nicely with a 3-D mine design, planning and scheduling software platform. Or downstream, electrical instrumentation, dust-control systems, or process-control and automation solutions for mineral processing and bulk handling would also be a good fit.

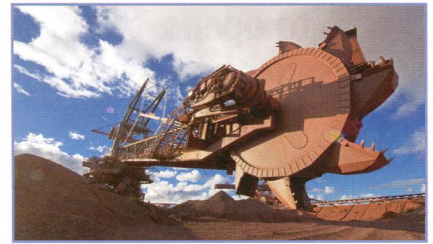
Of course, all of this is just speculation because, despite my best efforts, I couldn’t get hold of Hexagon to ask about its future plans. We shall have to wait and see, though I suspect the next move won’t be long.

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“It seems that Hexagon is no stranger to the acquisition process. In fact, it is something of a serial dealmaker”



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- Mine rescue
- Proximity detection & worker safety

COVER

Implicit Modelling in Vulcan 9: *Implicit Modelling is new in Maptek’s latest release, Vulcan 9. Flexible modelling tools allow geologists to rapidly generate models of complex geological domains from drillhole information. Models can be iterated quickly, plus users can model multi-domain geological settings with no overlap, which produces more consistent results and eliminates the need for manual adjustments. The all-in-one solution can then automatically produce a block model and triangulations, allowing users to move seamlessly into resource estimation. Learn more at www.maptek.com*

