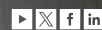


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TLX Technologies' new President discusses her vision for EMEA, innovative solutions for 2025, and the evolving fire and safety landscape

KATRINA GOETZ
Newly appointed
TLX Technologies
President delves
into her vision for the
EMEA region



Steering the standards of safety

Newly appointed TLX Technologies President Katrina Goetz delves into her vision for the EMEA region, upcoming solutions, and meeting evolving regulatory demands

Known for developing high-performance solenoids and valve technologies, TLX Technologies is a vital cog in the fire protection systems machine, delivering critical components that enhance safety and control. Specialising in custom-engineered solutions that ensure fast, precise activation of fire suppression systems, vital in managing fire risks effectively, TLX's commitment to quality and innovation has long supported stringent industry standards, making their technology a reliable choice for commercial and industrial fire safety applications.

In this exclusive interview, IFSJ Editor Iain Hoey sat down with Katrina Goetz, the newly appointed president of TLX, to discuss her leadership journey, the company's strategic goals for the EMEA region, and the cutting-edge solutions they plan to introduce in 2025. As the industry faces both challenges and growth opportunities, Katrina shares her unique perspective on steering TLX toward continued success.

Could you start by telling us a bit about your professional journey and how you became the President of TLX Technologies?

I started my career with the ultimate intent to go into law, but one of my first post-college jobs was in manufacturing, and I fell in love with the industry. I started my manufacturing career in multi-media duplication and replication, and that's where I had my first run-in with the fire suppression industry. Whenever I needed to file media masters in the vault, I always propped the door open so that I could escape in case the halon system discharged. The thought of being locked in the vault while all the oxygen was being sucked out was terrifying.

About twenty years ago, I was hired by TLX as a bookkeeper. The company got its start trying to develop a high-speed valve for inflating vehicle airbags. Just as I came on board, TLX was shifting its focus to making actuators for the fire suppression industry. It was exciting to start with ►

the company at that early stage, and because we were so small back then, I got to be involved in all the facets of our growth and innovation.

“We developed an actuator that not only acts as its own enclosure but also has integrated supervision, so our customers don’t have to worry.”

As the new president, what are the key priorities you have set for the company under your tenure?

I want to keep the focus on serving our customers. Most of our success comes from listening to our customers so that we can truly understand the problem they are trying to solve and what requirements they need the solution to satisfy. In some cases, that means really stretching ourselves. Customers sometimes come to us after they’ve been told by others that what they are looking for either just isn’t available or can’t be done. We’re willing to take on those challenges and make them work.

That’s pretty much how we developed our Explosion Proof Actuator. We had a number of people come to us asking for an actuator for hazardous



environments. Our team decided to develop something that was simpler and easier to install than what was currently on the market. We developed an actuator that not only acts as its own enclosure but also has integrated supervision, so our customers don’t have to worry about extra components or electrical connections to meet supervision requirements.

Circling back to keeping our focus on our customers, I think that everyone in the company—whether they work in production, sales, customer service, purchasing, or engineering—it really doesn’t matter what the role is, is working to serve our customers. I want to continue to strengthen that as one of the company’s core values, because, without our customers, we don’t have a business.

Looking at the fire and safety industry, what key trends or challenges do you see shaping the future?

There is a push to eliminate the use of PFAS, or “forever chemicals,” in extinguishing agents. These chemicals work really well, but the environmental impact they can have is something that the industry needs to deal with. We are going to continue to work closely with our

customers so that, if necessary, we can make adjustments to our products to accommodate any new chemical formulations.

Lithium-ion battery fires are also getting a lot of attention. These fires are exceptionally challenging to deal with, particularly because extinguishing them with water is nearly impossible. We are actively pursuing multiple solutions for not only preventing thermal runaway but also for extinguishing these fires. This is part of our overall commitment to bringing products to the marketplace that keep people, properties, and communities safe.

TLX has expressed an interest in expanding its presence in the EMEA region. Could you talk about your plans for growth in this region and what makes it an important focus for TLX moving forward?

The Middle East market is particularly exciting. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar are all investing heavily in infrastructure and technology, and that means that fire suppression systems are inevitably part of that investment. Due to the rapid expansion in that region, there is a lot of opportunity for us. We are



already exhibiting at Intersec in Dubai each year, developing relationships, and learning as much as we can about the needs in that region.

In terms of the European market, we are working with the relevant regulatory and testing bodies to have our products meet their safety standards. Since we already comply with NFPA, we don't see this as a huge obstacle, but it still has to be done so that we can most effectively supply the European market.

In terms of product development, what innovations or new technologies can we expect from TLX Technologies in 2025? How do these address emerging needs in the fire and safety sector?

We have three new valves and a liquid level sensor that we will be releasing as soon as UL testing is complete. Our new Supervised Pilot-Operated Water Valve is designed for pre-action and deluge systems and will be our first valve that meets NFPA 13: Sec. 8.3.1.2.1 standards for supervision for the sprinkler side of the market. Up until now, we have focused exclusively on gaseous systems, so we are really excited about this new water valve. We'll also be releasing two direct-

acting solenoid valves to broaden our portfolio of products beyond our range of linear electric actuators for fire suppression actuation.

We are also going to be releasing our Liquid Level Sensor. This sensor is designed for welded cylinders and will be the first sensor of its kind on the market. It's designed as a replacement for the legacy methods of measuring the weight of the extinguishing agent. Those methods require a technician to take a manual level measurement and then calculate the weight using a conversion table. With manual methods, errors can come from either misreading the level or making a mistake during the calculations. Our sensor will automatically provide the thermally compensated weight of the extinguishing agent and display it right at the cylinder.

How do you ensure that TLX stays ahead in terms of product reliability and meeting industry regulations, especially with new technologies coming to market?

We need to stay informed about changes to safety standards and the introduction of new standards for fire protection systems in various regions around the world. To that end, we are members of associations in different parts of the world. For instance, here in the U.S. we are part of NFPA, FSSA, and a few others, and in Europe and the UK we belong to Euralarm and FIA. Having an active role in these associations keeps us abreast of what's going on in the industry. We also work closely with testing agencies around the world. For example, here in the U.S., all our products are tested by UL, so we are

very comfortable working with these agencies. We can make sure that our products comply with any required regional standards based on our customers' needs.

“I started my career with the ultimate intent to go into law, but one of my first post-college jobs was in manufacturing, and I fell in love.”

Finally, looking ahead, what are your long-term goals for TLX Technologies, and what impact do you hope to make within the fire and safety industry as its president?

I think we have a corporate responsibility to both our local and global community to develop quality products that help keep people and property safe. That's what fire suppression is about anyway. We did an internal survey a little while back about what our employees liked about working at TLX, and one of our production staff remarked that they really liked their job because they knew that the product they were assembling might save someone's life one day. That's really what drives our desire to constantly improve and innovate. We want to make sure that we are always bringing the best products to the industry.

The best way to accomplish this is to build the best team we can, and that means building a team that is able to approach a problem from a variety of perspectives. I have a learning disability, and because of that I tend to think differently, and my problem-solving process is different. This has really made me appreciate the value that different perspectives and ideas can bring to the table. ■

