Solution Overview

CUSTOMER   A major cheese proccessing plant

INDUSTRY   Food

KEY BENEFITS   PXE Boot Capable
Ease of updating

ACP SOLUTION   App Link
SmartSession
Mirroring

Stacking up the Benefits:
ThinManager and Rockwell Automation

For nearly thirty years, ESE, Inc, the Engineering Solutions Experts, has seen continuous growth in plant automation engineering. Headquartered in Marshfield, Wisconsin, ESE specializes in Rockwell solutions for global food and beverage manufacturers. Yet, after years of providing support and upgrades, it became apparent that there was a missing piece to the puzzle. That piece turned out to be ThinManager.

Contacted by a major cheese processing plant in California, ESE was brought in to upgrade their existing processes with a combination of modern hardware and a Rockwell Automation FactoryTalk View SE distributed SCADA system. They replaced the older PanelView terminals as well as a legacy RSView32 SCADA system that were on the factory floor with Allen-Bradley 200R VersaView Industrial PCs to give them more computing power and greater flexibility.

"FactoryTalk View SE was designed for this type of large scale integration," stated John Tertin, Director of Manufacturing Information Systems at ESE. "Rockwell Automation offers the FactoryTalk View SE Client which can be installed locally on a terminal, but in larger configurations, the recommended architecture is to use a Terminal Server that has the SE Client on it while terminals on the plant floor connect to the Terminal Server using Remote Desktop Services. There really is a minimal amount of configuration because that's what the product is designed to do."

After fully upgrading the hardware

and software, a new set of needs and challenges became apparent to both the client, as well as ESE. Using the Allen-Bradley 200R VersaView Industrial PCs on the floor left the customer vulnerable to viruses and malware via

> " Installing ThinManager allowed the customer to save significantly on their administrative costs... "

the USB ports on the PCs. In addition, maintenance was a headache as the control system is isolated from the internet and corporate networks which meant there was no way to upgrade or apply security patches to the Windows XP-based PCs. This made them more vulnerable and less efficient over time…which is how ThinManager was introduced as a solution.

By using ThinManager, they converted the VersaView 200Rs from PCs to thin clients via the PXE Boot function (ThinManager XLi). PXE Boot allowed the PCs to load the ThinManager firmware directly from LAN, instead of using the Windows OS located on the PC hard drive. This let them immediately switch from PC based computing with high maintenance to thin client based computing with savings due to centralized management.

With most new software installs, there is usually a learning curve on the part of the integrator as they become accustomed to the best way to install and deploy new software. But, as John

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Stacking up the Benefits:
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Tertin soon discovered, that was not an issue with ThinManager. "It was fairly straight forward. I'd say we got the original configuration set up within a couple of days. And that included getting the clients set up with mirrored ThinServers, getting the AppLink configured, and optimizing the settings relating to periodic monitoring for load balancing. The biggest hurdle was cross referencing verbiage and terminology, which required referring to the documentation and drawing a correlation between familiar functions."

When asked for an example, John stated, "We use the ThinManager AppLink, which by name is unfamiliar, but once you understand that using AppLink is the same as opening up RDS and clicking on the programs tab, it is pretty straight forward as long as you have familiarity with the software."

After breezing through the ThinManager install, John and the other integrators at ESE immediately began to see the benefits of ThinManager. "What's nice about ThinManager is that I can create my display client to look at one or a number of Terminal Servers where the configuration file already exists. At that point, it only takes 30 seconds to create another client because I only have to do the configuration on the Terminal Server once. Then, using AppLink as soon as I use the display server, it immediately launches because everything is going through that common Terminal Server which is only configured once." Highlighting another significant benefit to using the ThinManager platform, Tertin continued, "We used to have a 2-page written procedure for adding a SCADA terminal to the network including instructions on naming the computer, joining it to the control system domain, configuring automatic login, etc. Using ThinManager, this is no longer necessary."

"Installing ThinManager allowed the customer to save significantly on their administrative costs because we no longer had to go to the facility and manually disinfect SCADA terminals. After that happens a couple of times, the ROI for a ThinManager solution is pretty apparent. Now they are no longer susceptible to those viruses, nor are they required to continue installing Windows updates on the individual machines with no connectivity. They still have to keep the Terminal Server updated, but that is only one machine as opposed to dozens scattered across the plant floor," said John Tertin.

So what does the future hold for ESE's large food manufacturing customer and ThinManager? "This is going to be the new standard," said John. "They have already standardized on the FactoryTalk View SE distributed platform, and ThinManager is part of that standard. Going forward, ThinManager will be employed wherever the SE system goes."

ABOUT ACP THINMANAGER
Automation Control Products (ACP) started providing Thin Client management software in 1998. ACP is a worldwide leader in the automation industry that provides full-feature centralized thin client and terminal server management software. Our unique platform offers trendsetting centralized management solutions for the modern factory by simplifying management of applications and visual resources.

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