

Case Study: Siemens

Customer Profile:

As a leading provider of energy and environmental solutions, building controls, fire safety and security systems solutions, Siemens Building Technologies, Inc., makes buildings comfortable, safe, secure and less costly to operate.

Challenge

To reduce time to market by speeding up cycle times, and reduce manufacturing and inventory costs, of complex building system automation equipment.

Benefits

With the Acrecco FLEXnet Suite for High-Tech Device Manufacturers, Siemens Building Technologies has been able to reduce the number of physical models from hundreds of SKUs to just a few. Cycle times have been cut from weeks to days, since systems can now be flexibly customized in the field. Faster velocity and greater flexibility have created a strong competitive advantage.

Solution

Acrecco's FLEXnet Suite for High-Tech Device Manufacturers comprised of FLEXnet Publisher and FLEXnet Operations was used and the FLEXnet Operations self service portal was deployed. This allows users to generate licenses on demand with a simple three-step process. FLEXnet Operations interfaces with Siemens Building Technologies' SAP system.



"Simply put, I love Acrecco's FLEXnet Suite for High-Tech Device Manufacturers. Our License Manager system (FLEXnet Operations) couldn't make the entitlement management process any simpler for the field organization."

Duane Keenan
Manager, Integrated Solutions
Siemens Building Technologies



SIEMENS

Siemens Building Technologies Streamlines Inventory and Reduces Cycle Times with Acrecco FLEXnet Suite for High-Tech Device Manufacturers.

Today's high tech buildings comprise a plethora of sophisticated systems to control everything from heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) to security and fire protection. And just as every building is different, so are the systems that orchestrate these functions. For Siemens Building Technologies, Inc., this inescapable fact created enormous complexity in manufacturing and inventory management, which had a negative ripple effect across numerous other aspects of its business.

Today, Siemens Building Technologies uses Acrecco's FLEXnet Publisher and FLEXnet Operations, which are key elements of the FLEXnet Suite for High-Tech Device Manufacturers. This has enabled them to put product customization capabilities into the hands of its customers, reducing the number of SKUs it needs to manufacture and inventory maintained from several hundred to just a few models. This in turn speeds cycle times – new

systems can be live in just an hour, compared to several weeks – and lowers the potential for human error.

A challenging economy requires operational innovation

"In the US, the challenging economy has had a big impact on the construction industry, which directly affects us," says Duane Keenan, Manager, Integrated Solutions at Siemens Building Technologies. "We were looking for innovative ways to differentiate ourselves from our competitors and boost operational efficiencies. We met both of these objectives with Acrecco's FLEXnet Suite for High-Tech Device Manufacturers."

Keenan is part of the R&D group at Siemens Building Tech's HVAC Products (HVP) division, which develops and manufactures automation systems that are primarily sold by Siemens Building Technologies' Building Automation Unit (BAU). "Acrecco FLEXnet has transformed the way we do business," he says "Before, to change capability in a deployed unit, we had to physically remove the old unit and put in a

new one. Now that can be remotely enabled with FLEXnet Operations.

"Likewise, the FLEXnet Suite has dramatically reduced the number of SKUs we have to manufacture and manage," he continues. For example, one of HVP's top hardware platforms has 12 hardware variations and 40 firmware variations, creating 480 SKUs for a single product line. Siemens has chosen to deploy the FLEXnet Operations self service portal to the BAU unit which has given the field the dual benefits of flexibility and 24x7 self service. It allows them to manufacture and stock just a few base hardware products, which can now be customized in the field by BAU with entitlement licenses created using FLEXnet Operations, in conjunction with Siemens Building Technologies' SAP enterprise software system.

FLEXnet enables flexibility and business efficiency

Keenan and his team created a simple, three-step process that allows BAU to generate licenses on demand with the FLEXnet Suite

for High-Tech Device Manufacturers. When an order is entered in the SAP system, it is automatically passed through to FLEXnet Operations, which generates a license. The license is then emailed to the BAU user, who activates system functionality on site by entering the entitlement identification number into the building's management console (a workstation) or directly into the device (such as an HVAC controller) through its Human Machine Interface.

"Simply put, I love Acrezzo's FLEXnet solutions. Our License Manager system (FLEXnet Operations) couldn't make the entitlement management process any easier for the field organization," Keenan says.

This quick three-step process is in sharp contrast to the two week-plus turnaround time that previous ordering and manufacturing processes required. "Our inventory costs have dropped," Keenan says. "It's not just the physical components themselves, it's the time required to manage everything."

Merchandise returns have also dropped. "Due to the high number of variations within each of three major project lines, the previous ordering process, due to the number of device variations, lent itself to making specification errors, resulting in returned merchandise that had to be restocked," he explains.

Ease of use for all

In addition to creating an easy-to-use system for BAU users, Keenan, a business user with no formal IT training, found Acrezzo's FLEXnet product suite exceptionally easy to deploy. "I've done all of the installations and upgrades to FLEXnet Operations myself, with a little help from Acrezzo's fantastic support team. I was thoroughly impressed with the clarity of the documentation. It walked me through all the steps easily; I didn't even have to get help from one of our own IT people."

Based on Siemens Building Technologies' success with utilizing Acrezzo FLEXnet Suite for High-Tech Device Manufacturers to automate the licensing of its key product line, PXE Modular, Keenan is enthusiastic about applying this breakthrough technology across the HVP product line.

He summarizes, "With the FLEXnet Suite we have achieved major business improvements. We are serving our customers better with faster velocity and greater agility. Acrezzo has helped Siemens Building Technologies to reduce the manufacturing complexity of a very sophisticated product line down to just a few models. I am excited to see how Acrezzo solutions will continue to benefit our company and, ultimately, the construction industry we serve."



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