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When Reliability Matters

Case Study

Sensus:

Sensus is a US-based manufacturer of utility meters and the supporting infrastructure to monitor and maintain those meters. The company operates at 5 different sites with a staff of more than 600 people. They are well known for their smart utility meters, which employ advanced metering infrastructures (AMIs).

The Challenge:

Sensus had a lot of tedious manual processes that took time and energy—materials tracking and time clock management were the largest among them. Space is at a premium in their manufacturing facilities, meaning they needed an all-in-one VESA mount PC with a touch screen to minimize the computer footprint.

In addition, their timeclock processes were extremely time consuming. They previously used a timeclock system that led to long queues at the limited terminals in each facility. Employees would often times need to wait 5-10 minutes just to clock in and out each day. And labor tracking was completely manual.

Materials tracking was another trouble spot for Sensus. As orders came in, materials handlers would take components from the warehouse to the production floor for assembly. But there was no automated system to track inventory levels leading to a less than optimal view of materials on hand.

Sensus set out to install a Manufacturing Execution System (MES) that integrated with their ERP system, thus necessitating the installation of all-in-one VESA mount PCs with integrated RFID scanners for clock in and clock out functionality. They also needed rugged tablets for their materials handlers that not only had integrated barcode scanner for inventory tracking and RFID capability for time clock functionality, but the tablets needed to be able to run their MES software.

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"Because every unit is equipped with RFID, our employees don't have to wait 5-10 minutes just to clock in and out every day. And the functionality of the tablets provides us with accurate materials tracking, which we previously lacked."

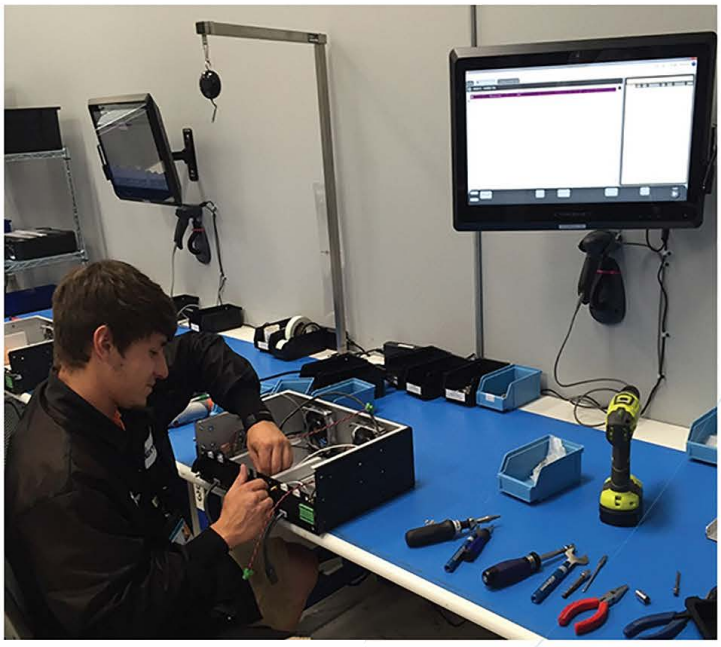
The Solution:

After reviewing the Cybernet products available, Sensus narrowed their selection down to the iOne C22 for use on the manufacturing floor. This all-in-one PC fit the requirements for port selection, RFID use, and could withstand harsh manufacturing floors with its IP65 protection rating. For their mobile solution, they chose the Rugged X10 tablet for the built-in functionality and high-impact build to protect against accidental damage.

The Result:

Sensus' IT department pushed hard to stick with Dell as their standard, but after two months of testing Cybernet's solution against multiple competitors, it was Cybernet's quality, price, and range of functionality that eventually pushed them to shelf their consumer-grade PCs.

The imaging deployment was seamless—all deployed computers were setup quickly with a "plug-and-play" result. The built in RFID technology turned every single computer in their multiple facilities into a time clock terminal as well, eliminating long waits by employees to start or finish their days. And with the RFID scanners integrated into their MES, timeclock management and labor tracking were completely automated, saving them time and money.



The Rugged X10 tablets also turned out to be fantastic solutions for their needs. Materials handlers could now scan barcodes in the warehouse when they removed items for production, automatically updating inventory levels in their system. The rugged nature of the tablets protected against accidental drops. Furthermore, with built in RFID technology, the tablets also because timeclock terminals, further improving the efficiency of that business process. To date, Sensus has had zero failures in any of the units they installed in their 5 facilities.