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netFIELD

IIoT networking: simple and flexible

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Growing importance of industry 4.0
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For some years now, connectivity and IIoT have become more and more important to MULTIVAC. The networking of machines and production lines, and the extensive process data involved in that, represent an enormous potential for optimizing availability and reducing unplanned downtimes. MULTIVAC relies on netFIELD technology from Hilscher to connect their machines. More specifically, the packaging solutions provider integrates the netPI edge gateways into its machines to collect process data independently of the control unit. The collected data can then be easily managed using the netFIELD OS for optimizing services.

For us, it was the netFIELD OS as a management software that ultimately made the difference because of its simplicity and flexibility. From our point of view, netFIELD OS makes applications available with ease via Docker containers, enabling gateways to be updated automatically, sending new commands or requesting data, etc. MULTIVAC is already benefiting from the use of this data for optimizing their machine development through the insights gained into wear tendencies and anomalous behaviors.

Smart Services and digital consulting
By integrating the machines into the IT network via IIoT, MULTIVAC is now also able to develop new data-based business models—in particular, in the field of customer services. In recent years, they have been able to develop a new range of services, so-called Smart Services, that enable machine operators to monitor their equipment and machines easily, optimizing processes in real time. The MULTIVAC Pack Pilot, for example, is a cloud-based software that supports operators in optimally setting up the packaging machine—an important factor when short staffed or lacking in experienced machine operators. Other Smart Services include Smart Production Dashboard, Smart OEE Analyzer, Smart Log Analyzer, Smart Machine Report, and Smart Data Backup. The machine operator can use these Smart Services on their own to make the appropriate adjustments. Initial analysis results show Smart Services to increase production time by 30-50 minutes per week. Within the scope of their digital consulting, MULTIVAC also offers customer training in the effective use of their Smart Services.

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„Smart Services are only the beginning of our successful adaptation to IIoT. There is still a lot of potential yet to be leveraged in the area of service and marketing models,“ explains Dr. Grathwohl, who already has his eye on the next goals. „Automatic updates of entire machines, digitally supported maintenance agreements, pay-per-use models, predictive maintenance: Once we’ve set the foundation for process data analysis with netFIELD technology, a wide range of exciting options await us, and we’re already exploring ways to implement them."

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We look forward to meeting you!

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