Multi-Site Manufacturing Company Improves Visitor & Staff Security

- A Savance EIOBoard Case Study

EIOBoard Solutions Used:

- Emergency Mustering
- Visitor Management

Brian Bell
Project Manager

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Lafe Brownfield
Integrator

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Background

Ohio-based Ariel Corporation was founded in 1966, and is an innovative and rapidly growing manufacturer of gas compression equipment. Quality of design and manufacturing is top priority for the company, and Ariel compressors are considered the world standard for performance and reliability. Headquartered in Mount Vernon, OH, Ariel employs 1,000+ people, and also has facilities in Newark and Akron, OH.

Challenges

In 2016, Ariel Corporation decided it was time to improve the safety and security of both employees and visitors. Brian Bell, Project Manager at Ariel, explains: "Our outdated guest registration process required a refresh, and we also wanted to improve the security surrounding guests in the facilities." At this point, Ariel was

still using a manual, paper-based system to manage and account for visitors. "The existing guest sign-in process was a sign-in book at the reception counter," Bell says. "We needed to get with the times and improve security and safety to match society today." ease-of-use.

Search

To find an electronic Visitor Management system, Ariel reached out to its access control integrator, Vision Concept Technology. "We already had access control in place," says Lafe Brownfield, Business Relations Manager at Vision Concept, "and Visitor Management was the next evolution of physical access control." Brownfield explains that Ariel needed a Visitor Management system that would integrate with its fairly large existing access control system. "They are a higher-end, larger enterprise company with 1,000+ employees and with multitudes of visitors. Physical security is a big thing for them," he says. "They also have several different sites, and needed a solution that could handle multi-site with single point integration as far as management is concerned."

In addition to electronic visitor management and access control

integration, the solution Ariel was looking for needed to be scalable and flexible, Brownfield explains. "Being flexible – customizable – was key. We did not want to fit the customer to the product, but the product to the customer, and Savance was able to achieve that."

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Multi-functionality was another aspect that had to be kept in mind, since Ariel was looking for a solution that could eventually grow from Visitor Management into also handling employee tracking and more. An immediate component of this was to incorporate photo IDs for staff members. "Our employees had badges without photos, and weren't even required to wear them," Ariel Project Manager Brian Bell explains.

Keeping all of Ariel's requirements and goals in mind, Vision Concept Technology started the search for a solution on Ariel's behalf. "They had the desire. They had the means, so we had to find a solution, and Savance was that solution." The fact that Savance already integrated with Ariel's Infinias access control system was appreciated by the customer, and was also one of the reasons Vision Concept Technology first got into contact with Savance. They called Infinias, now owned by 3xLogic, and told them what they were looking for. Infinias referred them to Savance.

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At the time, Ariel was also considering another Visitor Management provider, which was championed by another integrator. However, Lafe Brownfield explains, throughout the process it became evident that the other integrator was trying to get a round peg to fit into a square hole. "The [other] system was just too lightweight, too confined. It wasn't customizable. They couldn't show that they had enough muscle to achieve what was being asked." Ariel's Brian Bell agrees. "The other company did not have as robust of a platform to work from, and we also did not feel that the service would meet our needs," he says.

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While Ariel was still weighing Savance against the competitor, a call was setup between Ariel, Vision Concept Technology, and the Infinias VP of Engineering, Wayne Jared, something that gave Ariel the confidence that Savance had been integrating with Infinias for years, and that they'd be able to do what Ariel was looking for. This was something that the other

Visitor Management provider was not able to do. In fact, Savance's experience implementing similar solutions was one of the reasons Ariel made the decision to work with Savance. "What we found attractive about Savance was the previous experience implementing similar solutions for other clients," Ariel's Brian Bell says, "as well as the clean presentation and functionality of the process".

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The availability of an Emergency Mustering solution was yet another benefit, as one of Ariel's main goals was to improve the safety and security of employees and guests. Emergency Mustering added another piece to the puzzle.

Solution & Implementation
After carefully considering Ariel's needs, the Savance team proposed a solution with 16+ kiosks, divided between the various facilities. Each podium-style kiosk was outfitted with a printer, a 2D barcode license scanner, and a camera. The 2D scanner would be used both for signing in with your driver's license and for signing in or out as a visitor using a Savance-generated barcode.

"One big thing with Savance is being turnkey," Lafe Brownfield says, and explains: "Ariel is big in

presentation, big in capabilities, features, and functions, and Savance was able to do all that for them, as well as provide a nice multitude of options as far as hardware goes. You want desktop? You want wall-mount? You want free-standing kiosks? What size kiosk? Attended or unattended? How do you want the process to go? Does the badge just spit out and you're off and running? Do you want thermal, or thermal that expires? Color, not color, how many colors? The type of detail that Savance had narrowed down was key in the solution search.

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Following its normal procedures, Savance also custom-tailored the Visitor Management screens as well as the kiosk itself to match Ariel's branding, something that also played a big part in Ariel's final decision to go with Savance. Lafe Brownfield explains: "The fact that Savance is willing to go the extra mile speaks to you guys as a company and your product. Ariel is super particular with their brand, and Savance was able to velvet glove match that."

Something else that needed to be taken into consideration was what Ariel calls day visitors. These are the type of people that come in, require an escort, and have limited access

to the facility for only that day. For this reason, Ariel liked the idea of a hybrid between self-service kiosks and doors that were receptionist- or badge-controlled.

Ariel had originally wanted to do color-printed name tags or badges for all types of visitors, including day visitors; however, because of the recurring cost compared to the value – especially at Ariel's visitor volume – Savance instead proposed lower-cost black and white direct thermal-printed labels for day visitors. Ariel also has longer-term visitors, such as contractors, that needed temporary to permanent access. For this set of visitors, Savance proposed creating the badges with Savance EIOBoard's badge printing tools, and using EIOBoard's integration with Infinias to activate the badge for a certain set of security groups for a specified date range.

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Along with other members of the Savance team, Steve Bardocz worked directly with Ariel and Vision Concept during the entire process, and also went onsite to manage the deployment of the system. "Ariel is a model example of a manufacturing company embracing technology to improve the safety and efficiency of their staff, visitors, and contractors," Bardocz says. "In addition to using our Visitor Management solution, I love that they take advantage of our mustering solution for safety,

and fully integrate with their 3xLogic Infinias access control system to print and activate contractor badges, as well as automatically track everyone on the premises in the event of an emergency."

The implementation phase did not come without its challenges and issues to be resolved. "Many challenges came up with implementation and configuring the system," Brian Bell says. "However, the team was diligent to get it figured out and worked with our team to make the solution work." Ariel's IT staff also did their part for the complete system to function at its best for Ariel's needs. They even improved on Savance's existing Infinias integration by adding some enhancements to the scripts, and then sharing these enhancements with Savance for future Infinias integration projects.

Custom branded visitor self check-in kiosk designed for Ariel, with camera, printer, and RFID card/badge reader.

Results & Benefits

Since the implementation of Savance solutions, and the integration with its Infinias access control system, Ariel has seen an increase in both visitor and employee security. "Our visitor security has increased," says Brian Bell, "and we have better visibility on everyone who is in our facilities at any time."

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Overall, Ariel's entire visitor process has been automated and streamlined. When visitors arrive and sign in through a visitor kiosk, Ariel is now able to show them a required safety video. Visitors also sign an NDA and acknowledge reading it over, as well as get their picture taken. In addition, Ariel is taking advantage of EIOBoard's Here to See feature, where a text message gets sent to the host when their guest arrives. Visitors automatically get name tags printed right after signing in on the kiosk, and longer-term visitors and contractors get full color, customized badges printed and activated that are clearly discernible from staff badges.

A benefit that Ariel wasn't initially looking for but was immediately intrigued by is the addition of Savance's EIOBoard Emergency Mustering solution. Using Savance's mustering tablets, Ariel has an up-to-the-minute tool for roll call in case of an emergency. "The system creates a mustering log that can be used in the event of an emergency or evacuation," Brian Bell says.

When asked what he would tell others about Savance and its solutions, Brian Bell says: "[The Savance team is] a thorough group and will work with you on your system requirements and do everything possible to meet your needs."
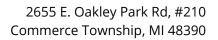
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For Vision Concept, the relationship with Savance has meant brand new opportunities for the company. "You guys have given us an expansion to our product catalog, and opened up a way to breath new life into an old product, Access Control", says Lafe Brownfield. "It's almost like v2, next generation Access Control." A lot of Vision Concept's manufacturing facilities customers are now seriously looking at Visitor Management, he explains. "The days of paper log books and giving a 'My Name Is' tag are coming to an end, and we are turning old news into new news. Everyone has access control, but can they bolt this on and make it Access Control 2.0?"

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Brownfield further explains that whenever the opportunity or prospect arrives, Savance is the company's go to solution for Visitor Management. "You guys are not just our flagship offering, but our only offering. If you're looking for an enterprise-style, robust, full solution for Visitor Management and beyond, it's Savance. There is no need to look at anything else. That's what I tell customers."