Retrofitting reloaded:
How can I bring old equipment into the digital era and make systems made by different manufacturers work together with each other?

There is a pressing need to digitize workflows, but getting started can be difficult: If you have older equipment from different systems, it can be costly to replace it with new systems or retrofit it. However, there is a simple solution to this challenging task.

Problem 1: You may have a lot of old equipment – just not a lot of data
Companies may often still be using older equipment, which only supplies data in analog form. For example, the systems may emit 24-volt interference signals that a simple traffic light system uses to detect defective cables. On the other hand, they do not capture information about changing temperatures, fluctuations in the boiler pressure or the flow rate if there is no piece counter. In addition, older devices often do not support transferring data to a database. This problem also affects many newer machines. Shop floor managers also need this information in order to get a correct, complete picture of their own production and to make the best decisions.

Problem 2: Any manufacturer can make a good product – but all do it their own way
Companies are constantly adding new equipment, for example, to meet the needs of new production lines. However, many companies use models from different manufacturers that have little connectivity with each other. Each one is an island by itself, speaking its own language. Since there is no common denominator to these systems, significant gaps in communication arise.

Solution 1 + 2: New systems or retrofit old equipment – a choice between very expensive or extremely expensive
At the same time, there is increasing pressure to modernize. Having digital real-time images of your own production and logistics offers your company a competitive advantage. The most obvious solution is to replace the existing machines. However, this rarely makes sense from an economic point of view. Thus, it is no surprise that retrofitting is popular. If you retrofit in the traditional way, you have to accept longer downtimes because of the conversion process and the risk that the machine will not work afterward. After the retrofitting, it is not a given

that the machines will interact better together. In addition, any modification made to the controller (PLC) can jeopardize the manufacturer's warranty and CE certification.

Solution 3: Retrofitting with Peakboard – no programming knowledge required
The key challenge when digitizing your equipment of varying ages and different connectivity standards is how to avoid the need to burden your IT professionals. With Peakboard, companies can make their not-yet-digital information available as data for other applications without using IT resources.

Take the following simple but effective example: A light barrier installed on the production line and connected to Peakboard serves as a digital real-time piece counter. The same applies to a temperature meter. These are just two examples of the many potential applications. Of course, Peakboard can also visualize all other existing data.

Companies can also historicize the data in order to analyze it as part of their business intelligence. This enables them, for example, to use average values to identify sources of errors along individual production lines. They can connect together numerous other systems with maximum flexibility, such as to link order data from SAP with real production data.

Peakboard therefore provides real-time data for the agile live optimization of production or logistics processes and can also save it as a starting point for strategic decisions. We have already helped hundreds of customers unlock these possibilities, from corporations to medium-sized companies.

May we show you how you can review and analyze your data in real time within two days?

Get in touch with Matthias Lunz, Head of Service, now to make an appointment for a free, no-obligation consultation:

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