

Case Study

Modernizing OT Remote Access – From Bottlenecks to Operational Flow

When a global food & beverage manufacturing organization separated from its Fortune 500 parent company, it faced the challenge of standing up its IT and OT security operations from scratch. While IT infrastructure could be built new, the OT environment was inherited completely with legacy systems and fragmented access methods. Under the previous model, remote connectivity relied on shared VPNs, contractor accounts, and improvised workarounds. Vendors often had to travel onsite because provisioning access could take weeks, and plant engineers had little visibility into what remote users were doing once connected.

“The overreaction I got from our plant engineers is this is probably one of the best, smartest tools that we’ve ever used... Not only do they allow third parties to get in quickly and securely, but the recording feature lets us go back and see exactly what was done to bring a line back online. It saves time, money, and helps build a knowledge base for the future.”

—IT Director, Cybersecurity, F&B Manufacturer

The Challenge

The inherited remote access approach created several critical pain points:

- **Delays and downtime:** Vendors often needed to be physically present to troubleshoot issues, leading to hours or even days of extended outages.
- **Excessive access:** VPN accounts granted broad, persistent entry without session oversight, creating risk and audit challenges.
- **Operational friction:** Onboarding a vendor could take a month, slowing down urgent repairs and eroding trust in official processes.
- **Shadow IT workarounds:** Engineers and vendors resorted to informal methods—such as direct RDP or unsecured tools—to bypass bottlenecks.

The Solution

The organization implemented a session-based remote access platform designed specifically for OT environments. Key capabilities included:

- **Rapid vendor onboarding:** Plant engineers could authorize and manage vendor sessions directly, cutting onboarding time from weeks to minutes.
- **Session visibility and recording:** Every remote session was logged and recorded, creating a transparent audit trail. Recordings also doubled as a knowledge base for recurring issues.
- **Secure, least-privilege connections:** Access was scoped to specific tasks or systems, automatically revoked when the job was complete.
- **Operational simplicity:** Browser-based access eliminated the need for complex client installs or firewall changes, reducing friction for both vendors and engineers.

The Impact

The transformation was immediate and measurable:

- **Reduced downtime:** Remote troubleshooting that once took 10–20 hours could be completed in minutes.
- **Operational efficiency:** Routine maintenance could be performed remotely, reducing travel and cost.
- **Knowledge capture:** Session recordings created a searchable history of recurring issues, informing future diagnostics.
- **Role-aligned workflows:** Plant engineers could authorize and manage vendor sessions directly, improving accountability.
- **Compliance alignment:** The removal of ad hoc VPNs and unmanaged accounts addressed audit gaps and supported frameworks such as IEC 62443 and NIS2.

Key Takeaway

Aligning access with operational practices reduced downtime, improved efficiency, and strengthened compliance, while building a scalable foundation for future requirements. The project demonstrated that:

- Modernizing OT access is a balance of technology selection and the equally important impact of designing around streamlined workflows and privileged role contexts.
- Success metrics extend beyond security—speed, uptime, and ease of use drive adoption across stakeholders. Manufacturers understand the financial impact of risk and the dollar value of downtime, so framing OT investments in terms of real revenue gains is especially compelling for leadership
- Building from the ground up allowed the company to avoid the pitfalls of legacy infrastructure and embrace a forward-looking, scalable model for secure OT connectivity.



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