

Finally, it is easy to use:

How Krombacher optimised its OT environment with TXOne Networks

The Situation

Krombacher Group, a renowned family-owned company, is one of Germany's largest and most influential beverage manufacturers. With multiple sites and over 1,000 employees, Krombacher boasts an impressive portfolio that extends beyond its flagship product, Krombacher Pils. Under the Krombacher Group umbrella, a diverse range of successful non-alcoholic brands, including Schweppes, Orangina, Dr Pepper, Vitamalz, and Germeta mineral water, continues to thrive.

As Krombacher Group, a renowned family-owned company, expands, the security of its machinery and operational technology (OT) environment becomes a critical concern. The unique challenge lies in managing both legacy and modern operating systems concurrently, without the support of legacy OS hindering progress. This is where TXOne Networks solutions stepped in, meeting Krombacher Group's specific requirements and seamlessly integrating with one solution for both modern and legacy OS's. Their user-friendly and robust OT security solution was the perfect fit for Krombacher's machinery and OT infrastructure, effectively safeguarding critical operations.

Previously, the team led by Dirk Peter and Roman Buch encountered significant challenges while consolidating their equipment and systems. The existing solution proved overly complex, lacking seamless integration between legacy and new systems via a unified interface. Recognising the need for change, they sought a more streamlined



Krombacher

"We wanted to move away from the old solution to the new one because the old solution was unsuitable for the size of our team. It was too complicated, no longer manageable and the configuration was too extensive."



Dirk Peter

Head of OT in
the Network
and Automation
department at
Krombacher

"The TXOne solution is now much easier to configure and use, making it easier to handle and manage the components." Dirk Peter,

Head of OT in the Network and Automation department at Krombacher

Customer Story

approach, one that would align with their team's size and operational requirements, by using the TXOne Networks solution.

By transitioning to the TXOne solution, Krombacher Group addressed two critical issues simultaneously. The cumbersome legacy system was addressed, and multiple disparate cybersecurity products were consolidated into a single, efficient solution. TXOne's user-friendly configuration and management capabilities eased the burden of overseeing components, ensuring robust cyber protection for the entire OT environment.

According to Dirk Peter, Head of OT in the Network and Automation department at Krombacher, "The implementation of TXOne not only simplified our processes but also bolstered reliability. Our entire OT infrastructure now stands reliably safeguarded."

Thanks to the separation of IT and OT, the networked environment only includes machines and management systems of the OT itself, which further segments the network. A distinction is made between process automation in production, brewhouse and cellar, building management systems, and factory automation in bottling and logistics, with bottling plants, packers, unpackers, pallet conveyor technology and more. In addition to the control and management systems, Krombacher OT is also responsible for higher-level systems such as ventilation technology or the collection of operating data via many measuring systems.

They only have to convince a few machine manufacturers to use the TXOne solution on their machines. Still, the general compatibility of TXOne is a given anyway - another criterion that tipped the scales. Buch was also impressed with the roll-out itself: "The roll-out process was straightforward because the product is highly compatible with our software distribution tools so that the client can be installed automatically. The update process within TXOne is also good and simple, and in summary, I can say that all the expectations of such a product are met, right down to blocking USB ports from a central location."

In the end, with Dirk Peter on the commercial side and Roman Buch on the technical side, only two Krombacher employees were needed to implement the TXOne security solution. The managers' understanding of the needs of the OT department also helped: "It's no longer industry-specific whether hackers target you or not. Attacks are happening everywhere, even against suppliers of plastic crates, because the hacker thinks the company has a good turnover and there might be something to gain. It's just a question of how difficult it is for the hacker to get into the network. So we at Krombacher are well aware of the risk," Peter explains and continues. "That was one of the reasons why we replaced the old solution with the TXOne solution because we now feel more secure. Therefore, convincing everyone internally to get a new solution was easy. The peace of mind and sense of security that TXOne brings is invaluable."

The switch

The traditional route to TXOne Networks in early 2022 was via a German system house, which presented a solution from TXOne based on Krombacher's requirements. The OT specialist was already able to convince the future customer: "We like to have POCs during which we can do a lot ourselves and only receive help when we need and want it. We don't want a lengthy process that ties up many of our resources. We liked that about TXOne," says Peter. His colleague, Roman Buch, OT Network Technology and System Administrator in the Network & Automation department and OT Security Officer at Krombacher, added: "They immediately made a good technical impression because they offer a Linux appliance that can be set up virtually, as well as encrypted communication channels. The implementation and support were compelling."

Then everything happened so quickly that even the experts at Krombacher were amazed. "It only took a few days from implementation to operational readiness. We set up the appliance, did a few test installations, played a bit around with the settings, and that was it," says Buch. The speed and efficiency of the implementation process were truly impressive.

"The system is straightforward and much clearer than the old solution. You can't compare the two." Roman Buch, OT Network Technology and System Administrator in the Network & Automation Department and OT Security Officer at Krombacher

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The result

With the help of TXOne's OT solution, Krombacher has increased its production environment's coverage by at least ten percentage points from 80 to 90 with reliable protection. The critical factor: "This wouldn't have been possible with the old solution," says Peter, "because we wouldn't have been able to achieve this level of coverage. The old solution was so time-consuming to configure and keep up to date that we couldn't keep up with our staffing levels. With the TXOne solution, we've finally been able to make up for all this." Buch and Peter point out that "the grouping or setting of policies has been made very clear and easy to configure, which wasn't the case before." The two are also impressed by the German TXOne team's support, which is always in direct contact, presents new products immediately, is available for discussions at trade fairs and even helps create tickets. A training course is also planned for Mr Buch to "get a deeper technical background". When asked to compare TXOne with the old solution, Mr Buch is certain: "The system is straightforward and much more precise than the old solution. You can't compare the two."

Incidentally, Peter and Buch are unafraid of NIS2: "Since we're already KRITIS, NIS2 is nothing we couldn't have expected. It's not a ghost. Still, they have only accelerated the process, made it more comprehensive, and channelled it. However, the TXOne solution

helps us, too; it's tightening up on top of everything else. We have complied with these regulations for several years, which has only accelerated the process, made it more comprehensive, and channelled it. Still, the TXOne solution helps us meet and comply with these requirements in every respect."

Dirk Peter and Roman Buch, while acknowledging the impossibility of creating an invincible network, aim to utilise TXOne to deter unauthorised access. They are under no illusions about constructing an impregnable fortress, but their goal is to make the network as unappealing as possible to potential intruders. By using TXOne, they hope to enhance the network's security to the highest possible level.

About TXOne Networks

TXOne Networks provides cyber security solutions using the OT Zero Trust methodology to ensure the reliability and security of industrial control systems and OT-based manufacturing environments. TXOne Networks works with leading manufacturing companies and critical infrastructure operators to develop practical, business-friendly approaches to cyber defence. TXOne Networks' defence-in-depth approach provides network and endpoint-based products to secure OT networks and mission-critical endpoints in real time. Learn more at www.txone.com.

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