



CASE STUDY:

Wacker Chemie partners with Ricoh to simplify digital certificate management

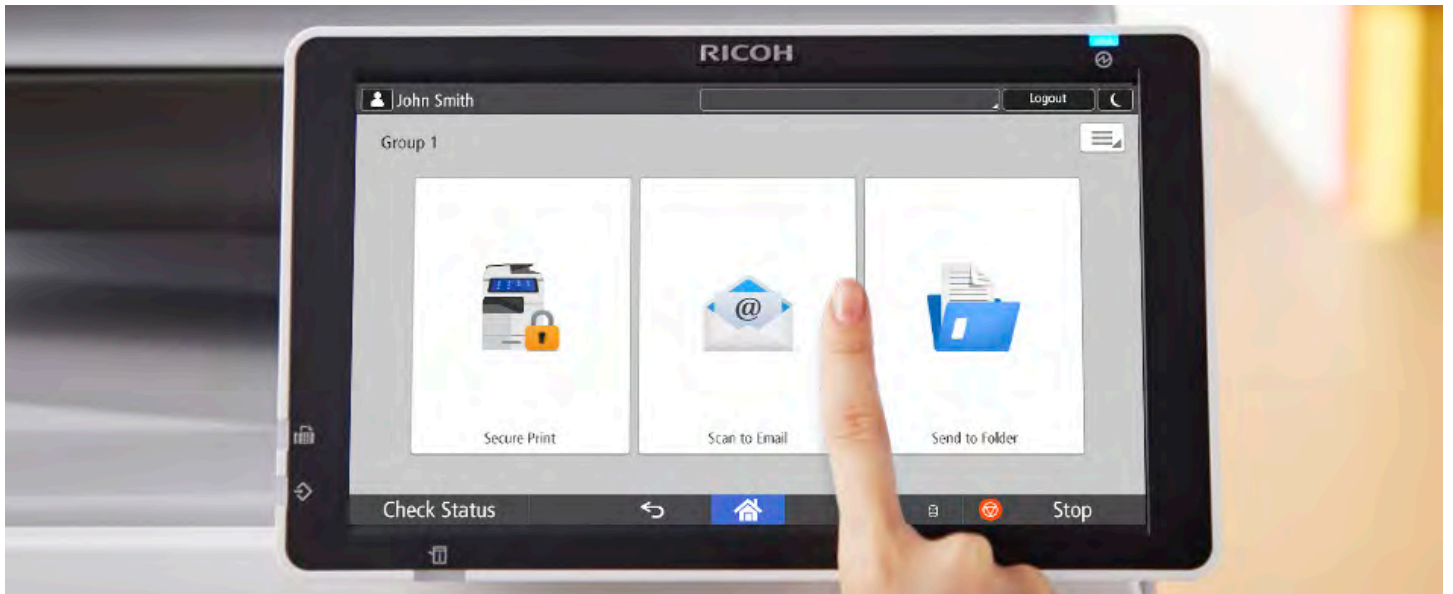


Wacker Chemie deployed RICOH Certificate Enrolment Service to automate digital certificate renewals and deployment, cutting administration times by 99.7% and helping to guard against security risks.

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

Headquartered in Munich, Germany, Wacker Chemie manufactures and distributes specialty chemical products for enterprise customers in the automotive, construction, energy, biotech, and medical sectors, among many others. Founded in 1914, the company has 14,300 employees working at 26 production sites and 52 sales offices worldwide. In 2020, Wacker Chemie reported total sales revenues of EUR 4.69 billion.

From supporting the creation of 3,200 different products to completing key back-office administration, Wacker Chemie relies on an extensive print fleet for many critical tasks. But managing and securing devices consumed huge amounts of time and resources, especially renewing and installing new digital certificates. How could the company streamline the process to ensure that printers remained online and protected at all times?



OBJECTIVES

Wacker Chemie develops state-of-the-art chemical products that make a positive impact on the wider world, based on innovation and sustainability. To support its objectives, the company focuses on building efficient and productive operational processes, with the lowest possible environmental impact.

At its global manufacturing sites and sales offices, Wacker Chemie uses around 700 Ricoh multi-function printers. Managing the print fleet represents a major undertaking, especially the digital certificates that ensure safe communications between devices and the web browsers employed by users. If certificates expire and are not renewed with a legitimate Certificate Authority, the company runs the risk that printers will become unavailable, hampering productivity, or that devices could be exposed to security issues.

Jens Dienst, System Engineer at Wacker Chemie, explains: “With cybersecurity threats growing increasingly sophisticated, creating a robust certificate management process has never been so important.

In recent years, major browser vendors such as Apple and Google have also reduced the valid lifespan for certificates, so we now have to complete the renewals and deployment process much more frequently.”

Previously, Wacker Chemie used largely manual workflows to manage the digital certificates for its print fleet, with employees installing renewed credentials for each device on an individual basis. Inevitably, this painstaking method consumed hundreds of working hours, and by relying on human intervention increased the possibility of expired certificates being overlooked or not renewed promptly.

Realising the time was right for a fresh approach, Wacker Chemie looked to develop a simpler, more scalable model for certificate management. How could the company accelerate the renewals and installation process, minimise exposure to risk, and safeguard the availability of essential print devices?



SOLUTION

Wacker Chemie identified that automating the existing manual processes offered a much smarter way to tackle digital certificate enrolment, and approached trusted partner Ricoh with its objectives. After an initial consultation and planning phase, the company decided to utilise the RICOH Certificate Enrolment Service, and kicked off a collaborative development and implementation process.

To form a combined project team, Wacker Chemie provided three technical experts — Jens Dienst, Isolde Stockner and Andreas Hontzia — that worked alongside solution consultants and developers from Ricoh Europe. In the early stages, Wacker Chemie ran multiple rounds of testing, and optimised the capabilities for its requirements. With testing complete, the team integrated the plug-in solution with company's RICOH Streamline NX device management system and the certificate authority used by the company.

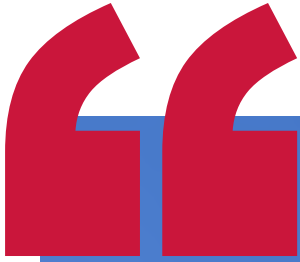
With RICOH Certificate Enrolment Service installed and configured, Wacker Chemie has fully automated the certificate management process. The solution monitors the validity of the digital certificates on all of the company's Ricoh multifunction devices and, when expiry dates approach, automatically interacts with the relevant Certificate Authority to renew and sign the certificate, before deploying the updated version.



Working with Ricoh was an excellent experience. Not only did Ricoh provide a powerful, scalable, and easy-to-use solution to automate certificate management, but they also delivered highly skilled and responsive support services throughout the implementation. By working very closely together, we kept the project moving forwards and ensured that we quickly went live with the solution.

Jens Dienst, System Engineer at Wacker Chemie





Having worked with Ricoh for more than 10 years now, this project represents the latest chapter in our successful partnership.

Jens Dienst, System Engineer at Wacker Chemie



BENEFITS

Using the RICOH Certificate Enrolment Service, Wacker Chemie has successfully streamlined its certificate management workflows. The Ricoh solution takes care of all certificate renewals and installation tasks and prevents issues from emerging due to expired credentials—helping to keep print devices online for business users at all times, and helping to mitigate exposure to potential cybersecurity threats.

By embracing this automated approach, Wacker Chemie has generated massive time savings. Previously, the installation of a new certificate would take 15 minutes for every device. Now, by using the RICOH Certificate Enrolment Service, the company completes certificate enrolment for all 700 print devices in just 30 minutes, a 99.7 percent reduction.

With less time spent handling painstaking manual work, Wacker Chemie employees now have many more working hours to focus on value-add activities, helping to improve operational cost-efficiency.

Jens Dienst concludes: “Having worked with Ricoh for more than 10 years now, this project represents the latest chapter in our successful partnership. Using the RICOH Certificate Enrolment Service, we have transformed our certificate management strategy, accelerating renewals and deployment, minimising our exposure to security risks, and ensuring our devices are always available to support our global workforce.”

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services, thus enabling individuals to work smarter.

With cultivated knowledge and organizational capabilities nurtured over its 85-years history, Ricoh is a leading provider of document management solutions, IT services, communications services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and industrial systems.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group has major operations throughout the world and its products and services now reach customers in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2021, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 1,682 billion yen (approx. 15.1 billion USD).

For further information, please visit www.ricoh-europe.com