

Genea + G&J Pepsi

How G&J Pepsi Unified Its Security

THE CUSTOMER

G&J Pepsi-Cola Bottlers is a production, bottling, marketing and distribution branch of Pepsi-Cola. They have over 1,700 employees situated across 13 locations, including their headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio. As Pepsi's largest family-owned and operated bottler, G&J Pepsi places tremendous emphasis on their security. So, when they found themselves with outdated, on-premises access control, they took action.

THE CHALLENGES: SCALABILITY, INTEGRATIONS AND SOFTWARE LIMITATIONS

Eric McKinney, Enterprise Infrastructure Director at G&J Pepsi, described their security as "the wild west." Like many enterprises, the bottling company was stuck using outdated, on-premises access control systems. These systems had three major drawbacks:

- **Poor Scalability**- Difficult to scale as operations increased.
- **Expensive Integrations**- Connecting video management and directory systems was costly.
- **Limited Software Capability**- Features made it challenging to perform routine tasks like remote credential provisioning and monitoring user access.

Without the proper technology, G&J Pepsi's physical security was vulnerable.

ABOUT G&J PEPSI

Enterprise • 13 Locations
• 1,700+ Credentialed Users

THE CHALLENGE

Poor Scalability • Expensive Integrations • Limited Software Capability

GENEA'S SOLUTION

Cloud-based Access Control
• API Integrations • Meraki VMS & Azure Identity Management
• Non-proprietary Hardware

BENEFITS

Non-proprietary Hardware
• Intuitive Platform • VMS Integration • Access Control Dashboard • Faster provisioning of key cards • Global scalability



SOLUTION 1: NON-PROPRIETARY HARDWARE

As G&J Pepsi searched for an access control solution, they put emphasis on several features including non-proprietary hardware.

“We had outdated hardware. Controllers were failing. Door readers were failing,” McKinney said. “So, we knew we needed a non-proprietary solution.”

The hardware would provide G&J Pepsi with the flexibility to change access control software providers without having to install a new hardware system. If the bottler ever wanted to switch software platforms, it could simply find another provider.

“If we want to switch platforms, it means we’re not spending hundreds of thousands of dollars,” McKinney said. “If Genea doesn’t deliver, we can pivot to another provider. So, we steered away from some platform providers that insisted we use their hardware.”

G&J Pepsi chose to install WaveLynx card readers as well. These non-proprietary readers helped G&J transform their security with mobile credentialing.

SOLUTION 2: FUTURE-PROOF SECURITY FEATURES

Several challenges existed on the software side. Before switching to Genea Security, G&J Pepsi’s security team used Honeywell’s WIN-PAK software, a self-contained database in which IT teams had to manually add users and details like facility location. Consequently, administrative tasks took longer to complete, and less oversight existed across the enterprise. But with Genea, the security team could see who badged into any given door, the time access was attempted and the status of their hardware.

“One of the things I love is the activity piece of it. I love going in and seeing who badged in, what door they opened and what doors are online. Previously, we had no visibility into [those aspects],” said Hannah Holscher, Digital Technology Support Administrator at G&J.



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Remote administrative access was another pain point. Whenever a security administrator was off-site, they would have to use a remote desktop to connect. Genea changed this.

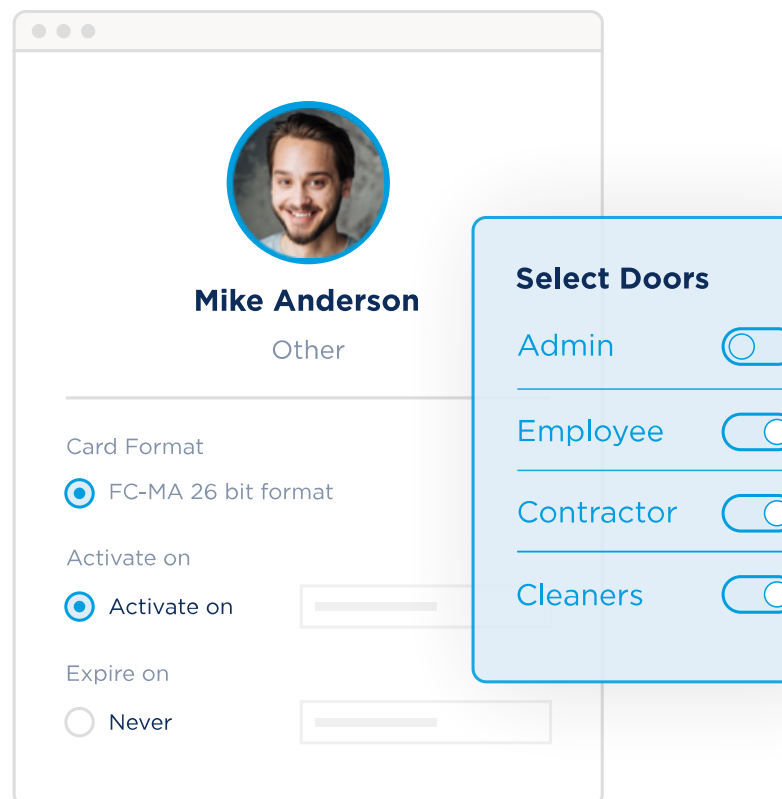
“Before, if working from home, you had to get on a VPN. Then, you had to log in to a remote desktop server,” Holscher recalled. “We’re [now] able to easily get alerts from the system and simplify the login process.”

With Genea, Holscher and her team can add and remove users whether they are onsite or at another facility. They can view access activity across their entire enterprise from one web-based dashboard.

“We have facilities that run 24/7, so sometimes the facility manager can’t drive in to unlock a door for someone,” McKinney said. “Genea allows them to literally be on their couch at home and open the door. It’s little things like that, that are incredibly powerful for our facility managers.”

Holscher also mentioned the benefits of Genea’s intuitive dashboard. She and the security team can quickly identify when hardware goes offline and troubleshoot access denied events.

“It’s really easy to search. When I’m looking for something but don’t know exactly where it is, it’s easy to find,” Holscher said.



SOLUTION 3: INTEGRATING WITH CISCO MERAKI VIDEO MANAGEMENT

Holscher and McKinney stressed one of the major values of Genea Security is its compatibility with API integrations. Traditionally, access control systems could only be tied to other software like video management systems and directory services through an expensive installation. Now, however, systems like Genea come equipped with integration capabilities.

“We [started using] Meraki about seven years ago. At the time, we had six people in digital technology. Since then, we’ve almost tripled that. We needed solutions that integrate, that are simple because we have people wearing multiple hats. That’s why you see us value Genea and its integrations,” McKinney said.

Instead of monitoring surveillance video in a separate platform, it is possible to sync Meraki video with door access control. This is all accomplished quickly and seamlessly through the cloud. G&J Pepsi uses the cloud to integrate access control with Meraki video management.

“If there’s a question about somebody badging into a food sensitive area, we can just click on a link within the Genea portal and see if it’s a problem,” Holscher said. “Those value-added aspects where you can tie in a system like Meraki are incredibly important.”

“The benefit of Genea is how much you can integrate...and Meraki allows us to manage our network in a really, really easy fashion.”

- Eric McKinney *Enterprise Infrastructure Director at G&J Pepsi*

SOLUTION 4: INTEGRATING WITH AZURE ACTIVE DIRECTORY

An important factor in G&J Pepsi’s decision to use Genea was the integration with Azure Active Directory. The integration between Access Control and the popular identity management platform gives Holscher and the security team a unified solution. Instead of managing a separate user database, all the information they need is synced with Access Control. This integration has saved time for other departments as well, namely human resources and operations.

“Now when we disable your user account, your physical access is disabled as well,” Holscher said. “It [used to take] HR five minutes to log in, type in somebody’s name, the location they’re in and add the badge. When we’ve got ten or fifteen people starting each week, that’s about an hour a week we’re saving [HR]. That’s 60 hours a year we’re saving just in badge creation.”

When an employee’s job title changes, an update can be performed within one system. Once the update is executed, the door access permissions associated with that credential change automatically. Holscher said for the most part they’ve made the system “touchless.”

The integration also eliminates the security risks associated with using separate databases to store information.



A SECURE FUTURE

G&J Pepsi has taken their security a step further by implementing a change management solution. The solution, built on Microsoft's Power Platform, gives G&J a way to track changes made to access roles and the parties responsible for those changes.

When a change in access is requested, a ticket is submitted through the Power Platform. Then, the security team fills out a form with data such as door, location and access time. From there, the form is sent to G&J's operation team who approves the request. Finally, Hannah and the security team fulfill the request. The platform essentially provides a "paper trail," logging how access privileges change and who makes the change.

As G&J Pepsi continues to refine their system, McKinney said he anticipates leveraging other Genea features. Features like Emergency Door Plans will help the team automate which entrances lock and which remain open during an emergency. By the end of 2023, they plan to install Genea in 12 locations and provision around 1,900 users.



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Still unsure if Genea is right for you? Get in touch with one of our helpful representatives. Backed by live 24/7/365 support, we ensure you get the help you need, when you need it. Plus, our vast online resource library includes webinars, guides help articles and more.

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