

PATCHBOX Success Story

Hirschvogel Group - organised in record time!

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Organized in record time: how the Hirschvogel Group's IT is innovatively supported by PATCHBOX

It sounds like a plot summary from "Groundhog Day" when André Roehler describes the former day-to-day work of the IT department at the Hirschvogel Group. Until recently, ordinary maintenance work and routine security updates cost them a lot of nerves and valuable working time – over and over again. The cabling at Hirschvogel in Denklingen had grown steadily and proportionally over decades – resulting in an impressive and often confusing number of cables and nodes. There was no standardization and the work processes in the local network team were not reduced to a manageable minimum. There was also no standardized system for patch-



ing, which further increased the complexity. This made maintenance time-consuming and inefficient. This puts enormous pressure on IT system administrators, on whom the ability of the entire production process depends in the age of Industry 4.0 and just-in-time production. "Our colleagues often needed the whole working day for a routine re-patch. Especially on maintenance days, the 8 hours until production restarted were ambitious. Today, we can do both the day-to-day business in just a few minutes without any stress. A switch had to be replaced at the beginning of the year due to a defect. Out of interest, we timed it ourselves: it took 13 minutes with PATCHBOX," recalls André Roehler. This is where the man who suddenly changed the state of IT comes into play – and an innovative product with which he came to the Hirschvogel Group in tandem, so to speak. The Hirschvogel Group is a development partner and manufacturing specialist for automotive components made of steel and aluminum as well as for product solutions in the fields of electronic systems and micro-mobility. The independent, family-owned group employs around 6,200 people worldwide and had a total turnover of 1.5 billion euros in 2023. The parent company is Hirschvogel Holding GmbH, based in Denklingen in Upper Bavaria. It unites nine production companies and two affiliated companies under one roof. André Roehler took over the management of the local network a few years ago. He was previously self-employed and already knew PATCHBOX from a cus-



toomer. When he moved to Hirschvogel, he decided to implement these systems in order to drive efficiency and cost optimization in this department as well. "Today, we need one hour to replace a standard node, compared to eight hours with conventional cabling. With PATCHBOX, you can do it in an hour, without any stress," emphasizes Roehler. Smart tidying systems are already familiar to various household helpers. Perhaps a little more unexpected in the IT sector, but at least as important for making cabling in control cabinets clearer and more efficient. Such a system also saves space and time, as the cables are neatly organized. "Finding your way is much easier and faster with the PATCHBOX," sums up colleague Artur Martin. "Finding the paths in a 4-port stack with 48 ports and TWT (target wake time) ports each used to be very time-consuming. Every single cable had to be traced, written down, repatched and replaced. The PATCHBOX saves us hours! With conventional cabling, in the best-case scenario, you took a cable and walked to the hall - a distance of over 600m as the crow flies - and had a suitable one ready. In the worst case, however, you don't have a suitable one with you, which makes a mess or you have to go back and get another one. So, colleagues have already stashed cables in the cupboard because the distance to the node is 15 minutes. As the PATCHBOX always has cables to hand and always in the right length, it not only saves time during maintenance, but also the long walks." Not to mention, the PATCHBOX reduces the risk of cable chaos and connection errors. The IT infrastructure is easier to maintain and employees can react more quickly to changes. Over 80 network nodes and two data centers at the Denklingen site were gradually equipped with PATCHBOX systems—over 200 in total—purchased from the German partner Macle. Old, end-of-life switches are being replaced, and PATCHBOX systems are being installed simultaneously. In addition to the classic Cat.6a variant, Hirschvogel has also installed PATCHBOX systems with fiber optic cables, the most flexible fiber optic cables on the market, in the data centers. Since then, the cabling has been much tidier and clearer. As patches are also changed daily, a backup client runs every 15 minutes via each switch. A special program pulls the configuration and updates the documentation. Even months later, the cabling is still tidy and the work is much easier. In addition, refurbishing a network rack saved an entire rack in terms of space. "Before there were two, now there's just one". By implementing the PATCHBOX systems, the Hirschvogel Group has not only increased efficiency and optimized costs but also standardized work processes and tidied up the cabling. Mr. Roehler and his team now work more efficiently and with less stress, are less prone to errors and can act quickly in emergencies.

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