



SIMATIC PCS 7

Future-proof with the latest SIMATIC PCS 7 version

SIMATIC PCS 7 Upgrade at Südzucker: An Interview with Thomas Löther, Strategic Asset Manager, CRDS (Central Department Research Development & Services), Südzucker AG

The Südzucker Group is a globally operating company in the food industry with segments including sugar, specialties (functional ingredients for food and animal feed, frozen/chilled products, portioned items), starch, and fruit. It is also Europe's leading ethanol producer through its CropEnergies segment.

Mr. Löther, why is an upgrade of your systems necessary?

At Südzucker Group, we operate over 20 SIMATIC PCS 7 process control systems across five countries. For economic reasons, we have previously aimed to maximize the lifespan of each control system version. However, due to increasing regulations, we had to rethink our strategy. Another important aspect is the growing significance of cybersecurity, particularly with new directives like

NIS-2. Therefore, we work closely with our IT department and have developed a Process Automation Security concept that is continuously improved. Our goal is to bring all our control systems to a manufacturer-supported version to ensure future-proofing. This includes the entire IT infrastructure – from hardware to the virtualization platform, Microsoft Windows, and the control system itself. These measures are aimed at preventing the worst-case scenario for any production: complete downtime due to a cyberattack.

What is the current status of the project, and what are the next steps for the SIMATIC PCS 7 upgrade?

We recently completed a Software Update Service (SUS) and are now preparing for a comprehensive migration to the latest version of SIMATIC PCS 7, Version 10.0. This strategic decision was essential to save on license costs for future updates.

The next step involves detailed planning for the actual upgrades (new hardware infrastructure, upgrading software projects, scheduling while considering operational constraints, etc.).

Looking ahead, we are currently searching for a pilot installation at one of our plants to gain initial experience with the fully web-based control system, SIMATIC PCS neo, and to evaluate how best to migrate our library.

What steps were necessary to prepare the systems for the update?

First, we conducted a comprehensive inventory of the existing SIMATIC PCS 7 licenses in our plants. Siemens provided excellent support by coordinating with the various national subsidiaries.

For plants not yet running Version 9.1, we first had to purchase update licenses. This was a necessary prerequisite to completing the Software Update Service. Despite the initial costs, this step will ultimately result in significant license cost savings for future upgrades to Version 10 or higher.

Why did you choose SIMATIC PCS 7 – and thus Siemens – as your provider?

SIMATIC PCS 7 is one of our proven standard systems, which has shown itself to be extremely stable and reliable over the years. We aim to upgrade all SIMATIC PCS 7 installations to the latest version to reduce the variety of versions in use. Siemens' support has been very helpful in this process.

Siemens has been a strong and long-standing partner for Südzucker, providing intensive support in evaluating and planning the upgrades. The collaboration has always been constructive and beneficial.

Südzucker is pursuing a clear strategy for modernizing and standardizing its process automation systems. Close collaboration with Siemens and adherence to new security standards are central to this effort.

Do you want to know more?

For more information about SIMATIC PCS 7 upgrades, visit: [Is your process control system up to date?](#)

Control center at the Südzucker plant in Ochsenfurt



A close-up portrait of a man with dark hair, wearing a patterned jacket. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Overlaid on his face are several semi-transparent digital elements: a blue grid pattern, a green rectangular box, and some blurred text and icons, suggesting a high-tech or digital theme.

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