

Why migrate your process to a new control system?

You have probably heard the old adage “if it’s not broke, don’t fix it.” While there are some great arguments for leaving well enough alone, it isn’t true for your control system. There can be serious advantages to moving your outdated system to a newer platform whether that be Emerson Delta V, Rockwell Automation, or Siemens.

Obsolescence

The first reason to consider moving to a new system is that as your current system ages, keeping it functioning can become more difficult and expensive. Once the manufacturer stops producing that particular system, finding replacement hardware becomes a challenge. As replacement parts become scarce, the cost can increase tremendously and sources tend to be grey market options such as eBay. Additionally, as systems age, it becomes harder to find technicians who can provide support. Both limited supply of hardware and trouble finding support for your software can make keeping the system you have risky and prone to catastrophic failure costing your company thousands. This is particularly true if your operation is mission-critical and downtime is not an option.

Advanced Functionality

Aside from reducing the risk of downtime, updating to a newer system can give you access to a range of additional functionality to improve your safety and efficiency should you choose to leverage those efficiencies. Possibly one of the most important features to consider today is cybersecurity. While older control systems have little to no cybersecurity, the new systems are designed specifically with security in mind following best practices and leveraging IIoT integrations. Thanks to bulk engineering tools, complicated batching can be moved to the new system easier with options to add functionality such as virtualization, which wouldn’t have been possible before.

Older DCS structured plants may have a DCS for analog I/O and a separate PLC(s) for digital I/O. Now with newer systems, all your I/O can be managed through one cohesive system. Other benefits of newer systems include better alarm management, improved graphics, and new reporting functionality. Features like these can give you better insight into your system and allow you to see problems before they happen.

Advanced functionality is not a requirement, however, and you still have the option of

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keeping things just as they are if desired. Many times, it is possible to leverage new functionality in the program code and keep the operation terminals the same so that operators are comfortable using the new system.

Would you like to learn more about how Cross can help you move from a legacy control system to a highly capable modern platform? If so contact us today. Our process experts are here to help you optimize your operation.