



Turning ‘zero risk’ from aspiration to reality

How an Ascom enterprise solution is helping the Guerbet Group satisfy stringent safety standards at two French production facilities

The Guerbet Group is a world-leading manufacturer of contrast agents and devices for diagnostic and interventional imaging and Magnetic Resonance Imaging. Two of its facilities in France are active-ingredient manufacturing plants, and are certified as satisfying the rigorous safety standards of the EU’s Seveso Directive.

To help meet those standards, Guerbet has since 2003 employed an Ascom communications and alarm notification solution for the two facilities. “When we were choosing a new upgraded solution in 2003,” says Patrick Conq, IT Project Manager at Guerbet, “we opted to go with Ascom, as we were reassured by their extensive experience with manufacturing industry. Moreover, Ascom could provide their ATEX-certified hardware [approved for use in explosive environments], something which is essential for our business. Ascom’s DECT devices met this criterion, and also delivered improved reliability and ease of use.”



Patrick Conq, IT Project Manager at Guerbet

A defining feature of the Ascom solution for Guerbet has been its ‘intelligence’. This refers to the solution’s ability to orchestrate data flows; to manage in real-time the distribution of a wide variety of technical, safety and personal alarms. “Our priority,” adds Conq, “is the protection of isolated workers. With the Ascom solution, such workers can simply use their mobile devices to send alerts in real-time to pre-defined recipients. Unanswered or unacknowledged alerts are automatically passed to colleagues until a satisfactory response is logged—something that gives us a sense of security.”

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Always ready, always operational

The solution also features ‘man-down’ and ‘no movement’ alert functions. Alarms are automatically sent should a lone worker’s handset remain stationary for too long, or if the handset senses a sudden drop “It is critical,” explains Conq, “that our workers’ handsets can still raise the alarm, even when the workers themselves are physically unable, such as might happen with a fall or loss of consciousness.” Another feature of the Ascom solution is accurate locating, a function that prevent responders wasting valuable time as they react to alarms.

Intelligent alarm management is also critical to equipment uptime and technical efficiency. Conq explains: “One of the key benefits of the Ascom solution at our Seveso Directive-certified plants is the deep integration with equipment and process alarm systems. The Ascom solution covers 100 such alarms at the facilities, sending context-rich alerts to targeted recipients in the event of a wide range of anomalies or deviations. And as alarms and actions are logged, we also gain a basis for identifying improvement areas.”

Preparing for Industry 4.0, preparing for zero risk

Guerbet and Ascom continue to cooperate closely in order to meet evolving safety needs. This evolution is currently influenced by the impact of the Industry 4.0 Revolution—the industrial communications transformation being brought about by extreme and ubiquitous connectivity between equipment, people and devices.

“DECT technology,” says Conq, “remains a strategic element for our factories. But the industry is in the midst of change. In the very near future, it will be necessary for DECT to evolve; to integrate all the features of smartphones into our workday, in terms of both ergonomics (screen size, etc.) and features (camera, video, etc.) —all while retaining the ability to protect isolated workers. The Group's employees expect it and we expect it to be the next step in our relationship with Ascom in moving towards a truly ‘zero risk’ environment”.

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