

World's Largest Yogurt Plant Thrives on Ignition

Chobani Sees Multiple Benefits from Unique Software

Chobani produced its first cup of Greek yogurt in 2007. Not long after that, Chobani became the top Greek yogurt brand in America. The award-winning company has achieved much notice for its rapid rise, innovative ideas, and quality products. In 2012 the company opened the largest yogurt-manufacturing facility in the world. Located in Twin Falls, Idaho, the plant has been expanded twice already, and it now covers 1.4 million square feet. In late 2017, Chobani broke ground on a third expansion in Twin Falls, for a \$20 million global research and development center.

Chobani is based in Norwich, New York, and employs more than 2,000 people. In addition to Idaho, the company has plants in New York and Australia. To help keep production running smoothly, Chobani has been leveraging Ignition software for years. Ignition by Inductive Automation® is an industrial application platform with integrated tools for building solutions in human-machine interface (HMI), supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA), and the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT).

All Aboard

Chobani uses Ignition at all three of its plants — on filler and packaging lines, for quality control, in asset management, with enterprise resource planning (ERP), and in capital-expenditure project management. “Ignition has really taken Chobani by storm,” said Hugh Roddy, vice president of global engineering and project management for Chobani. “Once we brought Ignition onboard, it opened up a new world for us.” That includes access to data that Chobani never had before. With Ignition, Chobani can see data from the plant floor all the way up to the executive level.



Ignition helps Chobani improve productivity and efficiency in three plants.

Ignition has helped Chobani improve efficiency and reduce downtime. “Once we took Ignition onboard as one of our enterprise platforms, everything has improved exponentially across the board from an operational standpoint,” said Roddy.

The company firmly believes in sharing data with its employees. “Our people, they want to be involved,” said Roddy. “They want to be part of what we’re doing here at Chobani. Having the data from Ignition at their fingertips really helps our employees be more efficient, and it makes them feel part of the team.”

Ignition also aids the convergence of operational technology (OT) and information technology (IT). “Ignition allows us to integrate our OT and IT environments into one,” said Roddy. The single platform creates numerous efficiencies.

“Ignition has been a very good bridge for OT/IT collaboration,” said J.C. Givens, global network services manager at Chobani. “We’ve been able to make gateways available to both networks,

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– Hugh Roddy
VP of Global Engineering & Project Management,
Chobani

so whether people are in the office making decisions or on the plant floor making decisions, IT and OT information are both available.”

No Limits

Ignition’s unlimited licensing means that organizations don’t have to pay extra for additional tags, clients, users, or projects. Unlimited licensing has helped Chobani keep up with rising demand for its product. “Because of the unlimited licensing with Ignition, we can roll out as many clients, as many places as we want, whenever we see the need,” said John Furby, automation engineer for Chobani.

One advantage is the ability to set up a single HMI for a special need. In one example, Chobani used this capability for a specific location within its new plant. “Previously, operators were having to use a radio to call in, and have someone start each step of the process for them,” said Trevor Bell, automation engineer with Chobani. “With Ignition, we’re able to have a special HMI out there, just for them. Ignition makes it really cost-effective to do a one-off scenario like that.”

Without the typical licensing issues, Chobani can implement new projects much faster. “With Ignition, we’ve been able to roll out several different projects more aggressively to get data to the operators on the plant floor more quickly,” said Givens.

Chobani also likes Ignition’s ability to speed up the development process. “Whenever we can save time in developing an HMI and implementing it, it’s really valuable for our team,” said Bell. Customization is easier as well. “Ignition gives us a software system that we can actually develop to our own,” said Roddy. Furby agreed. “The template development in Ignition is especially easy,” said Furby. “We can make custom data types and custom graphics that we can easily roll out to all of our projects.”

Mobility Too

Ignition has also freed up operators so they can roam the plant and still have access to data on phones and tablets. “Ignition has given us the ability to be mobile on the plant floor,” said Roddy. “Our operators and maintenance people don’t have to be running back to the control room. From anywhere, we can control a valve or a pump, and get full visualization of what’s happening in the plant, from raw receiving all the way through packaging.”

With Chobani constantly innovating, it needs flexible software that can grow with it. Ignition is a key ingredient for the future. “We believe Ignition gives us endless opportunities here at Chobani,” said Roddy.

Roddy also appreciates the work of two system integrators Chobani has worked with extensively. “Industrial Networking Solutions (INS) brought Ignition here to Chobani,” said Roddy. “We’ve partnered with INS for five years, integrating Ignition across our sites around the world. With INS and also Tamaki Control working with us on Ignition, it’s really brought remarkable results for us here, in a very short period of time.”

Watch the video online at:

bit.ly/ia-Chobani