

"The YesStations have saved us a bunch money and made life simpler"

Injecting New Technology Makes Managing Recycling Facility Simpler and Less Expensive At Collins & Aikman Floorcoverings, Inc.

Just in time for the new millennium, Collins & Aikman Floorcoverings in Dalton, Georgia has established a new facility called the Center for Environmental Innovation. This 100,000 square foot facility initially will focus on recycling manufacturing waste and product it reclaims from customers after its useful life, and recycling 100% of that material into high performance products. This asset benefits both the environment and the bottom line.

Borrowing a concept from the legendary Rumpelstilskin, the fabled father of recycling, who once turned straw into gold, Collins & Aikman is turning waste into products such as industrial flooring, and used carpet back into new carpet known as ER3 which stands for environmentally Redesigned, Restructured and Reused.

With the opening of their facility, Collins & Aikman will be keeping millions of pounds of manufacturing waste and used carpet from going to landfills and will instead be re-utilizing those resources.

Tasked with tying this new remote facility into their AS/400 centric network, IS Director Randy Waldrop at first considered two strategies. The first approach would have involved two separate communications lines between the environmental center and their corporate facility, one for WAN traffic, and the other for AS/400 SNA traffic. In that scenario, the SNA connection would have been similar to other SNA installations in use at C & A. This would have involved using industrial strength, twinax attached data collection stations attached to an IBM 5494 Remote Control Unit using bisynchronous communications with the AS/400. The second alternative would use a shared communications line for both AS/400 and network traffic. In this scenario, the twinax devices would be attached to an Ethernet enabled IBM 5494 control unit that would in turn connect to the LAN. The LAN would then be connected to a multi-protocol router that could provide both remote AS/400 and WAN connectivity.

The twinax workstations that C & A had been using were provided by IMCORP, Inc. a Marietta, Georgia based VAR/Integrator and long-term C & A supplier. They consisted of Decision Data terminals equipped with laser scanners and Printronix thermal transfer label printers. IMCORP not only supplied the hardware, they came on-site to assure that all the components would interact properly, and assisted C & A personnel in deriving and documenting the correct combination of set up parameters for terminals, scanners, and printers. However, when Mr. Waldrop approached IMCORP for an updated quote for more of the same to satisfy the twinax device requirement for the alternatives being considered, IMCORP representative Bob Lehman



suggested a third alternative made possible by new technology. By substituting Ethernet terminals for twinax terminals, the need for the remote controller could be eliminated. In addition, the requirement for an expensive multi-protocol router to support data link switching could be scaled back to just a simple IP router. These changes not only represented a \$7,000 reduction in hardware costs, they greatly simplified both installation and on-going support, a major benefit in today's environment in which IT personnel are stretched beyond the limits.

The centerpiece of this new solution is the 3602 YesStation Plus from Affirmative Computer Products. The YesStation features resident Telnet 5250e emulation, and a familiar and heavy-duty 122 key keyboard. Resident emulation allows the terminal to power up and present the user with a green screen. No boot server or other devices need to be provided or managed. The YesStation also comes equipped with 2 Serial and one parallel printer port as well as extraordinary printer support that includes named SCS printer sessions. Named SCS sessions allow printers attached to these terminals to function just like their twinax counterparts. Moreover, because the YesStation's printer drivers can be customized, IMCORP personnel were able to create a driver that performed identically to the drivers used in C & A's existing twinax workstations. YesStations are also easy to manage. New print drivers, configuration updates and features can be downloaded to the YesStations using TFTP or DHCP from either the AS/400 or a PC server, from anywhere on the C&A network.

According to IT Manager Waldrop, "The YesStations have saved us a bunch money and made life simpler. I think I can live with that!"