30 Years of Continuously Safe, Reliable Production
Invensys Triconex: 30 Years in Revolutionizing Safety

Triconex's exciting 30-year journey from startup to world renowned brand.

Industrial organizations today are consistently taking steps to prevent the risk of danger, injury, or damage in the plant environment. In so doing, these organizations rely on trusted experts to provide a sophisticated, robust defense against potential hazards. Renowned for setting the bar high in safety and critical control, Triconex develops safety systems that establish reliability and availability standards, earning Invensys the hard-won reputation for unparalleled dependability in critical applications that safely shut down burners, turbines or other equipment in the face of emergencies.

History of a Safer World

When entrepreneur Jon Wimer founded Triconex in 1983, he envisioned building the world’s premier industrial safety system. Assembling a small yet talented team of engineers, developers and professionals, the company launched its flagship product, the Tricon, a Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) incorporating Triple Modular Redundancy (TMR).

During the first two years, the Triconex startup struggled to certify a controller for industrial use and, to make matters worse, industrial safety systems were considered an “extra cost” — until tragedy changed the industry forever.

Global incidents in the mid-eighties such as the Bhopal Gas Tragedy and Chernobyl raised public awareness about industrial safety. Safety committees were formed to make recommendations and governments passed new regulations. Furthermore, private companies and venture capital investors began evaluating new technologies and companies, thereby opening doors for a struggling startup like Triconex.

At the time, the world’s largest energy company, Exxon, began a testing process to evaluate TMR-based systems. In 1986, Exxon certified the Tricon and placed an order. In parallel, Triconex had forged an alliance with Honeywell to distribute the Tricon.

Fact: Tricon made its first sale in June 1986 and grew rapidly to sell its 100th system by 1987.

As a result of technology, innovation, certification and alliances, Triconex grew and won industry awards, making the Tricon the market-leading safety critical controller by the early nineties. In fact, the company had reached several milestones; Tricon controller TÜV certification, recognition in Business Week as one of America’s fastest growing companies, an Initial Public Offering (IPO) and subsequent acquisitions, and the sale of Triconex to Siebe in 1995.

Fact: TÜV Rheinland provides certification indicating that products have been tested to international safety standards.

“Triconex changed an entire industry; their engineers built a safer world,” notes Gary Wilkinson, Triconex Training Manager. “The history of Triconex is really the story of modern safety systems in the industrial age. A small startup with a vision became the most trusted partner for the world’s leading companies in the aftermath of the tragedies at Bhopal and Chernobyl. Using a technology developed during the Apollo space program, Triconex engineers adapted TMR to build the world’s leading safety controller and become the market leader for over 25 years.”

Triconex Today: Continuously Safe

Since the sale to Siebe, the Triconex brand has successfully expanded beyond the Tricon core product to include a complete portfolio of cutting-edge safety solutions such as the General Purpose System, Trident, Safety Software Suite and Safety Lifecycle Services. Today, Invensys is the only automation company with 30 years experience and a track record in Safety and Critical Control.

Fact: Triconex has won multiple industry awards, including Control Magazine’s Readers Choice Award 16 out of the last 17 years.

As one of Invensys’ leading brands, Triconex has revolutionized safety with the only approved Nuclear Regulatory Commission commercial off-the-shelf controller. The award-winning flagship Tricon has certifications too numerous to mention but serves the international community with such certifications as TÜV, CSA, Factory Mutual, European CE Mark and NRC.

Furthermore, Triconex has designed educational programs to help customers maximize their investment by means of Invensys Learning Services’ comprehensive hands-on, intensive or customized training. Triconex-certified instructors, who have met rigorous professional and technical standards, lead courses and provide support enabling customers to develop and use applications at their specific plants. Notably, courseware and training equipment provided are in compliance with Triconex safety and reliability standards.

In addition to innovative technology, certifications and world-class training, Triconex prides itself on the commitment and contribution of its people. Over the years, brilliant minds have been the key ingredient to the successful evolution of the brand. “Triconex pioneered the safety system market and is still the unquestioned leader today! Triconex actually is primarily responsible for inventing the safety system market and Triconex systems were selected as the top safety systems in industry for 11 years in a row. No other safety system has been selected more than one time,” says Peter Martin, Vice President and Invensys Fellow.
Triconex of Tomorrow

With safety as priority number one, Triconex will continue to have an impact on industrial automation. Since its very inception, the organization has been partnering with clients to ensure that their plants are available, operating safely and running securely every day. By the same token, Triconex will continue to assist clients in providing their most valuable assets – people and equipment – with an environment allowing them to manage risks and hazards, avoiding unscheduled asset downtime while maximizing process uptime.

Importantly, Triconex will continue to evolve with the times. For decades, industry focus had been on occupational safety such as spills, falls/trips and hazardous materials handling. As a result of hazardous incidents, the industry began searching for ways to prevent large-scale disasters, making way for the world of functional safety and the safeguards required to manage and mitigate hazards.

As the industry is now moving towards process safety management, the Triconex of tomorrow is adopting the application of management systems that identify and control process hazards to prevent process-related injuries and incidents. For instance, recent product developments, such as Safety View which provides users with situational awareness and visibility of the risks being managed, facilitate better decision-making and enable customers to continue operating in a safe and efficient plant environment.

Principal Analyst of the ARC Advisory Group, Barry Young, recently recognized Safety View’s agility and usability: "End users realize that they need new solutions to help them remain agile, particularly as they react to changing business variables and process conditions. By clearly indicating level-1 alarms to operators ... and then showing them all the safety-critical devices that have been placed in bypass, the Triconex Safety View solution reduces the likelihood of unscheduled downtime and subsequent loss of production. And because it provides contextual information in real time, it helps operators and other plant personnel make better decisions."

Given the growing importance of plant safety and efficiency for generations to come, Triconex can expect a bright future ahead.

More on a Safer World


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