REGIONAL FORUMS for
SENIOR IT LEADERS

CIO
PERSPECTIVES

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CIO **CIO Executive Council**
Leaders Shaping the Future of Business

Sounding Board Workshop

Sheryl Fikse

CIO

Southwire Company

Southwire Facts

- Southwire is a big company with a small-town history—advanced technology products are developed, built and sold by 4,200 employees across the Western Hemisphere, many of whom spend their life at the family-owned wire and cable manufacturer.

- The technology infrastructure that supports them is well past its expected lifespan, but it is familiar to staff and there has been little pressure to upgrade.

- CIO Sheryl Fikse joined the company in 2010 and immediately started examining how to refresh that infrastructure with consideration for the mobile technology available today.

At a glance…

- North America's largest wire and cable company

- 19 plants, 11 CSCs

- $4.3 billion in 2010 sales

- 4,200 employees

- Founded in 1950 by Roy Richards, Sr. Privately owned by his children

- Traditional heavy investment in R&D as well as manufacturing lines

Electrical Division

Products

Romex™

SIM*pull*™

ResistAll

EZ-MC™

MC^AP™

LiquaFlex™

ArmorFlex™

OEM Division

Southwire's wire and its copper and aluminum rod are used by other manufacturers in variety of products.

Aluminum rod mill in Hawesville, KY

- Auto wiring harnesses
- Electric motors
- HVAC systems
- Appliances
- Industrial equipment

Business Goals

- IT must establish hardware profiles that will provide the most value for the three major user groups:
  - 1) headquarters support staff, who work mostly with forms and databases;
  - 2) shop floor managers and sales engineers at nineteen plants in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, who are working on the fly with checklists and blueprints
  - 3) sales management – for diverse markets and strategies

- Improved mobility is expected to greatly improve customer service, whether from engineering or sales.

- Moving to a new, common hardware and software profile will allow IT to exert more coordinated management and control..

Decisions Made

- Southwire has historically been a BlackBerry shop, but Sheryl is exploring a move the mobile devices to Apple due to the graphics-intensive applications the staff use and the ability to leap-frog to "app functionality" for enterprise use

- The company is also in process of moving applications off of the legacy mainframe and into an SAP environment, using a variety of end point options: tablets & smartphones with Citrix enabling mobile access to the back-end applications, laptops and VDI's as well as traditional desktop suites.

- To ease the transition for manual and paper processes, Southwire has adopted Adobe forms paired with the new SAP applications.

The Challenge

- Getting buy-in is a slow process. Members of the leadership team have had iPads since the end of last year, and only now are they beginning to carry them everywhere. One engineer has been testing an iPad in the field and now swears he never wants to give it up, and more than 30 are now out in the environment as test cases.

- Establishing role-based needs profiles requires cooperation from the other company executives who better understand what each type of user does on a daily basis. Currently, the company's executive team is not very technology-savvy.

- The company handles a great deal of highly sensitive data, between the work it does with the U.S. government, regional utility companies and the competitive value of its own R&D arm. Multiple mobile devices and user profiles will require an adaptive set of security policies.

Questions

- **Evaluating technology:** How do you educate yourself and your staff on all of the different end-user devices now available in the market? How have you measured the value of different hardware mixes for different user needs? If you could transform all of your end point offerings at one time – how far would you go in the transition to tablets and VDI's vs. traditional desktops and laptops?

- **Translating needs into solutions:** What advice do you have for marrying business leaders' process knowledge with IT's understanding of how each type of technology can improve those processes?

- **Encouraging buy-in:** What tactics have you used to share success stories and encourage use among managers who are not pushing for new technology?

- **Managing risk:** Moving to a mobile environment creates a new set of security concerns. What risks have you encountered for laptops, smartphones and tablets? What technology measures have you taken to mitigate these risks? What policies have you implemented to govern use of devices and data?