

## case study



# McKenney's Evolution of Remote Connectivity

Remote connectivity has long been a cornerstone of effective building automation management, though the methods, security expectations, and technology options have evolved significantly over the years. McKenney's Inc. planted the seeds of its *Remote Services* more than a decade ago and has continued to scale since then. As one of the most respected and well-established mechanical contracting and building automation services firms in the United States, McKenney's is demonstrating to the rest of the BAS services industry how *Remote Services* can serve as a key pillar in an overall business strategy. When Remote Service Maintenance options complement onsite work, it enables both staff and customers to save time, money, and energy, with seamless coordination between remote and onsite support. Secure, scalable, and efficient connectivity is the critical factor.

### CHALLENGE

McKenney's has been a trusted Niagara integrator and automation partner since the late 1990s, with decades of experience implementing and supporting complex building systems. Over the years, McKenney's approach to remote access has transformed alongside the cybersecurity landscape. Early strategies relied on VPN clients and even exposed IP addresses. While these methods were once standard, they no longer meet today's stringent security and operational demands.

Recognizing the need for stronger security and a more seamless user experience, McKenney's embarked on a journey of continuous improvement. The team first transitioned to customer-hosted VPNs, balancing access with protection. Later, they developed an internal platform

*"Niagara Remote™ now serves as the cornerstone of McKenney's connectivity strategy in the Carolinas—simplifying access management, enhancing cybersecurity, and improving customer trust. Customers save time, money, and energy by taking advantage of our remote service maintenance options."*

**Kristian Hernandez**  
Director, Service & Controls  
McKenney's Carolinas



### EVOLUTION OF REMOTE CONNECTIVITY AT MCKENNEY'S

#### GEN. #1 VPN CLIENTS



- VPN software can be compromised
- Broad network access is often granted, increasing threat landscape
- User credentials and devices may be vulnerable to attack

#### GEN. #2

#### INTERNAL PLATFORM



- Requires keeping pace with rapidly evolving cybersecurity technology
- Involves hiring and retaining IT to support the platform
- Hosted service subscription models can distract from core business

#### GEN. #3

#### CUSTOMER-HOSTED VPN



- VPN access is typically restricted to select users, limiting scalability across organizations
- Broader access increases management complexity and potential exposure across the network

#### TODAY

#### niagara remote™



- Provides remote access to a Niagara Supervisor or JACE through a web browser
- Tridium provides firewall-friendly connectivity with modern, enterprise-grade cybersecurity

## ADVANTAGES OF PROVIDING REMOTE SERVICES

1

### IMPROVED EFFICIENCY

Real-time remote monitoring and troubleshooting enables faster response times and reduced downtime. Equipped with secure connectivity, the McKenney's team can provide ongoing system maintenance. Issues are identified and resolved early, ensuring that systems operate at peak performance.

2

### COST SAVINGS

With remote service capabilities, McKenney's reduces the need for truck or vehicle-related expenses, resulting in cost savings. This cost-effective approach also benefits the environment by reducing the number of vehicles on the road.

3

### ZERO INTERRUPTION

McKenney's can respond quickly to any issues with remote access, minimizing disruptions to its customers' operations. By diagnosing and resolving problems remotely, the impact on daily routines is kept to a minimum.

4

### INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY

Remote service capabilities allow the McKenney's team to support properties across multiple states without requiring physical on-site visits. This approach benefits customers with facilities in multiple locations by delivering consistent, reliable service regardless of the facility's location.

called *buildingCONNECT*, a custom remote access solution designed to streamline technician workflows while maintaining strict security controls. Each step represented a meaningful advancement toward a more resilient infrastructure.

### SOLUTION

Ultimately, this progression led McKenney's to adopt Niagara Remote™, a purpose-built solution that integrates with the Niagara Framework® and the Tridium offering. Niagara Remote™ is a service within the Niagara Cloud Suite™ that provides:

- ▶ Remote access to a Niagara Supervisor or JACE® via a web browser, without the need for additional hardware, gateways or VPNs.
- ▶ Multifactor authentication (MFA) to verify the identity of anyone attempting to log on
- ▶ Latest TLS encryption for all transmissions
- ▶ Secure HTTPS/web-sockets connection
- ▶ Fine-grained, role-based access controls to allow user access to be managed at the station level.

For more information about Niagara Remote and to initiate a trial start at: <https://www.tridium.com/us/en/Products/niagara-cloud-suite/niagara-remote>

### ABOUT MCKENNEYS

McKenney's, Inc., is a commercial mechanical contractor operating for more than seven decades, and has helped

to shape the skylines of Atlanta and Charlotte. Today the company maintains in-house engineering, fabrication, installation and commissioning resources. McKenney's provides mechanical services and solutions for commercial buildings including HVAC, process piping, plumbing, building automation, controls, service and maintenance. McKenney's Automation and Controls Solutions (ACS) focuses on helping customers manage their building facilities for optimal comfort, cost savings, and energy efficiency. McKenney's expertise in control system integration and interoperable, open protocols allows it to serve as a trusted advisor to customers, without requiring customers to become dependent on any single control vendor.

### ABOUT TRIDIUM

Tridium is the developer of Niagara Framework®, an automation platform for the development and deployment of connected products and device-to-enterprise applications. Niagara provides the critical device connectivity, cyber security, control, data management, device management and user presentation capabilities needed to extract value and insight from real-time operational data in buildings, data centers, manufacturing systems, smart cities and more. Support for open-protocols and attention to cyber defense has made Niagara Framework® the industry leader in building automation systems and IoT solutions.



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