



Global electronics manufacturer handles FTP, SFTP, AS2, and SAP integration with Cleo



Company:

Kimball Electronics
(NASDAQ: KE)

Headquarters:

Jasper, Indiana

Founded: 1961

Industry:

Electronics manufacturing

Employees: 5,400+

Annual revenue:

\$930 million+

Business need:

FTP consolidation,
multi-protocol support,
SAP ingestion

Kimball Electronics Consolidates Legacy FTP Systems, Streamlines Data Flows

Kimball Electronics is a pre-eminent electronics manufacturing services (EMS) provider serving customers around the world. Its contract electronics manufacturing services teams provide manufacturing, engineering and supply chain services, design and testing services, as well as regulatory support processes for a variety of industries.

Kimball manufactures high-reliability and high-durability electronics, electronics assemblies, and integrated assemblies for its customers in various markets, including automotive, industrial, medical, and public safety. When the time came for an FTP replacement initiative, Kimball sought a more modern, comprehensive solution that could consolidate its data movement processes and meet the needs of its global manufacturing business.

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IT Challenge

With manufacturing operations in the U.S., China, Mexico, Poland, Romania, and Thailand, Kimball Electronics exchanges documents with customers, suppliers and contractors all over the world to deliver its services. The company also interacts with financial institutions and credit card companies for payment and finance workflows, creating demand for numerous communication needs:

- Exchanging customer and supplier information calls for a variety of secure FTP connections
- Communicating with banks requires secure AS2 transfers via TLSv1.2 and the latest cipher codes
- Ingesting engineering design files into its document management solution is a different workflow altogether

The breadth of its daily transactional needs put Kimball Electronics in pursuit of a platform that could support multiple advanced communication protocols and file transfer methods.

“While we were specifically looking for a replacement to an old FTP solution, we also were looking for a tool that could provide FTP, SFTP, AS2, and other protocols,” said Jim Sitzman, application developer for Kimball Electronics.

Kimball looked at several vendors, but many couldn’t support the communication methods Kimball might use in the future.

“Not all the solutions we looked at were able to cover the protocols that we were using or would potentially use in the future,” said Lynn Scheu, Kimball’s director of IT system support. “We also wanted something that we could decentralize the maintenance of the user authorization and business partner setup. Cleo supports this.”



“Cleo is a single-source provider that can easily make AS2 and SFTP transfers and provides a wide range of protocols for any future needs.”

– **Jim Sitzman**,
application developer,
Kimball Electronics



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The Solution

Kimball already had a longstanding relationship with Cleo and had used Cleo to exchange EDI data with one of its customers, but an RFI surfaced Cleo's advanced data movement and B2B integration platform with multi-protocol support and an intuitive self-service web portal for its customer-facing processes.

Kimball used the Cleo Integration Cloud to consolidate its outdated FTP systems and streamline data flows, and in doing so, the company gained various important benefits:

- The web-based front end, including a customer portal, made it an easier solution for business partners and internal users
- The consolidation of several tools into one simplified maintenance
- The web UI enabled easier administration on the IT side, a big win internally

"The web portal has made it easier to bring engineering design documents into our SAP document management system," Scheu said, "and the simplified workflow means users do not have to have strong technical skills to use the solution."

In replacing its legacy FTP solutions with Cleo Integration Cloud, Kimball Electronics also observed a notably happier customer base.

"The business partner and user support calls have been reduced significantly due to the ease of use of the tool and user self-help capability," Sitzman said. "Cleo has been an invaluable technology for Kimball Electronics."

