

EmpowerID helps **SIEMENS** enforce Zero Trust and Secure the World's Largest Azure Active Directory

By Mike Putnam

Siemens was able to improve security through **Zero Trust** as well as increase productivity and reduce costs by automating and providing many tasks as self-service options.

THE CHALLENGE:

“Security is our main driver”

“Siemens is the largest industrial manufacturing company in Europe,” said Patrick Parker, Founder & CEO of EmpowerID, “and it’s famous for having what Microsoft calls ‘the world’s largest corporate active directory (AD).’”

As a global company, not only do they have multiple ADs and hybrid ADs (on-premise and in Azure), they also have 200 different service providers, all in different countries, managing them all in different ways.

The sheer size of Siemens creates astonishing complexity.



Provide automated **Day 1 Readiness** for 7,000 monthly Joiners.



JML and application access automated

- **300** movers & **5,000** leavers per month
- **3,000** monthly Azure license requests
- **5,000,000** monthly group membership changes
- **450,000** users, **1,000,000** accounts, **1,650,000** groups



User-friendly self-service cuts costs drastically



Enforce Zero Trust with a surefire process that confirms and links a real person to their legitimate identity and resources.

On top of that, **“there was no central process to enforce standardized rules for identity and access management (IAM),”** said Leo Morales, IT architect at Siemens. “Everyone was doing whatever they wanted based on their own needs. It was so complex,” he sighed.

In an era in which hacking is almost like a new growth industry, complexity leads to vulnerability. And according to Mr. Morales, “security was our main driver. We were looking for a solution where we could maintain and enforce uniform policies of access to AD accounts and service in Azure based on identity and Zero Trust. That’s why we chose EmpowerID.”

Let’s break down what that means. If hacking is evolving, then cyber defense must evolve as well. For example, Harvard Business Review estimates that up to **60% of cyberattacks originate from inside organizations**, so it’s not a matter of building bigger walls around your company. In addition, with employees now working from anywhere, using any device, and huge numbers of resources moving to the cloud, those old walls have literally disappeared.

In this brave new world, **Zero Trust IAM is the new paradigm of IT security**. The three founding principles of this new approach are these: never trust, always verify, and always enforce least privilege.

All this pivots on identity and access—that is, who are the members of your company and what IT resources should they have access to? On one level, this comes down to some pretty pedestrian concerns: who’s joining the organization, who’s moving within it, and who’s leaving it? With each of those changes, access privileges change.

“Because Microsoft 365 license management is now completely dedicated to EmpowerID, it has been accelerating everything.”

– Mr. Morales, IT architect at Siemens

On another level, when you have an organization the size of Siemens, there are literally thousands of these events every month. In the old system, changes to access and credentials were handled manually by third-party providers and help desks. And as Mr. Morales noted, Siemens lacked an agreed upon set of standards.

This situation created any number of problems, not least among them:

- Deeply compromised security
- Higher costs due to reliance on outsourced manual labor and help desks
- Higher costs because if permissions aren’t terminated when someone leaves, the company continues to pay for licenses that no one’s using
- Higher costs because new hires sometimes wait days to gain access to basic applications like Microsoft 365

Siemens needed a solution, and fast.

¹ An IAM system is a type of IT security system. IAM is a collection of rules and technologies put into place by a company or institution that ensures the right users have the right access to the right accounts and IT resources. In general, the IAM system identifies, authenticates, and controls access to a company’s IT resources whether on-premise or in the cloud, and can do so in a matter of minutes. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_management)

² van Zadelhoff, M. (2016, September 19). [The Biggest Cybersecurity Threats Are Inside Your Company](#). Harvard Business Review.

THE SOLUTION:

Award winning scalability for IAM on Azure

EmpowerID presented Siemens with the solution they were looking for. **“EmpowerID’s mission,”** said Mr. Parker, CEO, **“is to provide simple and secure automation and Zero Trust management of identities and their access.”** And of course, when we’re talking about Siemens, the scalability of EmpowerID’s solution is fundamental.

Let’s be clear though, scale was a central challenge. Siemens is very data-driven, in order to have the intelligence (who changed jobs, who changed countries, who has access to what, who’s missing access, who’s joining the company, who’s leaving) and in order to automate provisioning and de-provisioning access, **“we are constantly ingesting ridiculous amounts of data and analyzing it for changes,”** Mr. Parker said.

“With EmpowerID, we’re not a number, we’re a customer.”

– Mr. Morales, IT architect at Siemens

EmpowerID provided Siemens with a great solution, but the best solutions depend on more than technology. They say people like to do business with people and **“with EmpowerID, we’re not a number, we’re a customer,”** Mr. Morales said. **“We talked quite often with Patrick and Alexandre to develop a common approach for how EmpowerID could help Siemens do business. That’s one of the big reasons we made the decision to work with them,”** Mr. Morales said.

“That was a challenge for EmpowerID,” Mr. Morales said.

“They didn’t think we’d be able to do it,” Mr. Parker added, a little less diplomatically.

But do it they did. And so successfully, that the industry-leading analyst firm KuppingerCole declared Siemens, EmpowerID, and their global partner Avanade (a key player in EmpowerID’s contract with Siemens), the winners of the **“IAM at Scale”** award at the 2021 European Identity and Cloud Conference. The team rolled out and managed **“one of the world’s largest Azure AD environments,”** which **“resulted in massively shortened response times of IT delivering better services to the users.”**

Together, they agreed that data-related work and provider coordination would be the task of Siemens. They worked together on defining the rules for access that Siemens wanted, EmpowerID provided guidance based on their experience, and after that, EmpowerID did everything else.

³ KuppingerCole Honors Excellence in Digital Identity and Cybersecurity. (<https://www.kuppingercole.com/eic-2021-awards>)

⁴ Patrick Parker and Alexandre Spoerri, EmpowerID’s CEO and Sales Director, respectively.

THE RESULTS:

Automation, self-service, and Zero Trust security

What were the benefits for Siemens?

Frankly, it's hard to know where to start.

EmpowerID helped Siemens implement numerous money saving automated functionalities. Automatic onboarding and licensing management for Microsoft 365 is one strong example. **Siemens can now detect joiners and assign licenses almost instantly.**

"For a person to start working, the most important licenses are Microsoft 365," Mr. Morales said. This raises the common problem of "Day 1 readiness." In the past, joiners at Siemens had to request licenses which were then processed manually. This led new hires to be idle for days and to what Mr. Parker said people call "the bad first impression" for a company.

With EmpowerID though, "the moment you set foot in the building, all your access is ready," Mr. Parker said.

And Mr. Morales concurs, "because Microsoft 365 license management is now completely dedicated to EmpowerID, it has been accelerating everything."

Day 1 readiness is a strong example, but keep in mind that the benefits of this automation continue to deliver throughout the lifecycle of the employee: provisioning access for new hires, changing access for movers, and deprovisioning access for leavers.

Another layer of benefits comes into play when we consider the power of self-service. Mr. Morales explained: **"Now I do more with less staff because with EmpowerID we can dedicate tasks as a self-service and reduce our reliance on help desks."** So by automating and creating user-friendly self-service options, "we're cutting costs," Mr. Morales said. Indeed, as Siemens moves forward, their plan is to implement as many tasks as possible to self-service.

"EmpowerID's mission is to provide simple and secure automation and Zero Trust management of identities and their access."

— Patrick Parker, CEO EmpowerID

Finally, Siemens' top executive priority was Azure and Zero Trust. **"We live in a new normal,"** Mr. Morales said. "There's no firewall, there are no rooms, there's nothing like the buildings we had in the past to protect our systems. Everything's in Azure, in the cloud. It's all accessible on the internet.

That's why it's so important to focus on identity and confirm trust in that identity. With EmpowerID we know the base, we've created a process, a trustworthy process, and we know the real existence of the human body linked to an identity and resources—that's the key to Zero Trust IAM. EmpowerID is helping us maintain these systems and adapt to the new normal."

Let's have a chat.

Schedule a demo today!

Find out for yourself how EmpowerID's **entirely workflow-based** and all-in-one platform can deliver simple and secure automation and **Zero Trust Management** of your organization's identities and their access for today's multi-cloud world.

→ [Click here to Schedule a Demo](#)

or give us a call using one of the contacts below.

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