

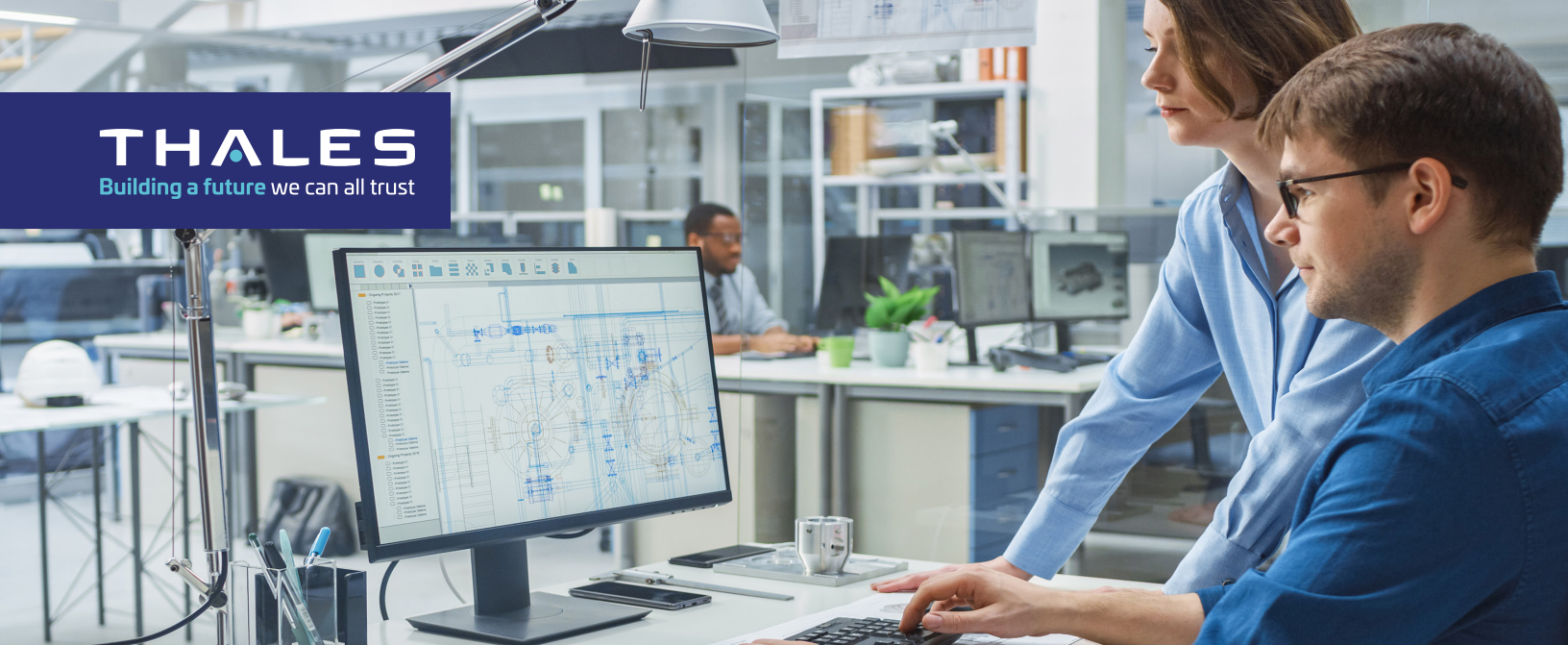
Case Study

DDX Readies for SaaS with Sentinel Licensing

The CAD/CAM Software
Producer Has Used
Sentinel Since Their
Establishment in 2001

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DDX Software Solutions, based in Italy with branches in France, Germany, and Spain, produces CAD/CAM software for builders and craftspeople using numerically controlled machining centers, wood, stone, and glass designs, and composite material elements. Since their inception in 2001, DDX's software solutions have been built to be simple, yet comprehensive and flexible. Since seventy-five percent of their revenue comes from software sales, they have ensured that their licensing and software revenue are protected using the Sentinel platform. Striving to scale fully, DDX is now on the cusp of implementing a SaaS model using Thales' Sentinel.

Stage One: The Move to Software-Based Licenses

For twenty years, DDX used Sentinel hardware key (dongle) software licenses. Then, in 2021, they decided to scale their software. To do so, DDX knew they needed to undergo a digital transformation. At the time, this meant delivering their licensing with Thales' Sentinel SL (Software Licensing). DDX chose Sentinel SL, delivered via a file, because it eliminated hardware key shipping and enabled a quick-and-easy end user installation and subscription activation.

DDX also required their licensing platform to facilitate monetization which would **accelerate their time to market and enable software revenue growth**. Additionally, they continued their long-term relationship with Thales because of their high level of service. "During all our years with Thales, they proved to be a helpful and reliable partner," recalls Nicola Gelmini, DDX Senior Software Engineer. "After the training period, whenever we need assistance, they are there. **Thales' support empowers us to achieve our goals with Sentinel. The Thales support team is so appreciated by our team.**"

Stage Two: Due Diligence

Since DDX relied on Sentinel for hardware key licenses for twenty years, they started their software licensing search for software monetization with the same Thales team they had always relied upon. Even with their long history, with Thales they still needed assurance that Sentinel would address their operational needs as follows:

- a) Security.** DDX's top priority was to extend the same level of security via SL as they had been accustomed to from their Sentinel hardware key API encrypt/decrypt engine.
- b) Ability to Integrate.** DDX's licensing platform had to integrate with their ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) and CRM (Customer Relationship Manager).
- c) Flexibility.** DDX wanted a simple process for license management - cancellations, reinstatements, or entitlement modifications - especially for its B2B enterprise customers and resellers.
- d) Revenue Leakage Prevention.** Prior to Sentinel, DDX experienced hacking on their free trial expiration dates, which meant that customers continued to use the software for free when they needed to pay for it. With Sentinel, the free trial end date is secure, and customers are required to pay immediately thereafter.

After comparing other software licensing and monetization platforms to Thales Sentinel, DDX chose to continue with Thales due to its security, integration, and flexibility. Plus, DDX already had excellent experience with Thales' robust support.



Stage Three: Proof of Value

Because Sentinel uses the same API for all deployment types, the move from hardware key to on prem software licensing was a seamless process, including a **streamlined ERP and CRM integration**. Moreover, the **Sentinel SL API offers the same security as its hardware-key licenses**.

DDX was also delighted with additional benefits they realized in using Sentinel software licensing, such as:

- **OpEx Savings and Lower Carbon Footprint.** By eliminating dongle shipments, DDX no longer had to contend with the resources, supplies, and logistics of mailing out hardware keys. This significantly lowered costs and reduced carbon footprint by eliminating production and transportation emissions.
- **Improved CX.** Laptop end users gained easier mobility between home and office since they no longer needed to remember to carry the dongle with them.

“ Sentinel SL development is simple to implement, deploy and release. It is very easy to change feature enablement, tailoring it for each customer.”

- Nicola Gelmini, DDX Senior Software Engineer

DDX was very satisfied with the migration process, especially the technical team which appreciated the Sentinel Toolbox, allowing them to verify every command sequence before implementing it in their code. “Sentinel SL development is simple to implement, deploy and release. SL removed the need for shipping hardware keys and enabled us to deal with any customer issues immediately. It made it very easy to change feature enablement, tailoring it for each customer. CX improved very much,” asserted Gelmini.

Final Stage: SaaS

DDX is now ready to adopt a SaaS model to maximize scaling their software. Considering their long-term positive relationship with Thales and the fact that **the same API is also used for cloud licensing**, there was no question that DDX would continue with Sentinel. Moreover, Sentinel’s dynamic product package **provisioning allows for a single onboarding experience across product lines**, a plus for DDX customers and partners. (Single onboarding is due to the integration of the key management library with their online customer logins, whereby users are authenticated immediately upon logging in and no longer need to know their license key.)

DDX has already begun the testing phase for moving all software licenses to the cloud using Sentinel CL. They are also strongly considering using Thales’ hosting with Sentinel CL Service, eliminating the need to arrange for cloud hosting themselves.

In addition to Sentinel CL’s software scaling capabilities, DDX has embraced CL because it allows for:

- **Immediate Delivery.** With cloud licensing, users access their subscription within seconds. They no longer need to install a file on prem as they currently do with SL.
- **Maximum Login Flexibility.** Through Cloud Licensing, DDX can disable/enable/delete/create cloud identity very quickly. For example, a large DDX customer with different employees needs to use the license flexibly due to employee changeovers. **Using a single license, Sentinel enables concurrent access via an identity to different users, who in turn can access the software from multiple devices.**
- **Always On.** Cloud license servers remain up and running 24/7. This allows DDX to offer the highest-level of service for their customers.
- **Updated Automatically.** DDX customers don’t have to worry about installing updates with the latest version from a license manager, rather, the updates are installed proactively on their behalf as part of Sentinel CL.
- **Continual Support.** Throughout the migration to the cloud, Thales’ supports ongoing training which is incredibly helpful “in general and with the API integration in particular,” points out Gelmini.

“ Thales has given us a better understanding of how to protect our work and allowed us to maintain reliable revenue.”

- Battista Siboldi, DDX Executive Board Member

DDX is poised to monetize their software as a SaaS company after testing is complete. “We look forward to moving all of our licenses over to the cloud with Sentinel CL,” says Gelmini.

About Thales

Today’s businesses and governments depend on the cloud, data and software to deliver trusted digital services. That is why the most recognized brands and organizations around the world, rely on Thales to help them protect sensitive information and software wherever it is created, stored or accessed – from the cloud and data centers to devices and across networks. As the global leader in data security, identity & access management, and software licensing, our solutions enable organizations to move to the cloud securely, achieve compliance with confidence, create more value from their software and deliver seamless digital experiences for millions of consumers every day.