Security in the real estate industry plays a significant part in industry forecasting

January 04, 2008 - Owners Developers & Managers

As another year approaches we go into a forecasting mode. We look back at what we have accomplished as well as what we wished we could accomplish.

Your author has written over 50 security and safety related articles over the last 15 years. These articles were on a variety of security and safety as they relate to commercial and industrial real estate. It was my objective to inform the readership, the property owners, managers and developers, of new and innovative approaches to protecting their properties, personnel and assets in light of the changing threats.

Further, it was my endeavor to convince the readership that security and safety awareness and planning are paramount. We have been in a technological revolution in every aspect of our lives and it seems to be escalating instantaneously. It's like riding a surfboard on the top of a speeding, giant wave. It's exciting and thrilling; just don't lose your balance.

The real estate industry has immersed itself in high tech environmental controls, high tech construction techniques, high tech elevators and even higher tech communications. The best part is that the real estate community has embraced this high tech renaissance, some more rapidly than others due to economic trends, mergers and acquisitions.

Over the last 10 to 15 years the business of security, its growth, and its application to the real state community, has also become a high tech industry. In 2008 you will have available the latest innovations in security technology to help you address and combat the threats to life safety and potential profit erosion.

One of the driving forces to positive, technological change in security has been emergence of industry giants into the security industry. Corporations like G.E., Honeywell, Johnson Controls and Siemens have entered, or re-entered, the security arena. Corporations such as Ingersoll-Rand, Tyco and Securitas have, too, become major forces in the security industry by virtue of acquisition.

The attraction to this industry has not only been its steady and consistently healthy growth, but its astounding projections.

With the presence of these corporate giants, come the resources to support new technology development. Just a few short years ago we were looking at analog video surveillance cameras and access control card readers, and the conventional videocassette recorders. With the digital revolution we find smaller, more efficient and more cost effective cameras. Digital proximity card readers are now more commonly used than ever before and VCRs have become obsolete giving way to the highly versatile, reliable DVR (digital video recorder) and the next generation, the NVR (network video recorder).

Network technology, usually applied to a corporation's information technology (IT) has embraced security applications. In video surveillance a new breed of cameras called Internet Protocol (IP)

cameras have virtually taken over.

As network technology emerges, the basis for IT support in corporations is essential as we become more vulnerable to IT related security problems. The real estate industry has intelligently adapted to the IP revolution and thus opens new vulnerabilities. The industry is subject to competitive prying. Everything anyone wants to know about your organization ranging from client information, potential property deals, policy matters and corporate strategies are available through data network compromising practices unless you plan and implement good IT security procedures.

Whatever new technologies the real estate industry embraces, the trend in the tightening of security in buildings, or "target hardening," is the implementation of computer based systems. These may start with visitor access/badging. In the past several months, there have been numerous new companies supplying such systems. If a property has an existing access control system, a visitor access/badging system can use the same database to facilitate implementation.

Just as the use of fiber optic and twisted pair CAT 5 and 6 cables became very popular in recent times, another new trend in security technology is the use of wireless methods for the transmission of video surveillance and access control information. With the use of

wireless technology we have the ability to transmit security event information and incident messages including live video surveillance pictures to a security person's, personal Palm Pilot, Blackberry, iPod or equivalent device. Intelligent behavioral analysis software is now commonly being used to "make decisions" as to which camera's scenes are showing actual, live critical events.

As the security industry grows technologically, the security professionals in this industry must keep up with this growth, as well as the security and safety issues that are challenging property owners and managers, in order to serve them better. The security industry is helping to assure that security practioners maintain established levels of expertise. Professional Board Certifications such as the Certified Protection Professional (CPP), the Professional Certified Investigator (CPI) and the Physical Security Professional (PSP) tend to be the real estate property owner's and manager's assurance that they can rely on the security practitioner for professional, knowledgeable and sound judgment when asked to protect lives, property and assets.

When forecasting for 2008, the real estate industry needs to be better prepared for any future eventuality, the industry has never been in better hands than in the hands of their local and regional security professionals.

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