



A building security measure that works: The safety benefits of a centralized messenger center

February 11, 2008 - Owners Developers & Managers

It is no secret that the chaos of busy entries and exits of commercial buildings can be a security nightmare for the tenants and visitors as well as employees. The high-volume traffic of unfamiliar faces combined with the endless incoming and outgoing flow of mail and other parcels are just a few obstacles that challenge building safety. Therefore, the incorporation of proactive and preventive security measures by facility management is crucial to securing the protection of a property.

In the past, security hassles camouflaged as safety measures have proven to cause unnecessary aggravation to all parties involved. Through the evaluation of potential security dangers such as visitor admittance, package acceptance and mail delivery, an owner is then able to carefully assess their building's strengths and weaknesses. And in turn can incorporate security protocols that make sense. Throughout the last five years, building owners have implemented procedures that have significantly heightened security, while other tactics have proven to be ineffective, time-consuming and costly to maintain.

One effective way for building owners to beef up safety measures is to restrict delivery access to and from the property. This can be achieved through the implementation of an on-premise centralized courier/messenger center. Serving a dual function, messenger services efficiently oversee the inbound and outbound stream of package traffic while instilling a sense of authority and control within the building.

Messenger centers were originally established to keep buildings in pristine condition and to maintain the satisfaction of tenants. They were seen as a class A property privilege to reduce petty crimes such as vandalism and purse snatchings. At the time, the thought of terrorist attacks happening on U.S. soil was not a realistic thought. Today, living in a post 9/11 world, these centers are viewed as an effective unobtrusive layer of building security if they are efficiently run. Through the utilization of this service, all deliveries enter and exit via the building's designated messenger center office (usually located near the side door of the property). Incoming parcels are signed for by the messenger center staff and brought directly to the tenant by a uniformed employee, thereby cutting off property access to outside couriers. To send a package from the building, tenants are instructed to call the messenger center, which will dispatch a uniformed designated staffer to retrieve the package.

Since acquiring Bright Star Couriers, a division of Alliance Building Services (ABS), in December 2001, the company has successfully opened messenger centers across New York City: from downtown at 100 Wall Street to uptown at 420 Lexington Ave. in the heart of midtown. Most recently ABS celebrated the opening of its 20th messenger center at a newly refurbished, 90 Broad St. With an average of about 500 packages and other parcels entering and leaving these properties on a typical business day, the installation of a messenger service has proved to be a secure and equally

resourceful service.

Â By reducing random building traffic and monitoring all packages and deliveries, messenger centers help keep workplaces safe. For example, before instituting a messenger service center, one property currently in the Bright Star portfolio was experiencing difficulties with bike messengers entering the building to drop off packages and using the ladies room as opposed to the mens room. As a result, the women began to feel threatened and feared for their safety when entering the bathroom. Once the messenger center was put into operation, the problem was eliminated and the tenants quickly began to feel safe in their own building once again.

Serving as a central collection point for all inbound and outbound deliveries, an internal messenger center is a cost effective method to provide an additional level of security and safety to both tenants and property owners. In essence, messenger centers offer an advanced level of access control within the building for the benefit of the tenants as well as safeguarding the property for the building owners.

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