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## **Security services has a new alternative: Viewpoint interactive video monitoring:**

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Many businesses that require security services have, until recently, been limited in their security alternatives. The use of security officers, with their high cost and varied success, has competed with electronic security, and the multiple layers of integration available that include detection, remote viewing capabilities and access control. A new alternative now exists that combines the best of these practices; interactive video monitoring.

The interactive video monitoring solution is a very proactive one. The operators perform video tours of client's properties 24 hours per day. This is a very proactive approach because they prevent situations from happening. Through technology they are also able to communicate to the property via speakers installed at each camera location. In this way they can move people along that should not be there, they can assist people from a customer service perspective and they can also act as a concierge by accepting packages.

Many clients find that there is a huge return on investment by utilizing interactive video monitoring. Many times you can reduce the amount of security officers on site or use the technology to assist or supplement the security force.

I am familiar with alarm central stations that provide video verification. In other words, when the central station receives an alarm it opens up a video connection and the central station is able to view the live video to verify whether it was a false alarm or not. They also retrieve the recorded video to observe what took place during the alarm. To me this is a reactive approach. I visited a remote video monitoring company called Viewpoint CRM located in Lowell Mass. They take a proactive approach. After spending time in their command center, it became very clear to me that they approach this service very differently.

I watched an incident where there were 25-30 individuals at 2 in the morning partying and drinking in a parking lot. After observing this situation, a Viewpoint agent made an announcement through the Viewpoint audio system that the group needed to disperse or the police would be notified. It was amazing to see: the entire group left immediately. There wasn't any confrontation like there would have been if a security officer had approached the group. I do not think any single security officer would walk up take on this situation alone, especially at 2 a.m.

On another occasion, I observed a Viewpoint agent receive a call from an on-site security officer requesting Viewpoint's services. In this case the security officer chose to have the Viewpoint agent command a person off the premises. The Viewpoint agent courteously diffused the situation whereas a face to face confrontation may have escalated the situation.

Over the years I found that security officers are often alone on site and are required to watch the video monitors on a continual basis. I also know that the effectiveness of one person staring at video monitors is measured in minutes, leaving them susceptible to missing even an obvious breach or

violation after staring at a bank of monitors for hours. Whereas a facility or company is challenged in budgeting the appropriate staffing numbers, Viewpoint can allocate multiple agents in times of need or heavy traffic, and stand-by services at times of low traffic and activity. The result is a more effective solution at a lower cost. Brad Gordon, CEO of Viewpoint, sights an example of a facility in N.J. "Every site is different," Gordon said. "This site in N.J. , for example, replaced a 24/7 guard position which cost the site \$148,000 a year with Viewpoint services offering 73 documented and recorded voice and video tours a day providing a savings of over \$76,000 a year." The property manager states the ownership is delighted with the savings, and they are installing it at other places because of the effectiveness.

The Viewpoint command center is staffed by supervisors 24/7. There is always a supervisor in the room monitoring the agents and providing them with support. Also, with many agents working at the same time, they rotate the various accounts by the half hour or hour so that they are not always looking at the same cameras at the same locations, keeping it fresh.

As part of the nightly tours, the agents perform health checks on each of the cameras and recorders to ensure that the equipment is functioning properly.

Technology is often touted as a solution in the future. In security, the future is now, and the applications will only get more challenging. Integrators and Security Solution providers must be in the forefront when delivering creative technology based solutions. Remote video monitoring is one of those technologies and it is happening today in Lowell Mass. at Viewpoint CRM.

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