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Make sure you get the most out of your video surveillance investment - and your installer

June 12, 2014 - Spotlights

When you're shopping for a video surveillance system, understanding what your options are and what the system will do for you is just as important as the company you select to install it. Here's a list of questions you can ask to help you make informed decisions regarding the security camera system you purchase and the installer you use.

How long have you been in business? There's no substitute for experience. A company that has been in business for a while will have established a reputation in the local market. With a longer track record you can take a good look at projects they've done.

How many systems like mine have you installed? Your installer should have experience with the size and type of system you want installed.

Can you provide me with a list of references? Ask for a list of references that have had projects similar in scope to yours and follow up with them. It's important to confirm that your installer has any recent, relevant experience as well as satisfied clients from years past.

How soon can you start and how long will it take? Make sure the installer's schedule is compatible with yours from start to finish. Although installation time varies based on number of cameras, how long the cable run is and other factors unique to your application, your installer should provide you with this information in your quote.

Can I still use my existing security camera system? Protect your investment and reduce installation costs. With the use of a video encoder, your installer can connect your existing cameras to a network video system. You'll gain the benefit of network video without having to replace existing analog cameras and coaxial cables with IP cameras.

What type of video management software will I need? The type of software is chosen based on your requirements. It can be as simple as video management software resident on a single camera that records video to an SD card or PC, to a video management system that supports simultaneous access to multiple sites with advanced functionality.

Is training included? Ask your installer to explain who will conduct on-site video management software administration and surveillance operator training, configuration, operation and diagnostics and if it's included in the price of the system.

Are there any ongoing costs after my system is installed and operational? There are no ongoing costs. However an installer should offer a support plan with pricing that addresses firmware upgrades, new camera additions, new features, and who you can contact if you encounter a problem.

What does the product warranty cover? In addition to any warranty extended to you directly from the manufacturer of the product used in the installation, the installer should warrant that the installation conforms to the manufacturer's recommendations and follows industry standards and quality

guidelines.

What will my video surveillance system cost? A video surveillance system needs to be customized for your application. You should receive a free quote that will itemize some or all of the following depending on your requirements: hardware, software, customization, installation and support.

Do you offer free consultations and site assessments? Choose from installers who offer free phone and onsite consultations. Security Camera Systems New England is available to answer these and any other questions you have to better help you explore which video surveillance solution is best for you.

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