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The importance of evaluating high-rise and large structure security systems and keeping them current

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Increased security levels in the post-9/11 world have mandated that high-rise and large structure building owners and managers address evaluating and prospectively updating security systems, and making them upgradeable, as future needs warrant and/or new technologies become available.

Rapid technological advancements and design ingenuity now allow for the full integration of all aspects of the security management system. All sub-systems and components within a high-rise facility's security system, including access control/card access, CCTV, intrusion detection, intercom, digital recording, and electronic turnstiles can now be fully integrated into the overall security management system. The result is a higher and more efficient level of security for commercial buildings. Furthermore, the security solution that is employed, based on the evaluation, whether it is an upgrade, a total renovation, or a new system installation, can be customizable to meet the specific needs of the facility.

So, where does the building owner or facility manager begin when it comes to evaluating existing security systems and determining whether the current system is an appropriate security solution for the building or whether there is a need for an upgrade or renovation? Since security technologies have changed rapidly, if a security system is more than 5 to 7 years old, there are probably aspects of it that either must be or should be upgraded. When deciding on how to begin the review and planning process, and making an appropriate determination as to whether some aspect of the existing system should be upgraded and fully integrated into the security management system, a qualified security system designer and installer should be called upon for an onsite review and evaluation of the existing system and all sub-systems.

How does one determine whether the security system company is the right one? A qualified security system provider should be adept and highly experienced in installations of the latest technologies for high-rise facilities and large structure buildings. That contractor should be able to provide a comprehensive evaluation and make recommendations for the appropriate system upgrade, should one be required, a renovation, or an entirely new system, if warranted.

A full-service security system provider/installation company can handle all aspects of an upgrade or a new security system installation project - design, quality review, system installation, electrical installation, system testing, commissioning, and service after the project. The full-service provider makes time constraints easier on the facility manager and also streamlines any necessary security system upgrade project.

The security contractor should be fully trained and certified with leading security hardware and software companies. Members of the staff should maintain a Mass. "D" license and all installers should have undergone a Commonwealth of Mass. CORI check. Technicians, system designers and installers should all maintain Commonwealth of Mass. Security Contractors Compliance Certificates.

At the onsite review and evaluation, threat level points will be determined and the existing system will be checked for quality, coverage, and upgradability.

In today's economy and given the need for high-level security, the key is to find an experienced security contractor, check client references, work performance, and system quality in similar types of facilities, and make sure that the recommendation(s) can be integrated into the security management system and can accommodate upgrades, as necessary.

Case Study: Proactive Owner Results in Innovative Security System Upgrade Solution

Recent high-rise security renovation projects at 225 Franklin St., 100 High St., One Post Office Sq., and 1 Memorial Dr. performed by Spectrum IT for property owner/manager Blackstone Properties are illustrative of the benefits of having a single source security design and installation company handle the security system evaluation and subsequent upgrade. In each of these facilities, state-of-the-art visitor entry security systems were designed, installed and integrated into the building's overall security management system to meet the owner's need for streamlined entry security. These web access visitor entry systems, the first of their kind in Boston, employ unmanned kiosks which incorporate bar code scanner and reader in lobby areas. Pre-enrolled visitors log in via a scan of their driver's license. A hardcopy access badge allows them to utilize electronic turnstiles, elevators, and assigned doors for the duration of their visit. Our firm planned and integrated diverse security system technologies of key vendors that were integral to the project: AMAG, Pelco, Building Engines, and ITS (Interactive Touchscreen Solutions).

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Spectrum Integrated Technologies, the security and tel/data division of J. & M. Brown Company, Inc. is a full service security system company based in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. The Company is a member of ASIS, NECA and BICSI.

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