

Leisure industry security encompasses a variety of venues, events and businesses. From night clubs, casinos and stadia, to gyms, retail and restaurants; they all have their own specific needs. Some can automate parts using security cameras, but the human input is essential and it also provides good customer services.

Security measures in this area can range from the preventative type, where people will be searched to avoid allowing offensive items entering the event, or crowd management techniques will be used to ensure a smooth flow; to the intervention in a case of disorderly behaviour or an emergency. Leisure facilities have to show a commitment to reducing anti-social behaviour and preventative measures can go a long way to achieve success.

Jean-Paul Frenett from Access Control Security (ACS) says, "Access control and CCTV are invaluable during opening hours for any business. These methods combined mean you can track movement of both visitors and staff, with historical checks to see who accessed certain areas and when. At night, fire and security alarms guard leisure businesses."

A personal touch

Despite the rise of CCTV to assist the monitoring of public areas, and the moves towards automating safety measures, manned guarding is still essential in leisure.

Adrian White from Carlisle Support Service, a company that provides security personnel to the public and private sectors, says that today a security guard doesn't just need to have training and an understanding of security, "He or she also has to provide good customer services."

Carlisle stewards need to have an NVQ level 3 certificate in customers' safety in addition to their SIA licence. Managers are also trained to be leaders of their teams. "Within an event you will have a chain of command including people with different skills, training and responsibility level," explains White and adds, "Venues are advised to have an effective command control process in place and guidance on security measures, describing how to deal with exceptional circumstances."

Carlisle works closely with security trainer and consultant Jim Ferran. The ex-policeman runs workshops and training courses for security personnel. He says, "When you deal with large numbers of people in a public space, it is important to provide safety, security, reassurance and deliver a high quality of customer services."

Ferran uses different techniques to help train security workers, from neuro linguistic

Service with a smile

programming (NLP) techniques, to role-playing and simulations, they all provide practical tools that can be used when dealing with risk situations.

"Security people have to be visible and show authority, but at the same time they need to be reassuring and have a smile on their face," explains Ferran. "Bag searches, for instance, can be quite emotive. People should open and show their belongings and not feel invaded. They need to be reassured that this is not because they are thought of as suspicious, but for everybody's safety. Empathy is a great ally when dealing with people."

In general, events are not one-off occurrences. Jim Ferran says that having a historic view is a good preventative measure. "Look at the demography of people going to the event. See if there had been incidents in the past and be prepared."

The use of technology is a great aid. As Jim calls it, CCTV is 'the eye in the sky'. The CCTV control room can monitor the venue and let guards on the ground know about the overview of any situation.

Stephen Marsh, from video security manufacturer Dallmeier, says that each venue and industry sector will have different technological requirements in terms of security cameras. "The solutions provided are location and application specific. Each leisure industry sector has its own challenges and requirements. These could range from lighting, to infrastructure or access. There is no true, out-of-the-box solution. Each system has to be designed with the project locations in mind."

According to Marsh, the technology trend in CCTV is a migration to HD. With the increased

Geny Caloisi looks at the best forms of leisure industry security and how to properly deal with the public

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resolution there is a potential to decrease the number of cameras installed. This saves on infrastructure costs as well as on-going maintenance costs.

Valuables at leisure centres

The value of electronic items we carry in our pockets on a daily bases, is a lot higher than it was some five years ago. This makes security in lockers more important than ever.

The use of smart-cards is a growing trend to sort out this issue, says Jean-Paul Frenett from Access Control Security. "In places like gyms, we have noticed increasingly sophisticated systems to track members. Smart-cards are becoming more prevalent. In particular university gyms, or other large institutions that already use smart-card technology for payment and identification, are adopting this solution. This also facilitates automation at barriers and entry-points. The next step will be to use it for lockers."

The sound of order

Not everybody can clearly read written instructions in a sign, especially if they are far away or looking the wrong way, but almost everybody can listen. In public venues it is common practice to use public address and voice alarms (PAVA) as part of its security measures for evacuating premises during an emergency - such as fire, or just to direct people in the right direction.

Roland Hemming, director at RH Consulting comments, "The implementation of PAVA has grown exponentially since the Hillsborough disaster of 1989, where 95 people were crushed to death. But now PAVA also has a secondary use. Today venues are taking advantage of the systems in place, to provide entertainment and make the experience more pleasing."

Hemming was in charge of planning and executing the PAVA for the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics games. He explained: "The games were a kind of hybrid. It was planned as if it was a fixed installation, with very accurate and detailed parameters, but it was executed as a live event. It was important to have the venue's audio system organised in independent zones. At a large venue, and especially at a popular international event, you might not want to evacuate everybody at once. Zoning is key. Dealing first with people that are in immediate danger and taking care of the rest later, can be essential to the right resolution of whatever the issue might be."

Audio announcements need to be intelligible and also instigate the appropriate action, allowing crowds to understand what they need to do next while trying to keep them as calm as

possible.

Roland Hemming lists four principles to bear in mind when designing PAVA:

- 1 The systems should have no single point of failure – if one part breaks, the rest has to continue working. It is good practise to introduce redundancy audio circuits to avoid failure.
- 2 Assess your venue and check the rules of coverage and quality. The audio needs to cover the whole floor and the system has to be intelligible.
- 3 Keep an eye on it. IP networking and other monitoring resources will warn you if something is not quite right. Don't ignore it.
- 4 Make your system is easy to use. Unskilled personnel should feel capable and comfortable about using the system.

It is important to create a risk assessment with evacuation analysis tailored to the specific building, because they are all different.

In-store digital signage and security

In the last three years, there has been a proliferation of digital signage screens in retail stores. These displays are used to promote products and provide customers with a better retail experience. So why not use this resource as a two-way street?

Digital signage specialist AOpen and network video surveillance provider Axis have teamed up to do just that. Their product is called DS2, and it is designed for retailers and other commercial applications. It combines signage and surveillance.

Gabriëlle Offringa, marketing manager AOpen Europe says, "We see surveillance as an important challenge for retailers. Shoplifting accounts for unnecessary losses. With the combination of signage and surveillance, retailers can use it as a marketing tool and at the same time, improve security measures and prevent theft."

DS2 allows a single player to connect up to six cameras. AOpen Digital Engine media player can power both the local signage network and the camera security feeds, making it cheaper.

Axis IP 30FPS cameras are housed in a 59 x 95 x 41 form factor. Motion detection and sabotage alarm analytics help to ensure maximum device security.

Customer service is important. Whether it is directing someone to the nearest toilet, or dealing with an emergency, security in leisure facilities must make sure that visitors feel welcome, safe and comfortable in the environment. Technology solutions can help to gain better control of the venue but they can't be used in isolation, the human touch is needed.