

When an investment decision is made to enhance the security of your operation it is always sound advice to spend money wisely, writes Clifford Corne, managing director at Kent based Secure Engineering Ltd. Security of your business using electronic surveillance and monitoring equipment is an investment from which you would expect to obtain peace of mind but would prefer not to have to use. However when your security surveillance system is called upon you want it to be effective in its ability to produce results.

When designing a CCTV system, you must focus on the operational requirement or what you want it to actually do for you all the time that you have it. For example, if you need to know only if a caller is currently waiting in reception or not and no other information is required, the most basic camera and picture monitor will do. The operational requirement here – is anybody there or not? It does not matter whether they are male, female, old or young.

If you wanted to be able to identify any caller in reception sometime afterwards, then your operational requirement has changed to include recording and identification of all callers at reception. Now you need to be able to record and reproduce, on demand, a clear image of each caller. This will need precise planning, preparation and implementation. At the very least you need to engineer the CCTV layout so that all callers must at some point present themselves fairly and squarely in front of the camera with sufficient resolution to clearly identify their face. This will require correct lighting, large enough image size of face, high resolution colour recording and reproduction, image capture rate fast enough and regular enough to guarantee a clear shot at the right moment. All of this is to cater for a system with just one camera. If the operational requirement is to be adhered to more strictly then you might consider additional cameras to give a wider angle view of the scene to give information on clothing, footwear, etc as the vital facial recognition camera may only produce a waist upwards image. You may require information from an external camera to see how the individual(s) arrived outside. A masked individual is more tricky but additional information can be provided by clever placement of cameras at lower level looking up to a face.

There is nothing more frustrating than a CCTV system that has failed to record a vital image sufficiently well to give any useful information. Conversely there is nothing more satisfying than being one of the few people able to present the Police



Quality of security rather than quantity

with a clear image of a suspect to help with their investigation.

So for the relatively straight forward situation described above the operational requirement and performance on demand are absolutely vital - anything less is money not invested wisely. When planning and providing more complex and larger systems the operational requirement and performance on demand are just as vital.

Automatic detection and location of intruders is another operational requirement often called for. This can be achieved by perimeter beams, which when interrupted, will alert the intruder detection system and may automatically guide a CCTV camera to the approximate area of intrusion. The operator will then take a closer look using the CCTV system. This can be taken to a higher level using radar sensors linked into a CCTV system which will not only detect an intruder in total darkness and fog, but will automatically drive the cameras to zoom right in and track the intruder continuously, even if they are not visible at that precise moment, the CCTV will be following the intruder so that as soon as they can be seen an image will be captured.

Recording of vehicle registrations can be another operational requirement. This is an area which should be precisely defined. It is possible to obtain and record vehicle registrations with basic CCTV equipment in normal daylight if the vehicle is close enough and moving slowly. However when in darkness and faced with vehicle headlights on full beam, higher specification equipment is needed.

The most important point is 'your CCTV system needs to perform on demand'. This demand is usually at the time of an incident in progress or reviewing the vital evidence.

This is when you will be sorely aware of the CCTV system's inefficiencies. So you will need to have it regularly tested and maintained. This means that when you look at the recording of last night's camera pictures and you notice one of them looks out of focus, one looks very dark or has gone off altogether, you get them fixed before you regret their lack of performance. When a reputable company carries out maintenance on a CCTV system there should be sharp images day and night, live and on playback. The system should be reliable with no unsolvable problems. Problems should be identified, agreed and fixed in one visit. New systems should have at least a two year guarantee from new.

Above all remember your operational requirement, get it agreed at the beginning and make sure your system does it for you and does it on demand. If your operational requirement changes over time then so should your system to reflect this.

"Focused on monitoring and protection"

01622 844 244

www.SecureEng.co.uk

SECURE ENGINEERING
CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION

Friday Street Barn Complex, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3DD