

Ensuring Guest Loyalty, Employee Safety and Hotel Profitability

How new camera surveillance technology equates to less hassle and bigger payoffs for hotel owners and managers.

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Owning and/or managing an individual or chain of hotels can be a rewarding career and worthy investment. However, in today's economy it can also be filled with more stress and uncertainty than ever. Genuine concerns about the negative impact high gas prices and a sluggish economy may have on leisure travel is creating anxiety for many. This puts even greater importance on keeping your corporate/business travel guests loyal to your hotel.

Beyond current economic factors, there are other serious concerns that can keep a hotel owner or manager awake at night; risks that can adversely affect their guests, employees, reputation and profitability, including:

- ✓ On-premise Crime, Violence and Vandalism
- ✓ False Guest Victimization Claims
- ✓ On-The-Job Drug and Alcohol Use
- ✓ Lack of Employee Professionalism
- ✓ Fraudulent Workers Compensation Claims
- ✓ Food and Beverage Theft
- ✓ Non-Conformance to Safety Guidelines

Not sure these risk factors truly exist in the industry or your hotel? Consider the following:

- Workplace violence costs employers close to \$36 billion annually, according to the *Workplace Violence Institute*.
- Not all employees will look to earn their raise, and many look to get paid while not working, all at your expense. Fraudulent workers compensation claims cost US businesses \$5 billion annually, as found by the *National Insurance Crime Bureau*.
- 75% of drug users are employed. These users cost their employers twice

as much in medical and workers' compensation expenses, according to the *U.S. Department of Health & Human Services*.

Clearly, there are a myriad of risk factors that may have a detrimental impact on the well-being of the hotels' employees, customers, reputation and profitability. How does management protect the hotel's bottom line?

One of the most effective tools to quell risks is camera surveillance systems.

Historically, these solutions have been used to varying degrees of success, due in large part to the lackluster technology utilized for many legacy systems. The systems weren't easy to use and the only time you could view live camera images or previously recorded material was while you were on-site at the hotel. Plus, the images weren't all that clear. Fortunately, for the owners of older systems and those considering this business tool for the first time, there is good news.

Times have changed.

For camera surveillance systems over four or five years old, the technological advances that exist today warrant a fresh look at how this tool can be used as a mission-critical component of a hotel's operation. If a hotel has somehow been incident-free without implementing a camera surveillance system, now is the time to re-evaluate that decision. Many new camera surveillance system owners don't believe what they've been missing when it comes to the risk factors outlined above.

What's Improved?

Let's review some of the key areas in which recent leaps in technology have vastly improved the overall effectiveness of these systems and how they can better assure a hotel's profitability remains intact.

It's in the DVR!

The Digital Video Recorder (DVR) is the heart of any good quality camera surveillance system. Replacing the continuously recording VCR of olden days and even first generation DVR's, this component does much more than record video evidence. How would you like to view real-time what your surveillance cameras are seeing, from any computer that has a high-speed internet connection? How about viewing previously recorded incidents that occurred earlier in the day, last night or weeks ago? You can now do that from your home office or anywhere remotely, and it is all a function of the DVR. Want to download that recorded incident to share with police or for use in court? With a few simple mouse clicks, you can burn that video to a CD, DVD or flash drive and share it as needed.

The images cameras capture are recorded on the DVR's hard drive in digital format. Because hard drive quality and capacity is at an all time high and their prices are at an all time low, having enough storage capacity should never be an issue. 500 gigabytes or more of storage capacity is commonplace today. The DVR can be a standalone unit, reside on your computer network and even interface with your point-of-sale cash register system. A future article will provide more in-depth details about the different capabilities, aspects and settings within the DVR.

No Computer Experts Needed

Today's systems are intuitive and extremely user-friendly. Users can point-and-click their way to success with today's systems and their familiar graphical user interfaces (GUI). Whether it's accessing live or previously recorded video or fine tuning the recording settings for a camera focused on a cash register, doing so within the system is easily within everyone's capabilities.

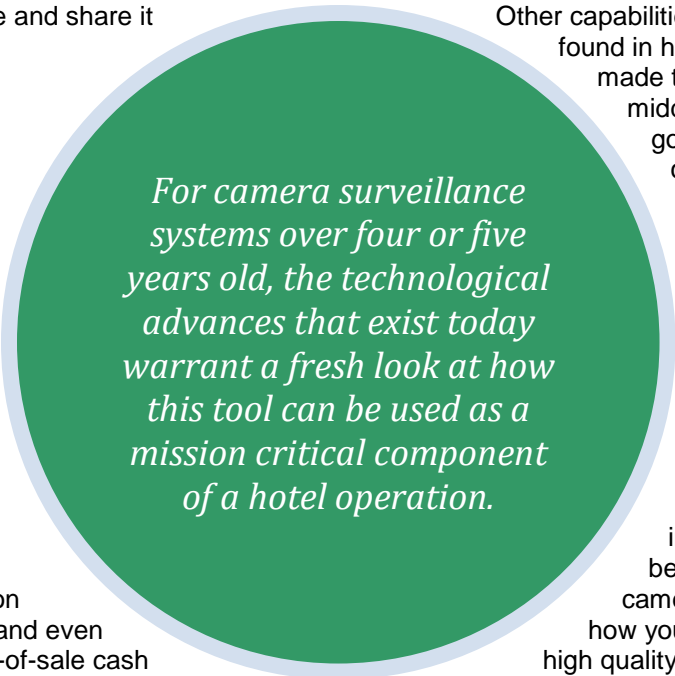
I Can See Clearly Now

Users of newer camera security systems are often astonished by the vibrant, clear images they produce. This is a result of gains in camera technology, as well as within the DVR. Today's cameras have superior optics and image sensor (chip) technology. What was considered a high end 1/4" image sensor four to six years ago has been replaced with larger, top-of-the-line image sensors in most quality cameras. The result is more light and color being captured and processed by the camera. Advances in DVR technology, specifically with frame rate and image rate recording and playback capabilities, means that more is being done with the high quality image the camera is capturing.

Other capabilities that were once only found in high-end cameras have made their way down to the middle market as well. A good example of this is a camera's capability to capture a detailed image such as a license plate. Inventive solutions include cameras placed in a low level speed bump which captures the front and rear license plates as vehicles pull up to the hotel. Other impressive gains have been made in covert cameras; it is truly amazing how you can now get such a high quality image from a lens a little larger than a pinhead on a covert camera.

What's more, all of the technological advances made are available at extremely attractive prices. Not unlike any other business tool that is technology-centric, as time passes and more advances are made, prices often remain static or fall.

Keep in mind that not all camera surveillance systems are created equal. Even with advancements, not all cameras, DVR's and other components are worthy of consideration. Regardless of great technology, if a proper risk



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assessment and needs analysis are not performed, the system has little chance of being engineered correctly to be the reliable solution you need.

Hotel owners and managers are encouraged to proactively take steps to ensure guest loyalty, employee safety and hotel performance. Protect your profits, property, employees and guests with the assistance of one of the most "mission critical" business tools that you can have in your arsenal. Camera surveillance systems are now better and more affordable than ever.

Gary Swearingen has been promoting the effective utilization of technology-based solutions for over 15 years. He specializes in helping businesses reap the benefits of digital video surveillance systems utilizing risk assessments and business needs analysis to develop customized solutions that deliver results. He can be reached at 937-293-1177 or via email at gswearingen@adsecurity.biz.



Advanced Digital Security, Inc.

Established in 2004, Advanced Digital Security provides businesses with comprehensive digital video surveillance solutions to effectively mitigate the risks that adversely affect profitability.

Advanced Digital Security develops customized surveillance solutions based on professional risk assessments performed at each facility or business location before specific solutions are developed for each client.

An expansive array of surveillance system components, including digital video recorders, medium- and high-resolution cameras, and LCD and flat-panel televisions and monitors, are available. Key relationships with top manufacturers allows ADS to provide the best-of-breed products at highly competitive prices.

Our solutions are implemented in a wide variety of businesses, including schools, retail and convenience stores, gas stations, hotels, restaurants and manufacturing facilities. We are experienced in implementing surveillance systems of all sizes, from small to medium-sized projects to large scale installations designed to monitor multiple stores, office locations and campuses.