

## **Ten point guide to the successful procurement of security systems**

### **1. Consider your security requirements early**

In the life cycle of a major project it is never too early to consider security requirements. It is all too common for a major development or building to be designed and then for a security consultant or contractor to be approached to design security systems as a bolt on to the finished design.

If security is considered when the project is still in the design stage, then it will be possible to design out possible security problems or to design in security solutions that are in keeping with the overall scheme concept or building design.

### **2. Appoint an independent security consultant**

Of course, we would say this wouldn't we! But it is important

If you have a clear understanding of the security threats to your business or proposed development, and can produce designs for security solutions and systems to be provided by a specialist contractor then you probably don't need a security consultant. If this is not the case then you almost certainly do!

An independent security consultant will complement a project team by bringing a range of specialist skills to the project that are unlikely to be provided by other members of the team. These are likely to include knowledge of current security threats, the latest methods for mitigating and reducing security threats and intimate knowledge of the security market including equipment manufacturers and contractors.

### **3. Carry out a security risk analysis**

Before procuring a new building or development it is essential to understand the nature of the risks to the site, building, business or operation. Any contractor will be happy to supply a security system to a given budget, but without knowledge of the risks and clear objectives for the system this may not meet your needs or reduce the overall level of threat.

By commissioning a security risk analysis for the proposed location you should expect to receive a report detailing the general and specific security risks to the development including local crime statistics, and recommendations on how the risks can be mitigated. These recommendations are likely to relate to issues such as building layout, lighting, and landscaping as well as the deployment of security equipment, systems and procedures.

### **4. Agree the scope of works and produce performance specification**

When it comes to the design of the security systems a clear scope of works should be agreed taking into account the recommendations of the risk analysis report and consultation with the design team.

The scope of works document should include clear performance criteria for the systems and equipment to be installed. This will ensure that when seeking tenders for the work that all the tendering contractors will have a clear understanding of what performance is expected from the system. This will reduce the likelihood of dispute about performance at the commissioning stage. When applied to a CCTV camera for example the performance specification should clearly state the camera performance characteristics, the scene to be viewed and the type of view required based upon the PSDB performance criteria.

## **5. Set a realistic budget**

Setting the budget is always a difficult part of a project. When applied to the security of a building it is particularly important to get it right first time as mistakes can have a negative impact on the security of the building or development. A realistic budget should be set for the provision of the security systems identified following the risk analysis process. If it becomes necessary to reduce the scope of the security systems as part of a value engineering process this is likely to have a direct impact on the level of security provided to the development.

## **6. Use technology to reduce costs**

The use of technology in security systems is constantly improving the quality of security equipment and leading to the development of new and innovative security measures. One area that has been the subject of particularly intensive development in recent years has been that of integrating security equipment with IP networks. These developments now mean that the management of security systems over IP networks is an effective method of reducing cabling cost within buildings while providing flexible and affective security installations.

Where the opportunity arises, consideration should be given to the integration of security systems with IP networks to obtain cost savings in cabling costs whilst providing flexible security systems.

## **7. Do not accept closed protocol systems, license agreements or solutions from a single manufacturer**

Effective security systems are normally comprised of a number of various components designed specifically for a given purpose. There are many manufacturers within the security market place and the best of these specialise in small segments of the market and are successful because they produce good quality products. These products are available to quality installers and integrators either direct from the manufacturers or through distributors.

We recommend that solutions from a manufacturer that only sells direct or through a limited number of installers are not accepted. If the relationship with the original installer should breakdown or parts of an installation are found to be below par it should be possible to replace the components with equivalent items from another manufacturer or appoint an alternative contractor to install, and maintain the system. This would not be possible with closed protocol systems or systems purchased with licence agreements.

There is no single manufacturer within the security industry that can supply an entire solution from their own product range despite what they might tell you! A company that makes high quality cameras does not necessarily make good quality digital recorders. The manufacturers of high quality access control systems do not supply CCTV equipment. With the help of an independent consultant you should select the best products for the purpose from a range of manufacturers.

## **8. Appoint a competent qualified system integrator/installer**

An essential part of procuring an effective and reliable security system is to select the right contractors to implement the installation, commissioning and maintenance of the works. To this end when selecting prospective contractors you should satisfy yourself that in addition to being financially sound, they can demonstrate that they have the relevant skills and experience to complete the installation of the systems and to maintain them effectively following handover.

## 9. Ensure the works are comprehensively and accurately documented.

Security systems are normally highly complex and require specialist skills to install, maintain and operate. An essential tool in managing and maintaining a complex security system is accurate detailed documentation.

Operation and Maintenance manuals including schematic and layout drawings should be produced for the systems and be kept up to date throughout the life of an installation.

## 10. Review

The pattern of use for many buildings or developments is likely to change throughout its life. The deployment of the security systems within the building is not always reviewed and amended to suit the changing use of the building, therefore the first time this comes to light is often after an incident.

In addition to routine maintenance the effectiveness and relevance of the security systems should be reviewed on a regular basis and where relevant amended to suit the changing use of the building.

This guide is intended as a useful aid for those who are considering relocating or expanding into new premises and procuring new security systems. Every location will have its own unique set of circumstances and these should be addressed individually.

If you would like to discuss how Instrom can assist with a specific project please contact us using the details below.

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