

Integration Moves to Next Level

If you think about what were the most significant change drivers in security, you probably would include the digital dialer, microprocessors, the Internet and the tragic events of September 11th.

There is another one just around the corner that we can add to this short list – IP video. It's already changing how you approach your investment in security, the technologies, the industry landscapes, channels to market and role of each of the participants. For those integrators and manufacturers who understand the value they provide there is opportunity and growth. For the others, get ready or get out of the way for what's just around the corner.



Sandy Jones

At \$5 to \$6 billion globally, the video equipment and installation market is already a significant part of the security industry. It is expected to grow an estimated 10-20 percent over the next few years; but that growth

will now be shared or even a significant amount lost to those outside the traditional industry – a trend that end-users can exploit.

IP revolution

The long term impact of IP includes the simplification of currently complex video systems that may include several types of cameras, large scale matrix switching devices, multiplexers, digital recorders, PCs and analytical software packages. The straight-forward transmission of IP video direct to a software-controlled PC that includes viewing, switching and recording is not far away.

“Look at business uses of security technology.”

Who will this simplified architecture most benefit? Certainly end-users who will witness cost reductions, economies of scale from their increased network productivity and flexibility to purchase security products from both security and IT vendors.

Who will be most adversely affected by this same innovation? Traditional security integrators, unless they recognize their value and are willing to adjust their selling methods and overhead costs. The reduction of complexity in new systems design will certainly downgrade the need for system integrators as we know them today. “Network appliances” and “plug and play” are IT standards that are rapidly crossing over into many other tech-

nology-based industries such as security. IT suppliers tend to provide more comprehensive technical assistance to their users immaterial of purchase channel. I've seen this trend duplicated by some traditional camera suppliers upon introduction of their IP product lines.

Integrators can expect change and a greater proliferation of cameras bought and sold for applications outside of the security industry. First and foremost, integrators working with security will more often get involved with a client's IT department. If they understand your business challenges and goals, the same IP cameras you use for security can also function for any type of information gathering. The benefits can provide a faster return on investment.

Toffler was right, “knowledge is power” and by using IP cameras for security plus other business functions and information gathering you empower your mission, add efficiency, reduce cost and provide a better business experience.

When involving IT, there are new and non-traditional metrics which all tie to “knowledge.” The following are just some examples of what you can do to flip it from grudge to real value.

Improve productivity. Use IP cameras to “visit” locations that can now be addressed from any location over a secure network. Turn visiting one location a day into visiting multiple locations in one day.

Obtain marketing and customer data. By using the same cameras but with some adjustment to placement, you can capture buying patterns.

Improve customer service, satisfaction and their experience. Examples range from improved staffing levels and relocating service people to insuring their safety and the appearance of the facility.

Drive revenue. By having cameras at toll booths and other unmanned areas where payments/fees are received, you can verify and count people to revenue.

You know how to share. Let them know you can co-exist on the same network without interfering or creating damage to the information and data that already get.

Change information overload into real-time actionable information by adding analytics to a camera system. ♦

About the Columnist

Sandy Jones of Sandra Jones and Company provides revenue development, strategic planning, marketing and M&A support services to integrators, manufacturers, investors and IT companies in all segments of the commercial security and fire market. Jones is considered one of the leading resources in the security industry and a founder of the annual Securing New Ground conference, cosponsored by Security Magazine and SDM Magazine. For more information please go to www.sjandco.com.