

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR SECURITY BUDGET

Does Credit Crunch = Security Squeeze?



One of the effects of the global economic downturn is likely to be an increase in crime. This stark fact has been recognised by the UK Home Office in a leaked memo obtained by the BBC.¹ As the motivation for crime increases, property crime is predicted to have risen to 7% in 2008 and will rise a further 2% in 2009;² just at the time when there is increased pressure on police resources and priorities, following the diversion of government funds to other sectors.

So now is the time to review your security budget, in order to squeeze as much value out of suppliers as possible. You need to make sure that you are spending your security budget in the most cost-effective way possible.

CCTV

One way in which companies still using traditional manned security guards and mobile patrols can actually save money is by switching to remotely monitored CCTV systems. These security systems can protect any type of premises 24-7 at low cost. Every type of closed location can be protected, from construction sites, depots and factories, to offices, schools and colleges. The advanced technology used in these systems means they can be adapted for use at any site; when designing the system the client's needs are always assessed and incorporated into the final product.

Unlike traditional manned security guards that can be expensive and unreliable, remotely monitored CCTV reduces the risk

of human error and can be extremely good value for money. CCTV cannot be threatened; it does not require any facilities, such as rest rooms, radios and vehicles, nor does it ever fall asleep on the job. CCTV can constantly monitor premises to provide total security during unoccupied hours and can be far more cost effective than mobile patrols that provide limited coverage.

How does it work?

Using high speed broadband and wireless 3G connections, integrated cameras and motion sensors detect any movement on site and transmit live images to the control centre 24 hours a day. If the images indicate a problem, trained operators act with an audio warning to any intruder and alert the police within seconds to deliver an immediate response. Research shows that 96% of intruders leave the site immediately when they are given an audio announcement.³ Recording from the systems can also be used to replay any incidents, which can be useful as evidence in a criminal case, or for training, internal security and Health and Safety purposes.

For high-security requirements, intruder alarm systems and other surveillance technology can be included in an integrated system. Fences can be linked to alarm monitoring and CCTV systems; this allows the remote monitoring station to observe large areas of perimeter fencing, and if necessary arrange for an appropriate response. Such measures can also be linked to speakers through which a remote security officer can address and deter an intruder.

INTEGRATED ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS

Remotely monitored CCTV can be used very effectively in conjunction with other electronic systems, thereby providing an integrated approach to business security. Other elements of integrated systems can include the following:

Access Control to Buildings

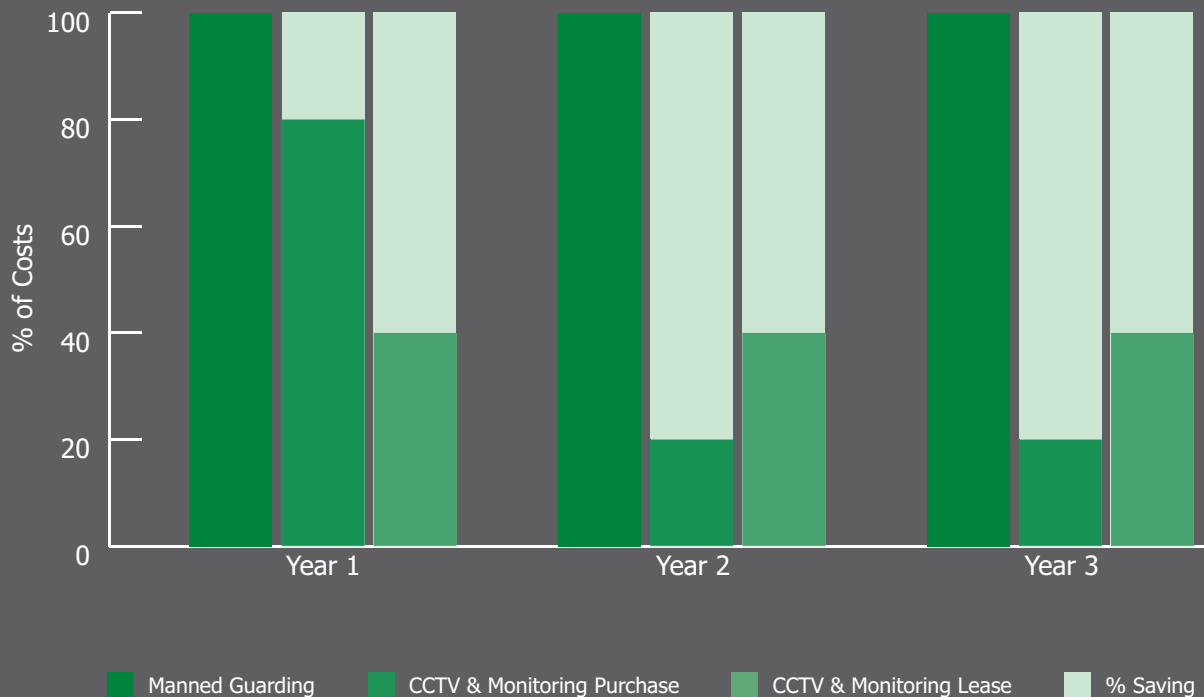
Electronic access control is becoming more common. Door entry phones, many with visual verification by small video cameras, or swipe cards or tags that are read by computer operated detectors, are



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CCTV & MONITORING COSTS/SAVINGS v MANNED GUARDING



The graph above shows that purchasing an integrated security system along with remote monitoring is a solution to reducing your security budget. It demonstrates that remote guarding is significantly cheaper than using manned guarding, even in its first year of operation. Monitoring and maintaining an integrated security system as opposed to manned guards can save as much as 80% on a company's security bill after the first year. Alternatively, a rental CCTV system offers even lower start-up costs, and still provides substantial savings compared with the costs of employing a manned guard.

Typical cost example:

Guarding: £81,000 / year (@ £9.25/hour(excludes bank holiday supplements)

CCTV Purchase Cost:

Year 1: £65,000 (includes installation of CCTV, gates/barriers and monitoring costs for CCTV system and site ingress/egress)

Year 2: £15,000 (includes monitoring and maintenance costs)

CCTV Rental Cost: £30,000 / year (includes installation, monitoring and comprehensive maintenance package)

24-hour camera cover installation, using 4-camera system for 52 weeks £30k (with no extra charge for bank holidays).⁴

ADVANTAGES OF REMOTELY MONITORED CCTV

- 1 Operates 24/7, 365 days a year.
- 2 Significantly cheaper than manned guarding solutions
- 3 Cannot be threatened by intruders
- 4 Provides evidence of incidents
- 5 Operates in remote, sometimes inaccessible locations
- 6 Can be customised to suit specific client's needs

all readily available. Building entry can also be controlled via an audio entry system with door release mechanisms at all access points. For greater security a video entry system can be installed allowing those inside the building to view any visitor and request identification to be shown prior to being granted access.

Integrating Access Control systems

These cards, tags, and fob control systems can be integrated into intruder, fire and CCTV systems, which can be used to activate them. Computer control of these systems potentially offers far wider applications than security, as they can also help you to locate staff more easily, or record their times of entering and leaving the building. Such a system can be expanded to control automatic locks, alarms, smoke and fire detectors, building up a complete management and reporting package. Tagging all equipment also makes a computerised inventory of the entire business simple to set up and manage.

Alarms and Alarm Communication

Alarm design and technology is continually

improving. False alarms are being reduced, and higher degrees of security are being provided. Alarms can be audible-only or monitored remotely by a monitoring station arranged by your installer. Monitored systems are strongly recommended for business users, as many now provide verification that intruders are on the premises using additional signalling equipment.⁵

Integrated solutions result in technologies working together to achieve security outcomes. They can reduce cost and have a wider applicability than simply security, e.g. equipment tagging for both security and stock management purposes. With an integrated system many actions can be automated, meaning that a security system is simpler to use, requires less training and performs more functions. Moreover, by having a single company install these products, it allows system infrastructure to be shared, reducing costs and providing only one contact for all service requirements. A company like GBSG is able to provide clients with a 'one-stop-shop' for all its security solutions.

MANNED GUARDING

Technology allows sites to be protected 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. To match this level of cover would require a significant manned guarding presence, but the costs of employing on-site security guards have been rising steadily over the past few years due to new licensing requirements and minimum wage legislation. So, if CCTV and remote monitoring are so much cheaper than manned guarding why not simply rely on technology? The answer is that there are occasions when it is more appropriate to have a real person in place, for example in a front-of-house role, where they will interact with employees, customers and visitors. A human presence can also act as a deterrent to potential intruders, and sometimes businesses will need to employ extra security personnel to cater for one-off events.

There is also a synergy to be gained from guards working in conjunction with technological solutions. A manned guard can become more effective because he is supported by technology. While



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technology can be used to tour sites remotely, the use of a guard patrol can provide additional cover. Indeed many companies opt for 'mantech' solutions, where guards form an integral part of site monitoring and are able to call into visual monitoring centres before they set off on their tour of the sites so the centre can 'virtually' accompany them. Some businesses have a flying squad of guards who are able to go out rapidly when they get visual verification following an alarm. Even if you have an audio link where you can immediately warn an intruder off site, it is still effective to have a human body to back up the warning.⁶

Quality of Guarding Personnel

If you decide that your business still has a requirement for manned guards then you must ensure that they are high-calibre personnel who are licensed to work in the security industry. This means they should be working for an ACS registered company,⁷ which has screened their personnel and ensured that they have the right clearances, references, level of training and expertise to work for your business. Guards these days need to be more technical, more customer-facing, able to embrace technology and computer literate.

In addition, your security provider should pay competitive wages, and ideally have benefits packages in place, in order to discourage high turnover amongst security personnel. For some contractors, the turnover rate is as high as 300 percent, which is the equivalent of replacing the whole work force three times in a year.⁸ High turnover causes the contractor to lower recruiting standards to constantly fill vacancies. This results in lower quality personnel placed with the client. Wages that are set too low also result in a high rate of call offs, where an officer calls in sick at the last minute, which can lead to unsatisfactory fill-in situations.

Supervision, training, and officer discipline should be carried out by the security provider, not your own business personnel. Your security provider should also carry out supervisory visits to security staff as part of the management process.

SECURITY: A NECESSARY EXPENSE

A British Chamber of Commerce (BCC) Survey in 2008 highlighted that 44% of respondents had never sought any crime reduction advice. Yet addressing crime, shrinkage and loss is essential; the BCC calls it 'Profit Protection', because when

you address these issues effectively you protect your business profits. Even in these cash-strapped times it is essential that businesses initiate and maintain effective security measures to ensure that they are adequately protected against crime. If budgets are tight then there are ways of maintaining a quality service whilst cutting expenditure, e.g. switching from manned guards to electronic systems, which could cut your security bill by over 80%.

Free Professional Advice

One of the most important factors when considering your business' security is ensuring that all your security measures have been sourced from professional companies that provide quality products and services.⁹ GBSG offers all aspects of integrated security in house. This allows us to have complete control over the design, installation, and service and most importantly ensures the customer has a single point of contact that can be relied upon to provide a quick and efficient service. We offer a free advisory service and employ only ACS –approved security staff.

So, if you want to save money and protect your business better in 2009, please contact GBSG to arrange a free on-site visit, or visit our website at www.gbsg.co.uk.

¹ 'Lack of resources could lead to some difficult choices in terms of police numbers and priorities', 01 September 2008 BBC News.

² 'Crime shock, and no more heroes', 02 September 2008, Alan Hyder. <http://www.info4security.com/story.asp?sectioncode=9&storycode=4120566>

³ www.guidesecurity.co.uk/returnoninvestment.html

⁴ Camera costs based on research from security company websites.

⁵ www.bcrc-uk.org Business Crime Reduction Centre Website advice.

⁶ www.info4security.com/story.asp?storyCode=18744§ioncode=10

⁷ ACS is the Approved Contractor Scheme regulated by the Security Industry Authority.

⁸ 'Guarding Against Poor Performance', June 2006, Ronald D. Heil, CPP. <http://www.securitymanagement.com/article/guarding-against-poor-performance?page=0%2C3>

⁹ www.bsia.co.uk 'Get back to basics with your business' security', 19 October 2007.

