

Red Hawk Fire & Security



Reducing the cost of guarding through remote video

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Executive Summary

Protecting assets and reducing risk through effective security is a high priority for businesses today. Many businesses rely on traditional “boots on the ground” onsite guarding as an important piece of their security program. Traditional guarding has not changed much over the past 100 years and it can be a significant cost for any business. The average cost of late night or site critical guarding can run anywhere from \$3,000–\$6,000 per guard per month depending on the site, or even double that amount if off-duty police officers are used. And the costs are only increasing. Add liability concerns and emerging threats and these costs can be crippling to businesses that are managing budget reductions and increased pressure to do more with less. Security managers are faced with the dilemma: reduce guard time and increase risk or maintain guard time and find other areas for economies.

Enter Remote Video Guarding

Remote guarding is a significant evolution in the safety and security industry that is revolutionizing the way sites are protected. Remote guarding allows you to reduce risk through effective security measures, increasing your total business awareness and control of your site. It is event driven and can be configured to respond to an array of different triggers. It can be used to augment traditional onsite guarding or even substitute for it in certain situations. Increasingly sophisticated technology coupled with competitive product pricing and the ability to integrate with existing systems has made this capability a reality for more businesses today.

The Technology

As early as 1965, the first closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) were being used by police as surveillance devices. These cameras needed to be watched constantly and boasted a grainy 64 pixel resolution. Although they were a great improvement at the time, allowing more “eyes” on site, the limited resolution and reactionary nature of the system called for improvement. Businesses relied on the forensics provided by play back of tapes and needed to have well-trained analysts watching the systems. But even the best-trained analysts are not capable of watching a screen 24/7 and realizing every security event.

Today, with the evolution of technology, traditional analog cameras are being replaced by smaller megapixel cameras with greater capabilities. By 2015, the megapixel cameras will dominate the market and IMS

Research forecasts that more than 70% of all network camera shipments will be megapixel resolution (imresearch.com). Megapixel cameras provide high definition resolution and can be equipped with face detection software, zoom, intelligent alert of risk activity, specialized access control and motion detection. They work best in conjunction with existing alarm systems to create an enhanced solution. Any number of cameras can be combined into a single system and placed in multiple secure locations. This allows for the creation of a “virtual guarding” set up which mimics a traditional guard walking rounds and doing look-ins. The key differences, however, are that cameras can be in all places at all times, they aren’t subject to simple human error and they are significantly less expensive.

The growth of remote video technology has also been spurred by the growth in bandwidth capabilities. Greater bandwidth allows for the simultaneous transmission of both audio and video. Gone are the days of silent blurry camera views. Today’s technology allows sharper images, audio listen-in and even two-way audio where permissible.

Remote video technology is continuing to grow on a daily basis. Cloud-based solutions have burst onto the market allowing for the remote, secure sharing of images with a variety of devices. A single camera can be configured to provide access to different remote viewing devices. Companies are seeing the security and flexibility that cloud solutions can offer and the demand will only continue to grow.

Five Reasons to Choose Remote Guarding

Remote video guarding virtually mimics an after-hours guard doing rounds of your site. It is available 24/7 with random look-ins or on a predetermined schedule based on the customer’s specific needs. Market research shows that the remote guarding industry has grown tremendously over the past few years and is poised to continue growing. As the market has grown, so too has awareness. This awareness then fuels demand, creating a self-sustaining growth cycle.

#1. Extend coverage without extending cost

The average remote guarding solution can save up to 70% of the cost of a live guard and can pay for itself in less than nine months. Remote guarding employs cameras that can be incorporated into existing systems to heighten security coverage. Cameras can provide up to 22 to one and more zoom and cover more than 300 feet of space. Integrated intelligence in the



What Happens When an Event Occurs?

When an onsite alarm device detects an event such as an intrusion, an immediate signal is sent to Central Monitoring. There, a trained technician receives the alarm and can provide immediate visual review of the site.

The intervention specialist can determine if an actual event is taking place in which case they can immediately notify authorities. They may also intervene through two-way audio, potentially stopping an event while it is still happening. If the alarm was due to onsite employees, the two-way system also facilitates the exchange of a code and cancelling of the alarm. This greatly reduces false alarms and the costs that can be associated with them. Once an event is handled, the central station documents the activity and notifies the client based on their established protocol procedures.

software lets the cameras communicate with each other to register “events.” Alerts programmed into software can also “see” events even before they happen and employ face recognition software.

Another way that remote guarding can extend reach is that cameras can be placed in remote or sensitive areas, allowing for extended reach without extended risk. Look-ins can be scheduled to happen regularly, so there is no such thing as a guard not being where they are supposed to be—cameras are always in place and are not interrupted in the event of an alarm.

Most systems can be fully integrated with existing life safety or security solutions and serve as a tool to enhance and expand coverage. Businesses can also use remote guarding as a supplement to onsite guards—keeping watch over additional areas and alerting onsite guards to immediate concerns.

#2. Immediate response

When an event is recorded by an onsite alarm device, a signal is immediately sent to the monitoring center and a trained intervention specialist (IS) has the ability to interact in real-time with the event. Most systems employ audio that allows an IS to alert the intruder that he is being watched and monitored and order him to leave the premises immediately. Real-time interaction has been shown to drastically reduce the continuation of a crime. This immediate response is also a focused response. If there are guards onsite, the dispatcher can direct them to the appropriate locations, streamlining and speeding response.

Immediate response and two-way audio can also be used with site monitoring and premise liability. If, for example, a person enters a restricted ATM location and chooses not to exit, the system can be configured to signal an alert. An IS can look-in and issue an immediate request for the person to leave the premises. This remote audio request serves as legal notification in the case that further actions must be taken to remove the person from the premises.

#3. Reduction of false alarms

According to research, burglar alarms constitute 10–20% of all police calls and 94–95% of those calls turn out to be false (Blackstone & Hakim, 2002). Responding to those alarms costs more than \$1.8 billion annually in the United States. Remote video guarding can help reduce these statistics.

There are multiple events that can trip an after-hours alarm at a site: An employee mistakenly enters an alarmed area. A weather event knocks over something in a storage yard. After hours workers such as cleaning or maintenance workers fail to correctly disarm the system. In each of these cases, the system will signal an alert and a trained IS will visually review the situation to determine if additional steps need to be initiated, thus preventing an automatic false alarm. If a code needs to be input by someone onsite, the IS can initiate that process and work to resolve the situation.

By preventing the false alarm, the system also prevents the notification of a false alarm. So not only do businesses save the potential costs associated with false alarms, but they also do not receive unnecessary alarm notifications and police will continue to respond to alarms.

#4. Reduction of liability

Every business faces its own unique risks exposures and liability costs. The cost of liability coverage (and the need for it) has steadily increased over the past few decades. Multi-million dollar lawsuits that were once the exception are now the norm. And the substantial expansion in what legally constitutes liability over the past thirty years has greatly increased the cost of liability insurance.

In the past, a key component of the definition of liability was negligence, but that simplistic definition has been steadily replaced with broader liability doctrines (econlib.org). Improved protection of a site will lead to fewer chances of intrusion and possibly liability issues that might ensue. Fewer guards onsite also means a reduced likelihood of an incident occurring with the guards themselves—especially armed guards for overnight hours. Insurance companies are also recognizing the value of remote guarding and reflecting its presence in reduced premiums for liability insurance.

#5. Improved employee retention

Remote video can provide invaluable peace of mind to the employees who are on site. The mere presence of a panic button and knowing that someone else is available at all times to watch over them can help late night or remotely located employees feel more secure and more likely to remain in their jobs. Job retention means reduced cost of hiring and retraining.

Conclusions

The cost savings and flexibility of remote guarding is making it an attractive option for businesses to add to their security programs. Increases in the capabilities of technology and the ability to integrate with existing systems have led to the creation of more affordable, yet powerful cameras that can help augment onsite protection. Although there will never be an exact replacement for boots-on-the-ground guarding, remote guarding is adding a much-needed offering to the category. Look for its continued growth and the expansion of its capabilities.

Authored By Red Hawk Fire & Security

Red Hawk Fire & Security is an industry leader with more than 1,400 employees and 50,000 clients across the country. Relentlessly dedicated to helping protect businesses from the risks they face every day, Red Hawk's comprehensive portfolio of life safety and security offerings employs cutting-edge technologies and advanced systems integration to create flexible solutions for companies of all sizes. The Red Hawk team of industry experts brings an unmatched breadth of expertise and years of hands-on experience to every solution. The company serves clients in banking and financial services, retail, education, health care and manufacturing and is headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida.

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Boca Center Tower II, 5100 Town Center Circle, Suite 350, Boca Raton, FL 33486
877-744-HAWK(4295) | info@redhawkus.com | www.RedHawkUS.com