Improving conventional decisions with Axis.

Pittsburgh convention center puts Axis high-definition network cameras in place to ensure the safety and security of their valued employees and visitors.

Organization:
David L. Lawrence
Convention Center

Location:
Pittsburgh, PA, USA

Industry segment:
Stadiums/Venues

Application:
Security and safety,
loss prevention

Axis partners:
Dagostino Electronic
Services, TransSystems,
OnSSI

Mission

In a venue that plays host to events ranging from several hundred to 50,000 attendees, security at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center (DLCC) must be nimble in order to meet the individual needs of its guests. Management at the downtown Pittsburgh venue determined that a strategic migration from legacy analog to IP-based surveillance technology would improve property coverage and make it easier to share situational awareness with local law enforcement and other first responders as needed.

Solution

With assistance from Dagostino Electronic Services, a Pittsburgh-based integrator and Axis partner, the DLCC underwent a massive upgrade to its existing surveillance solution. The integrator installed a new IP-based Ocularis video management system (VMS) from OnSSI and integrated 50 existing legacy analog cameras into the network by attaching them to an Axis video encoder rack.

Finally, they began deploying an array of high-definition Axis fixed dome and pan/tilt/zoom (PTZ) network cameras to monitor activity in the exhibition halls, loading docks, lobbies and parking garage.

Result

Because the Axis cameras are run by Power over Ethernet (PoE), security can easily redirect or move their locations to suit the specific requirements of exhibitors and event planners. The facial details captured by the Axis cameras have helped local law enforcement identify, track and apprehend suspected criminals. In addition, Axis cameras linked to panic buttons throughout the venue enable security to quickly assess the nature of an emergency and dispatch the appropriate assistance to that location.

AXIS
COMMUNICATIONS

Providing a premier destination venue

Since the completely redesigned David L. Lawrence Convention Center reopened its doors in 2003, the venue has been host to dozens of events a year – everything from the international G20 summit to national festivals, local conferences and industry expositions. Whether working in tandem with local, state and federal law enforcement or strictly as an in-house security detail, internal security is charged with the protection and safety of everyone from visiting dignitaries and heads of state to corporate executives, local unions, artisans, gamers and more.

With over 1.5 million square feet of space, the security team relies heavily on surveillance technology to assist in making every affair a positive experience for event planners and attendees. In keeping with its forward-thinking redesign – the DLCC is the first LEEDS-certified convention center in North America – management decided to upgrade its security system as well.

The move to an IP video solution began with the installation of an OnSSI Ocularis VMS and the deployment of more than 100 network video cameras.

To leverage their existing investment, 50 legacy analog cameras were integrated into the new IP video system with an AXIS Q7920 Network Video Encoder Rack. As the analog cameras reach end-of-life, they will gradually be replaced with new Axis network cameras.

Today, the DLCC is populated with a mix of HD-resolution Axis fixed dome and PTZ network cameras – from the exhibit halls, receiving docks and kitchen area to the exterior perimeter and parking garage.

Applying conventional wisdom

"We're being very strategic about the deployment of our Axis cameras," explained Steve Morrison, Director of Information Systems for the DLCC. "By choosing the right model and placing it in the right location, we're able to achieve great coverage with fewer cameras. It's really helped us stretch our budget."

One smart choice was the pairing of AXIS Q6045-E MK II PTZ Dome Network Camera with AXIS Q6000-E PTZ Network Camera. "We have a 40,000 square foot hall that's a low utilization space so we couldn't justify putting in a dozen IP cameras," said Morrison. "Pairing the two Axis cameras gave us an uninterrupted view of the entire area and the option to zoom in for a closer look."

AXIS Q6000-E delivers a continuous 360o field of view in HDTV 720p resolution with no gaps. The image is also divided into four quadrants. AXIS Q6045-E integrates into AXIS Q6000-E and mounts into the bottom of the casing, giving the security team the most diverse field of view possible. When the guard monitoring the camera clicks anywhere on one of the four views, AXIS Q6045-E automatically pans and zooms in to that area to reveal more detail.

Another smart choice was the selection of AXIS P5534-E PTZ Network Camera for perimeter surveillance. "We've put those PTZ cameras in some difficult places – like out over Fort Duquesne Boulevard," noted Mark Gillenberger, Project Manager/Estimator for Dagostino Electronic Services. "If we had to service those cameras we would have to get a permit to shut down the road to get back in there. Fortunately for us, those cameras are built for longevity. In the five years they've been up there we haven't had a single service issue."

The DLCC also pairs all of its Axis cameras with its DSX Access Control System to have eyes on the scene in case of a forced door alarm or access denied event. For added safety and security, AXIS P5534-Es are also paired with panic buttons placed throughout the building.

"If the panic alarm is pulled, the closest Axis camera to that spot pops up on the monitor in the security center," remarked Andre Henderson, Chief of Security for the DLCC. "This way the security center can describe exactly what's happening to the security detail on the floor and law enforcement coming onto the property."

Sharing observations

Now that the surveillance system is IP-based, the IT department has been able to expand access to the cameras to different departments as well as local law enforcement.
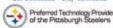
"While security is certainly the heaviest user of the system, we give limited access to different organizations throughout the building to improve their operations," Morrison indicated. "For instance, the catering department has access to the cameras covering their concession stands and loading docks. The parking garage manager has access to all the cameras covering the garage. We even share some of our perimeter cameras with the city of Pittsburgh via a Wi-Fi link."

In one instance, local police were trying to locate a suspect they thought might have boarded a city bus in front of the DLCC. A review of the center's video showed which bus the individual boarded. From there, the detectives determined where he went, tracked him down and brought him in for questioning.

Axis cameras have even proven to be lifesavers. In an incident where a guest started having a seizure, a security officer monitoring the cameras saw the individual hit the floor, immediately dispatched someone to the location and called 911 for assistance. "Thanks to the cameras we were able to respond to the situation very quickly and get our guest the emergency medical assistance they needed," Henderson recalled.
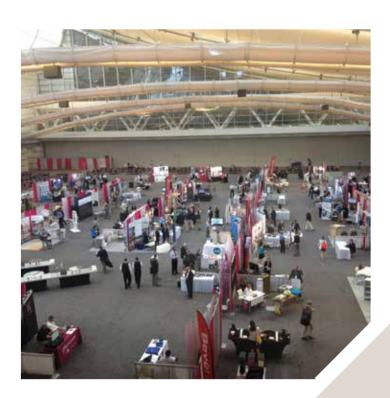
David L. Lawrence Convention Center

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About Axis Communications

Axis offers intelligent security solutions that enable a smarter, safer world. As the global market leader in network video, Axis is driving the industry by continually launching innovative network products based on an open platform - delivering high value to customers through a global partner network. Axis has long-term relationships with partners and provides them with knowledge and ground-breaking network products in existing and new markets.

Axis has more than 2,000 dedicated employees in more than 40 countries around the world, supported by a network of over 75,000 partners across 179 countries. Founded in 1984, Axis is a Sweden-based company listed on NASDAQ Stockholm under the ticker AXIS.

For more information about Axis, please visit our website www.axis.com.

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