

Alko invests in Axis network cameras to enhance store security.



Organization:

Alko

Location:

Finland

Industry segment:

Retail

Application:

Safety and security

Axis partners:

Securitas Alert Services Oy,
Mirasys Oy, ASAN Security
Technologies Oy,
EET Europarts

Mission

Alko is a Finnish state-owned company with a monopoly on selling alcoholic products stronger than 4.7%. Alko is managed and supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Its head office is in Vanda. Alko was formed in 1932 and has 350 stores and 103 sales agents in Finland. A year ago, it was decided that Alko would switch from an analog surveillance system to an IP-based system in all its stores.

Solution

Axis partner Securitas was chosen as the total solution provider, responsible for cameras, alarm center, cable installation and security guard service. AXIS M3004-V Network Cameras with Axis' Corridor Format™ function is used in the stores. AXIS P1354 Network Camera with Lightfinder technology was installed in the entrances, and AXIS M3024-LVE, with integrated IR lighting, was installed in the storerooms. All the cameras are adapted to Alko's need for secure, professional installation.

Mirasys VMS Enterprise software is used for recording and display in the store, while ASAN Security Technologies supplies the software used at the Securitas alarm center in Helsinki.

Result

Alko's stores have 10-25 cameras, depending on the size of the store. 50 stores have already had a more modern new infrastructure and an IP-based surveillance system installed and the remaining stores are next. The work is part of Alko's new profile on the Finnish market. The objective is for all of Alko's stores to be safe and secure for both their staff and their customers. Axis cameras deliver extraordinarily good picture quality and the remote link to the Securitas alarm center means that action can be taken immediately in the event of an alarm.

“It is easy to talk to Axis. You get all the support you need. And the image quality of the cameras is by far the best.”

Kyösti Lehto, Shop design Manager at Alko.

Benefits of IP camera systems

The Finnish company Alko began to review its camera surveillance system a few years ago and decided to switch to IP cameras. Axis partner Securitas was tasked with supplying a total solution, including upgrading the infrastructure, camera installation, the access control system, alarm center service and security guard service. Axis network cameras are now being installed in all of Alko's 350 stores and are linked to Securitas's alarm center in Helsinki.

“An IP-based camera system offers so many benefits. The images are displayed live in Securitas's alarm center and the staff there can see what is happening in any store, wherever it is in the country. We get the right help at the right time,” says Kyösti Lehto, Shop design Manager at Alko.

Surveillance of long corridors

Alko's stores have long corridors lined with shelves. The challenge is to be able to cover a long corridor and have a good picture all along it without needing to use a large number of cameras. Axis's innovative Corridor Format™ produces a vertically-oriented image that is perfect for monitoring narrow corridors. The images delivered are in 9:16 aspect ratio and HDTV quality. This can be achieved by rotating the unique 3-axis lens through 90 degrees when the camera is installed. The image is then rotated back through 90 degrees via the camera's configuration interface.

“Different stores have different needs. Sometimes we need a wide-angle camera image and sometimes corridor format has to be used. Axis' cameras are flexible and we do not need to use more than 3 different models to meet all of our needs,” says Rene Piiparinen, Project Manager at Securitas Alert Services Oy.

Light quality and identification

Light quality in a store environment often varies. The light quality at entrances/exits can cause problems for the cameras and this is also where it is important to be able to identify people. In storerooms, on the other hand, there is sometimes hardly any light at all. AXIS M3024-LVE has a built-in IR lens that makes it possible to deliver quality images in complete darkness. These cameras are used for store surveillance at night and to save energy as they remove the need for additional lighting. AXIS P1354 Network Cameras are installed in the store entrances. Axis' unique Lightfinder technology is integrated in these cameras, which means that the cameras are able to deliver color images even in extremely poor light conditions. This is extremely important when it comes to identifying people.

Time is money

It takes roughly two days for two Securitas employees to install everything in an Alko store. It has to be done fast and the system has to be reliable. “It is important that the store does not have to be closed for a long time and that our installation engineers do not encounter problems,” says Rene Piiparinen. The cameras are delivered with pre-set focus, which makes them easy to install. Adjustments can then be made remotely. The cameras used at Alko also have a pixel counter function, which makes it easy for the installation engineer to check that the camera installation meets the customer's requirements for image resolution, for example to identify the faces of people passing through a doorway. This facilitates quick installation and saves both the installation engineer and the customer money. “The cameras' integrated functions make it very easy for us to install them and their unique picture quality is another reason why we like working with Axis cameras,” says Rene Piiparinen.

