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Cell phone dealer Phone Wave uses a hosted video solution with Axis, Cloud Vision and Secure-i to improve retail operations.



Organization:
Phone Wave, Inc.

Location:
Tampa, Florida, USA

Industry segment:
Retail

Application:
Loss prevention, store management

Axis partners:
Cloud Vision Security,
Secure-i

Mission

As a small retailer with big ambitions, Phone Wave realized that its old analog surveillance system couldn't keep pace with the company's growing franchise operations. The standalone, DVR-based setup at each store was vulnerable to tampering, and the video quality didn't provide sufficient forensic value. The cellular phone dealer decided it was time to upgrade to a high-resolution, network-based solution. A hosted solution was the ultimate choice for cost and efficiency.

Solution

Cloud Vision Security, a hosted video service provider and Axis partner based in Tampa, FL, installed a wide angle, 3MP/ 1080p AXIS M3006-V Fixed Dome Network Camera at each store. The video streams to two locations: a Secure-i hosted video recorder in the cloud and a low cost, local lomega network-attached storage (NAS) device kept under lock and key in each store. Both storage locations are accessed through a single secure Web portal. The redundant configuration prevents the loss of critical video recording if Internet connectivity is ever interrupted.

Result

The operations manager now views live and recorded video remotely instead of having to go onsite to watch the DVR across three stores. Because the solution is hosted, Phone Wave receives full technical support, maintenance and system upgrades as part of the monthly subscription fee, and this keeps the cost of ownership low. The video also provides critical business intelligence which helps the operations manager boost team efficiency and maximize sales.

“I originally installed the Axis hosted video system for loss prevention, but now it's become the greatest tool I have to manage the business.”

Dale Lemons, Owner and Operations Manager for Phone Wave, Inc.

Protecting surveillance footage

As an authorized dealer for MetroPCS, Phone Wave sells business services, mobile phones and accessories from three stores in the Tampa area. After repeated DVR failures, tampering and inadvertent write-overs of crucial recordings, Owner and Operations Manager Dale Lemons had enough of his old analog CCTV system.

“The DVR could only record on a seven-day loop. After that, any older recordings would be written over,” said Lemons. “Plus, the DVRs were vulnerable to tampering, and the only way to see the footage was to go into each store and review the recording onsite. It just wasn't sustainable.”

Cloud Vision changed all that by installing a new hosted video solution to store recordings in Secure-i's cloud. The plug-and-play system not only solved the problem of losing source recordings onsite, but it also took the technical worry out of the Lemons' hands by guaranteeing uptime and complete management of system software and hardware.

“The time saved by this solution was very advantageous because time is money for any business,” said Justin Kelly, Chief of Business Development for Cloud Vision.

One camera sees it all

Because each location is about 600 square feet, Cloud Vision was able to cover virtually the entire floor with a single, wide angle 3MP/1080p AXIS M3006-V Fixed Dome Network Camera mounted above the door to the backroom. Cloud Vision programmed the vandal- and tamper-proof camera to switch between three preset coverage areas to monitor the two register areas and the front door. Lemons can adjust the view remotely with real-time digital pan/tilt/zoom.

The camera streams two copies of every recording simultaneously. A bandwidth-friendly, low-resolution 320x240 copy streams to the cloud in real time. This stream can be quickly scanned for day-to-day operations. A second higher resolution 1280x1024 stream records to a local NAS device for forensic investigation.

Both streams can be remotely accessed from the same web portal.

“If the manager sees something on the cloud copy and wants to see clearer details of that event, he can switch his view to the hi-res video with the click of a button,” said Brian Lohse, Vice President of Secure-i, the storage host.

“Making the transition from my old analog system to this new network-based one was extremely easy,” said Lemons. “For me, the HVR Mobile app [to control the system remotely] wasn't harder than any other app I have on my smartphone.” According to Lemons, the image quality of his former surveillance system was so poor that he rarely used it. Now that he has high resolution video, he uses the system every day.

The camera as management partner

With three franchises to run, it is logistically impossible for Lemons to give on-site support to every location simultaneously. While he regularly visits each store, he believes that using the video system to support more real-time interaction with employees helps improve merchandising and sales, customer service and the store's bottom line

“With my new hosted video system, I can log onto the system from my tablet whenever I want,” said Lemons. “It helps me stay in tune with what's going on in my stores when I'm not there.”

Lemons uses the new Axis IP cameras for real-time business intelligence – everything from tracking the peaks and valleys in customer traffic, optimizing staff schedules and maintaining consistent franchise branding standards to helping employees hone their customer service skills and build repeat business.

“As an owner and a manager, the video is the greatest tool I have to manage the business,” said Lemon. “Because the hosted subscription is comparable to a monthly cell-phone plan, if it helps me gain one extra sale a month, the system pays for itself and then some.”

