

Cruise control: protecting an auto dealership operation with Axis.

The Rydell Automotive Group implemented a full tank of Axis network cameras to drive away fraud and keep their engines revving.



Organization:
Rydell Automotive Group

Location:
Grand Forks, North
Dakota, USA

Industry segment:
Retail

Application:
Store management,
customer behavior
tracking

Axis partner:
High Point Networks,
Aimetis

Mission

A failing surveillance system with a clunky interface and inability to expand drove the Rydell Automotive Group to seek out a new IP video system that could thrive in light of its fully staffed IT and development departments. As cameras had little room for customization and consistently fell offline, Rydell began its hunt for a solution that would allow it to take control of their video surveillance needs.

Solution

High Point Networks specified an expandable system for Rydell of Axis cameras on an Aimetis Symphony platform that can be configured with specific feature sets depending on each camera's location. Rydell implemented a mix of panoramic views to accompany high-resolution fixed network cameras, creating a blend of general overview with clips that can be heavily analyzed in detail.

A selection of fixed dome cameras also adds Wide Dynamic Range (WDR) to storefront and service window environments where lighting may highly differ across the scene.

Result

The network camera system has saved Rydell resources and high costs in countless situations since deployment. When one customer claimed they left a set of expensive golf clubs in their old car prior to purchasing and leaving with their new vehicle, the company was able to provide direct evidence showing the customer removing them from the car while on site. The company is also able to maintain higher safety standards in its service drive, monitoring any potential accidents to protect its workers.

“The cameras have led to major savings for us when a customer complains that something is broken or that we scratched their car; the cameras at 5-megapixels let us zoom in very close to identify if any cracks, chips, dent or scratches were preexisting. We now have that evidence to back us up.”

Steve Symons, IT Manager, Rydell Auto Center.

Driving higher standards

Standing as the corporate headquarters for the Rydell Automotive Group in Grand Forks, N.D., the Rydell Auto Center is comprised of a multi-site campus with departments varying from sales centers to a body shop and carwash. Rydell has 76 other dealerships nationally, but the central location in Grand Forks prides itself on its focus on technology, even incorporating a team of developers to maintain a top notch network and computer system.

While every department has differing needs and concerns, Rydell found itself needing a new system after an old camera deployment lacking scalability continued to drop offline. The first major feature of Axis network cameras that drew Rydell in was their operability within ONVIF standards; with a development team in place, being able to get into the data was a strong deciding factor in settling on the Axis products fed into an Aimetis software solution.

Shifting throughout the gearbox

With over 230 cameras in place, Rydell worked with High Point Networks to distinguish the proper camera line that suited each targeted location. The resulting system includes about 30 different camera models. “We buy the camera for the need we have to address,” noted Justin Fetsch, VP of Sales with High Point Networks. “Axis has a wide line of solutions to give us a unique and proper fit for every application.”

Rydell has positioned a group of AXIS P3367-V Network Cameras to get fixed views on countless areas in 5-megapixel resolution. The main service area recently added 24 of these to pair with two AXIS M3007-V Network Cameras that results in a broad view of the scene along with specific shots in notable spaces. “Our goal with the cameras is always to have an overview to accompany more specific shots,” added Fetsch.

The force of cameras throughout the five-plus sites on the main campus plus the formal retail storefront all stream back to Aimetis Symphony on standard licenses as they primarily record on motion throughout the week.

The Aimetis VMS partnered with the Axis cameras give Rydell countless opportunities to improve their solution. They implement a mobile bridge so that staff can access footage on both their desktop and mobile devices. Rydell also began utilizing the Aimetis License Plate Recognition analytic, not necessarily for a security purpose but to potentially identify customers as they arrive to personalize service, which can shorten their wait times immensely.

“Overall, everybody is really happy with the Axis cameras on the Aimetis software,” said Steve Symons, IT Manager with Rydell Auto Center. “Especially coming from the previous system which was just miserable from an end user standpoint; we can configure it how we like it on each computer and that is why we love the system.”

Spending wisely to save endlessly

Though the Axis and Aimetis solution assists Rydell in its security efforts, the footage derived from the system has proven essential to protect the dealership from fraud and keep its employees safe. Five cameras surrounding the entrance to its car wash provide HD recordings as a vehicle is coming through. If a customer complains that Rydell's equipment or staff caused damage to their vehicle, the company has hard evidence to back up the claim. When a customer exclaimed that the machinery had ripped off their wiper blades, video backed up Rydell by showing that they had their wipers activated at the time.

“In the long run, it is helping with our customer service because there is no arguing with customers when you have evidence,” Symons commented. In furthering their ability to drive higher customer satisfaction, Rydell has a set of four cameras broadcasting to a television in the sales tower of their Honda store. Showing views that cannot be seen from inside, a manager can send a sales consultant over to a potential customer out in the lot that otherwise may not have been noticed.

While the majority of Rydell's customers and visitors are honest and cause no difficulties, the Axis cameras have given the company a solution that settles any concerns of fraud or deception on the premises.



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