

Wisconsin's Deer District scores a winning security plan.

Milwaukee Bucks protect new Fiserv Forum arena and growing downtown entertainment district with intelligent surveillance solution.



Organization:
Fiserv Forum, Deer District

Location:
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
USA

Industry segment:
Stadiums/Venues

Application:
Safety and security, loss
prevention

Axis partner:
Johnson Controls, Inc.

Creating a destination spot packed with activity

In the world of sports, oftentimes there's as much action in the stands as there is on the floor. That's why the Milwaukee Bucks felt it was so important to design their new arena with a network of security cameras to safeguard the welfare of players and fans alike. The new Fiserv Forum, which opened its doors in 2018, boasts an array of more than 850 Axis IP cameras monitoring everything from the 17,341-seat arena bowl to the concourse lined with concession stands and eateries to the upper deck social clubs, loft boxes and VIP suites. For added security, the Bucks also installed exterior cameras to protect the Fiserv Forum perimeter, parking lot, gate entrances and plaza.

The 128-foot building, with its striking zinc-wrapped exterior, is the focal point for a 30-acre development underway in the heart of downtown Milwaukee called Deer District. When completed, the district will include the Bucks training center, the Froedtert & The Medical College of Wisconsin Sports Science Center, the

Entertainment Block consisting of restaurants, pubs and sports bars, medical and business offices, and a mix of hotels, apartments and parking facilities.

With a robust calendar of NBA and collegiate games, big name concerts and other activity drawing tens of thousands of locals and visitors to Fiserv Forum most days of the week, security staff shoulders a lot of responsibility for protecting people and property.

"The Bucks have evolved from just being an NBA team to a sports and entertainment group," says Adam Stockwell, VP of Security for the Milwaukee Bucks organization. "So my team not only handles all the security aspects of the new arena, we oversee security for the Bucks training center and the whole entertainment district – about 30 acres in total."

As the entertainment complex continues to expand, the Bucks organization plans to install and integrate additional Axis cameras into their enterprise solution.



Using a zone defense strategy

To manage security across the sprawling campus, the Bucks turned to Johnson Controls (JCI), security specialists and an Axis partner. The JCI team created a robust solution that streams all the Axis cameras to the Arena Operations Center (AOC), where security staff can view the video on a dozen 60-inch monitors using an enterprise video management software. JCI grouped the cameras into quadrants allowing Bucks security staff to watch an area from multiple viewpoints simultaneously or review video of an incident from multiple camera angles.

"On event day, we can have a dozen or more people monitoring their specific area of responsibility," explains Stockwell. "They could be from the police or fire department, housekeeping, food service or even guest services." The configuration allows an operator to toggle between a full screen image and a mosaic of 16 camera views.

Capturing irrefutable detail with amazing clarity

Stockwell points to the 20-megapixel AXIS Q1659 Network Cameras as one of the biggest boons to his department. "We put these powerful cameras in our upper and lower bowls, along with AXIS Q6155 pan/tilt/zoom (PTZ) cameras so we can look at any section and identify the person in a specific seat," says Stockwell. "We want to be sure that if we decide to eject someone, or give them a warning for egregious behavior, that we're sending our security staff to the right guy, especially if it's one of our season tickets holders."

The busy concourse is another high-priority area. There the Bucks deployed a mix of AXIS P37 multi-sensor cameras and AXIS P38 panoramic cameras to maintain a watchful eye on the myriad concession areas. They also used an outdoor version of these camera models to monitor entrance gates and the plaza where crowds tend to congregate.

"With the PTZs we put on the corners of the building, I can see something a mile away, zoom in on it and tell who the person is," says Stockwell. "It's a very powerful camera."

Stockwell credits his Axis support team for ensuring the optimal solution to meet the demands of the environment. For instance, the Axis account manager happened to be at a Bucks game one night and stopped by the AOC just to see how the system was doing. He noticed a couple of cameras that needed a quick adjustment – the aspect ratio of one, the white balance of another – to improve the quality of their views. "He did a quick bit of programming right on the spot and instantly upgraded our usability," says Stockwell. "That's real customer support."

Pivoting between offense and defense

Like any large entertainment venue, Fiserv Forum has its share of incidents. "When you blanket the property with as many cameras as we have, there's not much you miss," says Stockwell. Given that the Axis cameras are deliberately overt, it sometimes amazes Stockwell how people seem to ignore their presence.

In one case, a bartender thought they could grab a quick nip between customers. The cameras documented the infraction, allowing management to quickly mitigate the issue before it escalated. In another instance, an altercation in the stands led to police escorting a fan from the stadium. The fan's lawyer attempted to sue the police, claiming they assaulted his client. The video proved otherwise and the suit was immediately dropped. Sometimes incidents happen behind the scenes, too.





For instance, "When a delivery truck damaged a loading dock door, we used the video to prove the driver was at fault," says Stockwell.

The network of Axis cameras have also proved invaluable during medical emergencies. In the midst of a recent Milwaukee Marathon, security received a medical call from the crowded plaza. In the AOC, an operator quickly pulled up the cameras in that quadrant, saw who they were talking with and what kind of medical emergency was happening.

"With the fantastic coverage we have, we get excellent situational awareness," says Stockwell.

Improving gate flow

Whether it's game day or a concert, managing the flow of people into the arena can be a real challenge. "It gets super crowded on the plaza as people start lining up at the gates," says Stockwell. "We might have 50 people walking in one entrance and 300 at another."

Resource managers in the AOC use the Axis cameras to continuously monitor the queues and redirect personnel to different locations to expedite ticket scanning and bag checks. Or in case of a real bottleneck, they might instruct security to redirect fans to a less crowded entrance.

Stopping stalkers and welcoming VIPs

The security staff is currently evaluating facial recognition software to embed on the surveillance system. "We're already anticipating all the ways this technology will help us improve our operations," says Stockwell.

Those improvements run the gamut from apprehending known celebrity stalkers to helping law enforcement track individuals on their most-wanted list to alerting guest services when VIPs are in the arena.

Becoming a victim of their own success

The old Bradley Center arena housed a mere 60 security cameras. Stockwell notes that the jump to over 850 in the new Fiserv Forum has made a huge difference in the Bucks security landscape, especially when it comes to interacting with local law enforcement.

"Now we have police asking us for footage of vehicle accidents outside the arena," says Stockwell. "In a recent hit-and-run, the camera footage was so sharp we were even able to provide the license plate number."

As the Bucks organization grows more familiar with the forensic value of the Axis cameras, the number of internal requests to pull up video for investigations continues to rise. "We've become a bit of a victim of our own success," smiles Stockwell.

"With Axis cameras I can understand exactly what happened and deal with it very quickly. I don't have to interview a dozen people to get to the truth of the matter."

Adam Stockwell, VP of Security, Milwaukee Bucks.



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About Axis Communications

Axis enables a smarter and safer world by creating network solutions that provide insights for improving security and new ways of doing business. As the industry leader in network video, Axis offers products and services for video surveillance and analytics, access control, and audio systems. Axis has more than 3,000 dedicated employees in over 50 countries and collaborates with partners worldwide to deliver customer solutions. Axis was founded in 1984 and has its headquarters in Lund, Sweden.

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