HYATT HOTELS

Hyatt Hotels Set a Global Standard with Milestone Video

Hotel Security Challenges

Hyatt Hotels owns and manages hundreds of properties worldwide. Until 2013, they had no standardized CCTV security platform. This presented different challenges. Disparate video management software across different sites was not efficient or effective.

"I travelled around the world and there was no rhyme or reason to the number of cameras our properties had," says Mark Sanna, head of global security for Hyatt Hotels. "Even more disconcerting was the fact that at least a few cameras were usually out of operation at each property, some for a considerable period of time, and if the one person tasked with security monitoring was not around, there often was no one else who knew the system – user training was a big issue."

A turning point was an international terrorism act at a Marriott hotel in 2009. The event alerted Hyatt to the fact that video storage for Hyatt properties was exclusively onsite.

"The first thing police did was they came in, captured all the video imagery and confiscated it," Sanna says. "The police began releasing video clips in the public domain in an effort to explain to the citizens what had happened. So we knew we needed to start thinking about remote storage and the ability to get access to video if an incident occurred."

Organization
Hyatt Hotels

Location
Global

Industry Segment
Hospitality

System Integrator(s)
Virtual Software Equipment & Consulting (VSEC)

Milestone Partner(s)
Axis
Anixter
HP/BCDVideo

Solution
XProtect Corporate
XProtect Enterprise
XProtect Professional
XProtect Express
XProtect Smart Client
Customer Dashboard
Milestone Interconnect

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A Standard Solution Worldwide

Mark Sanna felt it was important for Hyatt to have a standardized security platform across its brands. He wanted one that would allow for integrated security and risk management, centralized support and training, and remote storage and incidence management.

In December 2012 Sanna commissioned Hyatt's global security standards project. He reached out to Wade Pinnell, now owner of Virtual Software Equipment & Consulting (VSEC) Services, an emerging leader in the electronic security industry, to assist in choosing Hyatt's new platform and implementing the rollout.

"We had it narrowed down to Milestone XProtect video management software (VMS) and another competitor," Sanna says. "Milestone offered clear advantages in features and function. Once they decided to match the competitive encoder price, the choice was pretty easy."

The program was officially launched in December of 2013 following a pilot project with three smaller Hyatt properties. Pinnell, who for this project was hired as a contract implementation manager for the Hyatt global closed circuit television (CCTV) systems, says that as of 2016 Milestone is online in over 100 Hyatt properties with deployment plans in some stage of development in another 50-80 properties. The ultimate goal is all Hyatt properties.

In addition to Milestone VMS, Hyatt wanted preferred component partners in other aspects of the installation. After careful deliberation, Hyatt chose Axis Communications as its preferred camera provider, Anixter as the preferred distributor and HP/BCDVideo as the preferred server.

Pinnell says Hyatt presents unique challenges because it manages, rather than owns, the majority of its properties, which means working out agreements on security deployments with other stakeholders. "This is going to be a long and complex process because each Hyatt property is unique. But what's great is that at the core, tying everything together, is Milestone VMS."
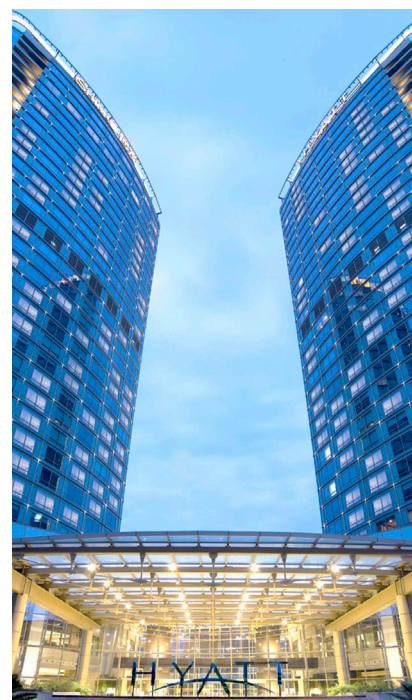
Expanding Hotel Locations

Hyatt Hotels includes 10 distinct brands and more than 600 properties worldwide, with almost $4.5 billion in revenue in 2014. In that year alone, Hyatt experienced rapid growth by adding nearly 100 properties.

Hyatt offers a number of sub-brands to address the needs of a broad customer base, from business travelers to family vacationers to others looking for a high-end hotel experience. Hyatt's newest brand, Hyatt Centric, launched in April 2015 to serve guests as a "super concierge", offering recommendations on things like wine tastings and beach activities that place visitors right in the center of the action.

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> Firstly, we wanted a global standard – a security system we could eventually deploy in all Hyatt properties. We also wanted something that could adapt to a diverse, rapidly expanding enterprise. Milestone VMS made the most sense on both fronts.
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> **Mark Sanna**
> **Corporate Vice President**
> **Head of Global Security**
> **Hyatt Hotels**

Open Platform Architecture

Pinnell says that one of his first requirements was that the platform be built on open architecture. "When we started looking into Milestone and other competitors, we found Milestone easier to use and a lot more open. If you dig deep into the software's architecture, there is a pretty big difference there."

One of the chief differences involves Open Network Interface Video Forum (ONVIF). ONVIF is the dominant industry standard for the interface between IP physical security products. In addition to video streaming, Pinnell appreciates that while being ONVIF compliant, Milestone does not rely exclusively on this standard. By having dedicated drivers for Axis cameras, and thousands of other cameras, feature sets such as input/output and voice-over-internet IP are guaranteed to work. Other competitors that rely exclusively on ONVIF compliance, are less reliable, which in Sanna's eyes was a clear advantage in choosing Milestone.

"These cameras can do a lot more than record video," Sanna says. "With Milestone, we can maximize many of those other features, which is a big selling point."

Shared Video Helped Catch the Rico Suave Bandit

Mark Sanna says that video surveillance has helped resolve a major investigation. Several years ago, there was a jewelry thief that repeatedly made off with a sizable amount of jewelry from a hotel in Los Angeles.

The thief would pretend to be a hotel engineer and targeted specific individuals he thought he could manipulate. He would appear at their room posing as a hotel engineer, and tell them the hotel sent him to do a check of the AC system in the room, and to do so he would have to spray an aerosol that had an offensive odor. He advised the guests to wait in the hallway while he performed the check. The guests would leave him alone in the room for a few minutes, during which time he would make off with jewelry and other valuables.

Months after multiple thefts with the same modus operandi (MO) were reported in the U.S., a robbery with the same MO was reported in Australia. Hyatt meticulously combed through video footage, coordinating with both the Perth and Sydney police departments. Eventually, the thief was caught on a Hyatt property in Sydney after being wanted for almost three years and making off with nearly $5 million dollars in stolen goods. Hyatt receives all the FBI bulletins and distributes them internationally because many jewel thieves operate globally.

"By sharing imagery, we helped lead to his arrest," Sanna says. "Our partnership is predicated on the use of a global system that enables us to use our equipment more intelligently, lower our costs, improve our performance capabilities and most importantly, better protect our operations. Milestone will give us that foundation."

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> **Vade Pinnell**
> **Owner**
> **VSEC Services**

Sanna says that Hyatt's security system is also integrated into specialized city security systems in the US, like Project Shield in Chicago. Hyatt is already a partner with municipal police departments in cities like London, Chicago and San Diego for the purposes of sharing video to assist in the protection of public venues.

Software Features Address Management Needs

As VSEC Services and Hyatt were deciding on a VMS, Milestone released two product features that proved very timely: the Customer Dashboard and Milestone Interconnect.

"The Customer Dashboard lets us monitor our installations in real time," Pinnell says. "We can see that all our sites are up and working, and if something does happen in that process, we get an alert so we can immediately respond to the problem."

In addition to the stand-alone systems at each property, Hyatt uses Milestone Interconnect, which allows Pinnell to monitor all the Milestone deployments from one central location. This gives Hyatt tools and options to prevent situations like those seen in Jakarta. Milestone Interconnect also gives Pinnell a one-button click access into the VMS installed at a property level. That means he can log in, add and modify users and passwords, and do remote configuration – all from his office in Michigan.

"Hyatt has over 600 properties, so we had to have that ability to know when things were working and when they weren't on a case-by-case basis," Pinnell says. "We wanted a tool that would allow us to manage the health and functionality of our servers and to make sure that the standards we wrote were being deployed properly. Milestone Interconnect was a perfect fit for these needs."

Milestone Tiers Provide a Flexible System

Hyatt's 10 different brands require varied security configurations. Milestone's ability to accommodate each was another advantage of the company's open platform.

"Generally we use Milestone XProtect Corporate for Hyatt's casinos and large, complex sites," Sanna says. "Milestone XProtect Enterprise is deployed to sites with more than 48 cameras, XProtect Professional for use with 17-47 cameras and XProtect Express for our smallest sites. It's great to have tiered solutions that meet the needs of different properties."

Sanna estimates that Hyatt has saved tens of thousands of dollars based on the fact that there are significant cost differences in camera licenses between the tiers. In addition, the ability to use the Customer Dashboard and Milestone Interconnect to monitor all the tiers from a central location are critical, cost-effective tools for Hyatt.

Easy Training and Programming a Big Plus

Pinnell says Hyatt is already seeing meaningful benefits from the recent Milestone

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installations. "We did a recent deployment in the south of France. Obviously there was a little bit of a language barrier, but with the XProtect Smart Client supporting 27 languages, training went well. One week later the security manager calls me to say how much the staff loves using Milestone, how easily they've picked it up. We're going to continue to have deployments all over the globe, and so far, we're hearing that the user benefits compared to previous systems are tremendous."

Previously, Hyatt's digital video recorders (DVR) could bring up different camera feeds but the system did not allow customization. With Milestone, operators can toggle between different views with ease and change camera options based on time of day and location.

In addition, Hyatt personnel have commented on the ease of video export with Milestone. "Properties often need to coordinate with law enforcement or human resources to pull video," Pinnell says. "We've consistently received feedback that it's so much easier to accomplish this with Milestone. If there are questions, we can support them in real-time."

Ready for the Future

Sanna and Pinnell say that Hyatt's first year using Milestone was mostly focused on getting installations up in different locations and adapting to a new system. The upcoming year will be more focused on adding complexities to the system.

"Right now we are considering various biometric applications, business analytic tools like traffic flow and space utilization, and license plate recognition (LPR)," Sanna says. "We're definitely looking at capitalizing on the many integrations Milestone has to offer."

Most of the installations so far have been on smaller properties, but Pinnell already sees year two deployments featuring bigger, more complex installations.

"We're tying a lot of our deployments to major renovations or acquisitions," Pinnell says. "Obviously if you're spending millions to add or significantly upgrade a property, it's easier to add in $50-100,000 for a new security system."

Pinnell is hopeful that the positive feedback from Hyatt properties with existing Milestone installations will spur more locations to ask for their upgrade sooner.

"We want the rollout to be a model that demonstrates the value of a centralized standard based on business principles and not edict," Pinnell says. "We're definitely moving forward, but a key is getting people excited about implementation, banging down our doors for Milestone because they want it."

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For more information, please see:
www.axis.com, www.bcdvideo.com, www.anixter.com,
www.vsecservices.com **and** www.milestonesys.com

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STARTS
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