

Security Products

Illinois Goodwill Stores Manage Loss Prevention, Safety With IP Video System

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At Goodwill Industries locations in Illinois, Milestone Systems XProtect open platform IP video management software is operating with mobiDEOS MobileCamViewer for mobile access to video surveillance and remote video on BlackBerries, to monitor and reduce shrinkage.

The solution is also a tool for safety and employee training, with the Milestone platform enabling investigations of innovative retail analytics to further improve their business.

Goodwill Industries is a \$2.4 billion nonprofit retail and social service organization selling donated goods to support their mission. For help with external theft from shoplifting, as well as internal pilfering, they wanted a good deterrent for employees to know they are monitored, and a forensic investigation tool for work related or customer injuries.

In December, NAVCO Networks and Security installed Milestone XProtect Professional IP video management software to manage Axis HD network cameras, and the MobiDEOS Blackberry application for mobile client access to the surveillance system. With the Milestone open platform architecture that allows integration with other systems, Goodwill has been able to test retail-based analytics for people counting, traffic patterns, or other innovative retail systems they wish to investigate in future for improving their business.

The primary surveillance needs here were typical for a retail environment with some high theft areas: officials wanted to monitor entry and exit points, point-of-sale terminals and store activities.

“Additionally, we needed to be able to maintain surveillance on a coffee house area, as well as ‘Donor Drop Off’ locations, with audio and people counting,” said Rick Levine, vice president of loss prevention at Land of Lincoln Goodwill Industries. “Our primary concerns were general shrinkage where internal theft accounts for roughly 48 percent. We of course have issues with shoplifting, too. In our unique environment, we furthermore have high concerns for slip and fall, as well as a need for tracking and monitoring the donations that we receive. Having remote two-way audio for the drop off area was key to this application being the right one for us.”

Since the employees know that the executive team and the loss prevention team carry MobileCamViewers that let them see staff activities anytime and anywhere, internal theft will be reduced and productivity will be increased.

“With the Milestone system being PC based, it has helped immensely to make it easy to work with; most of our users are not your traditional security folks, but are familiar with your common PC interfaces,” Levine said. “Most of the installation and training was easy because the software is user friendly. We got help when necessary, but the Milestone Smart Client allowed for rapid understanding of the system and with some basic training from our Milestone contact, we were off and running.”

In addition, the mobiDEOS MobileCamViewer gives access to video from the Axis security cameras in just three simple clicks -- as easy as making a phone call.

Within a short period of time, Goodwill was able to identify a 'short-change' artist at one of the POS terminals.

"Without the ability to digitally zoom in, we would not have been able to see him 'palm' the bill off the bottom of the stack," Levine said. "Also, people occasionally drop off a donation and notice something in the next bag that they might want, thinking it can be taken in trade. Now it's easy to stop this because there is two-way voice communication along with the Axis cameras."

Levine is pleased that the Milestone video can be viewed anytime by the remote MobileCamViewer.

"Once we had an irate customer, so I received a call from the store and I could evaluate the situation using MobileCamViewer," he said. "And just recently we received an alarm around 10 p.m., so I just checked the video on my Blackberry with the MobileCamViewer and was able to send the police directly to the location. It saved time and was safer for the police to know exactly what they were going in to.

"Using the Milestone open platform has enabled us to lay the foundation for migrating to the future and adopting such emerging technologies as Video Content Analytics, remote monitoring, VoIP, and even smart phone applications through MobiDEOS MobileCamViewer. The solution manages loss prevention and store activities, with enhanced video for training purposes, and business intelligence, as well."

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