Five Reasons Your Facility Needs a Visitor Management System

1. **The world has changed.** Workplace violence, industrial espionage and global terrorism threaten the security of personnel and property. When facility entrances aren’t secure, companies are vulnerable – and liable. Consider these examples:

   - An armed suspect walked into Washington, D.C., police headquarters and shot and killed three people, including two FBI agents. A jury awarded $1.7 million to the husband of one of the slain agents. The reason? They determined that the facility should have had a better visitor sign-in system and other safeguards in place.
   - Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma Federal Building terrorist bomber, reportedly conducted preliminary walkthroughs of the Murrah Building’s ground floor before perpetrating his horrendous attack. Other would-be terrorists are likely to attempt to case buildings before attack. Effective lobby security can prevent this.
   - A jury awarded $10 million against a security firm that supplied a guard for a building lobby. The guard did nothing while three loiterers in the lobby harassed a tenant and then shot him six times, leaving him paralyzed.

   “Visitor management is about controlling access, knowing who’s in the building, and making employees accountable for their visitors,” says Ron Orchid, a security consultant with 30 years of experience who is general manager for Glover/Resnick & Associates.

   Orchid says a visitor management system that comprises software tools and ID validation, combined with physical barriers and a well-designed lobby, can keep the wrong people out – and let the right people in, quickly and efficiently.

2. **Your lobby is your first line of defense.** “The lobby is the single-most important security point in any building or facility where protection of personnel and property is paramount,” says Richard Grassie, a Certified Protection Professional (CPP) and president of TECHMARK Security Integration Inc. “Security around visitor management has to be nearly flawless.”

   Grassie says a complete lobby system must be in place that supports security physically, electronically and procedurally. Visitor management systems are an integral element of the total system and must be capable of:

   - Accurately and quickly capturing visitors’ pictures, signatures, business cards and drivers license information.
   - Authenticating their ID or credentials.
   - Performing discrete security checks using watch lists.
   - Creating one-time-use visitor badges that feature the visitor’s photo, name, affiliation, host name and authorized areas of access, as well as the badge’s expiration time.
   - Allowing employees to register visitors online ahead of time – and be notified electronically or by phone when a visitor arrives.
3. **Digital trumps paper when it comes to security.** “A digital system provides an audit trail that’s easy to create and access,” says Orchid. When facilities rely on logbooks, reusable visitor badges and security guards to manage incoming visitors, security breaches can occur more readily than automated systems:

- Information written in the logbook can be illegible – or false. You have an inaccurate record of your visitors – and no warning that your visitors aren’t who they say they are.
- Competitors, hackers and suppliers can read your logbook and gain confidential information about your business.
- Visitors can neglect to sign out and return their badges; unauthorized visitors can use unreturned badges to infiltrate your facility and gain access to employees, restricted areas, equipment, compounds or proprietary data.

4. **Visitor management is already working for facilities like yours.** Consider these examples:

- A leading North American paper company installed Honeywell LobbyWorks™ to maintain security at its Canadian facility during a major renovation. The system verifies the contractors’ identities, tracks their comings and goings, and alerts them when they are due for safety training.
- At an off-site data-storage center in the Southeast, LobbyWorks streamlines entry for employees, contractors and others, while enabling the facility to “watch out” for unwelcome visitors.
- A major Canadian airport upgraded its corporate office’s visitor management system from a logbook-based system to LobbyWorks. During the airport’s expansion, the new system helps manage the influx of consultants, contractors and vendors and keeps the airport secure.

5. **Systems offer benefits beyond security.** In addition to strengthening facility security, visitor management systems also:

- **Improve productivity** — Visitors are pre-registered electronically and multiple visitors can be processed simultaneously. The system can be integrated with the facility’s existing email system, as well as other business and security systems. It also can be used to set up meetings and attendee lists.
- **Enhance your image** — Badges are professionally done and visitors are processed efficiently and professionally, eliminating large waiting lines in the lobby.
- **Improve visitor service** — Because they are pre-registered or can be registered quickly, visitors are made to feel expected and welcome.
- **Control resources** — The system can track assets and deliveries and provide traffic reports for resource planning.
- **Enhance emergency response** — If the building must be evacuated, the system can be used to determine the presence and location of visitors within the facility.

“A digital system is a more secure way for a lobby guard to authorize a visit – rather than through word of mouth or the visitors’ claim,” Grassie says. “An automated system, used properly and effectively by lobby personnel, can significantly heighten facility security – and process visitors quickly.”

For more information about the use and value of visitor management systems, please contact:

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