How Do You Make Smart Purchases In A Changing Economy?

Build A Strong Case For Return-On-Investment When Considering New Technologies.

Megapixel IP cameras and systems can make a profound positive impact on security solution purchases because they can significantly improve ROI (Return on Investment) and they can improve the quality of the viewed and stored images at the same time.

The basis for creating a convincing business case for purchasing new security imaging technology is to know what you're buying. Knowledge of new and emerging technologies is the security professional's best tool to separate the hype from the reality. Megapixel camera technology provides the utility for the most superior imaging quality; and better images make for better systems. Making intelligent technology choices can enable a company to leverage the benefits of innovation while still minimizing costs.

The economy is looking up in 2010, but companies still need to be careful about how they spend money in the months and years ahead. Tightening of corporate spending patterns extends beyond the residual impact of the recent economic downturn. An ongoing trend toward corporate "leanness" - in which every expenditure is expected to provide a return on investment, is the new reality for the global security market. Security professionals are well aware that all capital expenditures face incredible scrutiny at the corporate level. Quite simply, the value of a purchase is even more important than the price.

The Case For Megapixel Cameras

Megapixel IP cameras on IP recording platforms are extremely cost effective. It takes fewer megapixel cameras to cover the same physical area and resolution and picture quality are greatly improved over standard resolution cameras. Using fewer cameras offers the additional benefits of fewer cables, fewer camera housings, fewer lenses, fewer network video recorder (NVR) licensing fees, fewer NVR systems, and far less installation expenditures.

Even before factoring in the value of megapixel imaging, IP security systems already offer several benefits that can help make a case for a strong return-on-investment (ROI). These include:

- Standardized IT-based components. IP video systems are created using the same building blocks - servers, network switches, digital storage, etc. - that make up the IT (Information Technology) industry. Competition among suppliers of industry standard systems tends to lower prices and increase technology advances. Product functionality is enhanced even as the prices come down. There is also a broader choice of sources for new equipment and technology platforms.

- Ability to use existing infrastructure. For new installations at medium-to-large-sized facilities, cabling costs can be significantly lower if the IP system uses existing Ethernet infrastructure. For example, existing fiber-optic cables can sometimes be leveraged for networked systems. Probably most important is that the video security network architecture, design and support can be identical to the network that is deployed for other IT and networking uses.

- Software flexibility. Because the brains of IP video systems are in the software, it is much easier to update or upgrade a system. Software updates can be made easily available, often over the Internet, so that the latest version of each product is accessible to the user. Updating firmware and software is more efficient and less expensive than physically replacing equipment.

- Smarter systems. Paying operators to watch a display of 10 to 500 cameras for many hours in a row is expensive and impractical. Expecting the operator to be monitoring the correct camera at the precise time to enact PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) mechanical functionality is also unlikely. Viewing the stored megapixel image and being able to electronically PTZ within the image to extract the information needed is much more practical and economical. Forensic, stored data and images can be more easily retrieved and utilized that ever before through more sophisticated network video platforms. Technology that combines analytics with digital imaging is capable of sensing a change in a video frame and then alerting a human operator only in case of a rules-based alarm.

- Fewer cables. The basic structure of an Ethernet network can contribute to lowering cabling costs because a camera merely has to connect to the nearest network node, as opposed to using a home-run coax cable to connect to a centralized recorder. Cat-5 cabling used in IP networks is less expensive than coax, it weighs less and it has a faster transmission speed. Because it is a part of the com-

pany's standard IT architecture, the IT organization is more accepting of Ethernet cabling than coax cable.

Power over Ethernet (PoE). Connections can be simplified (and the resulting costs lowered) by the use of Power-Over-Ethernet (POE) technology for IP systems. The power goes to the camera over the same cable as the network connection, thus eliminating the need for a separate power source to the camera. For non-POE implementations, separate electrical wiring and installation for the wiring are required.

When evaluating the numbers for a new system installation, it is helpful to take a broad view of overall system costs. The complete cost of the system is obviously a better measure than the price of a single component. Users sometimes react to the price of single components and may dismiss a new technology as too expensive without considering how the extra expense will be offset by added functionality and other system cost savings. In the case of megapixel cameras, factors helping to offset a higher price would include the need for fewer cameras, the decrease in infrastructure and installation costs, the elimination of mechanical pan-tilt-zoom devices, and a reduction in operations staff.

Harder to quantify, but certainly no less real, are the performance advantages of megapixel video. In the day-to-day real world of video surveillance, that higher image quality translates into the ability to identify the face of a suspect or to read a license plate number on a passing vehicle. Megapixel video camera technology provides clear images that can be enlarged so the security team and law enforcement can see all the details they require. The security professional's task is to quantify that value, to demonstrate to management the dollars and cents impact of being able to solve a case or to thwart a fraudulent personal liability lawsuit. Megapixel video is a valuable tool to achieve those goals. The precise value of the added performance and functionality is dependent on each application and specific to each end-user company.

A challenge for security professionals is to demonstrate the value to their company's executives using management and security metrics that are specific to their company and to their industry. Translating the technical capabilities and benefits of new technology into the management and bottom-line benefits to modern companies is at the heart of the job of security professionals in today's corporate world. Knowledge is vital – both knowledge of the technologies and their capabilities and of how they can impact the company's profitability.

Superior Images: Worth the Cost

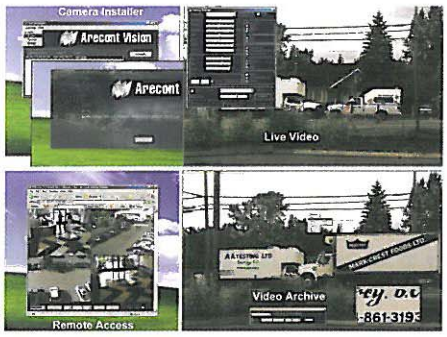
When dealing with corporate spending constraints, security professionals should consider carefully both the initial cost of new technology and what its on-going expenses are projected to be. Above all, one should focus on the value technology can bring to their enterprise. Technology can pay back its purchase price through cost avoidance or better efficiencies like superior imaging quality and better forensic information. These technologies prove their worth by protecting corporate assets, improving loss prevention, defending against expensive liability lawsuits, and make simple security operations more efficient.

Even if security departments see that their 2010

budgets are the tightest to-date, there are methods that can help them demonstrate and assign value to the benefits of new technologies, especially megapixel video. There is also a role for the systems integrator to help his or her customer build a credible business case. Here's how:

- Demonstrate to customers the value of using megapixel IP solutions. Demonstrating how other organizations have benefited from megapixel technology solutions is extremely valuable. Look for ways that traditional video has failed and show how megapixel video is better. For example, we have all seen analog video recorded from a crime scene and how poor it is, to the point that you cannot even discern a face. With megapixel video camera resolutions being 10, 15 or 30 times greater, details such as faces can be more easily discerned. Additionally, one can zoom in after event and further enhance those details. This is quite a challenging feat for analog and low definition cameras. Also, suggest ways that the qualitative value of megapixel imaging can translate into quantitative value for a company.

- Be specific about cost savings. Create a spreadsheet comparing costs of a system using megapixel cameras versus standard IP and analog camera technologies. Focus on the



specific, dollars and cents impact of using fewer cameras or of eliminating the need for mechanical pan-tilt-zoom devices. Factor in all the costs, including infrastructure savings, reducing the number of components (cameras, housings, cabling), installation and support savings, and operator savings. Provide a case that you can share with management that translates the benefits of the technology into operational advantages for the company.

- Become a trusted partner and consultant. Work to get beyond the perception that you are just trying to implement a new technology or drive a project to conclusion. Provide real service and value to convince your decision makers that you are seeking to meet their specific business needs. Trust will be your reward.

- Emphasize better image resolution. They say that "a picture is worth a thousand words" and the modern corollary might be that "a megapixel image is worth a million words". The quality of a megapixel image is a great selling tool for the technology. Viewing live and recorded megapixel images is one of the best ways to make a strong case for the new system. Demonstrate the image quality improvement in specific terms and relate it to the business. Try comparing a recorded standard definition or analog image to a megapixel image and zoom in after event showing the forensic utility of recorded megapixel video.

Better Days Ahead

The new bottom-line mentality of the corporate world isn't likely to change. Governments are also much more cost conscious. The need to focus strategically on the cost/benefit balance of new technologies and how the features of a new technology can be translated credibly into hard benefits for a company is the opportunity for all of us.

If we learn how to crack that code and communicate a measurable return on investment to our companies and our clients, it will empower us to take the industry to its next level of success. Choosing megapixel imaging technology can profoundly expand the functionality -- and opportunity for return-on-investment - of any IP-based system. **[www.arecontvision.com]**

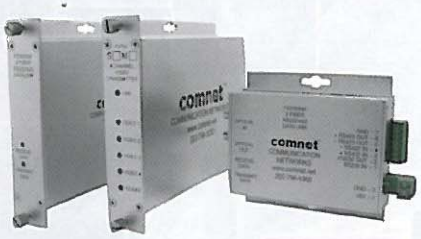
G4S

Next Generation: Symmetry

G4S Technology, an industry provider of integrated security management solutions, announces the release of its latest Symmetry Security Management System v6.2. The new version of Symmetry will provide many new enhancements and robust integrations with some of the industries foremost partners Salto Systems, On-Net Surveillance Systems (OnSSI) and integrations with the Axis H.264 camera range. Additional system enhancements include support for Windows 7, Symmetry camera tour feature and SQL Server 2008 support. Salto's electronic locks provide an affordable locking option for internal doors when integrated with Symmetry. The locks operate in a wire-free environment so no hard wiring or wireless infrastructure is necessary. Installation is fast, self contained and costs a fraction of the price of a normal secured door. Symmetry also integrates with OnSSI's NetDVMS digital recording platform. NetDVMS is a multi-site, multi-server network video recorder and camera management software suite that can manage a limitless number of cameras and video clients. **[www.salto.com]**

ComNet

Fiber Optic Line Introduces Value Line



ComNet, Communication Networks of Danbury, Connecticut, a leading manufacturer of fiber optic transmission and networking equipment, is introducing the ValueLine to satisfy the demand for a cost-effective line of fiber optic and Ethernet transmission products. The line consists of digitally encoded fiber optic video multiplexers, serial data products, Ethernet media converters and a new Ethernet over coaxial cable (VDSL) product. ComNet products including the ValueLine are designed and manufactured in United States and have been released for sale. **[www.comnet.net]**

Visimetrics

Standard Life Monitors Assets with Video Servers

Visimetrics Fastar Digital Video Recorders (DVR's) have been chosen by Standard Life to provide continuous surveillance across their property estate. Fastar is a key component of a comprehensive package of measures to ensure the safety and security of staff, customers and data and enables Standard Life to store high quality images locally while keeping bandwidth usage over the corporate network to a minimum. Standard Life has a significant estate of managed properties within the UK, including prestigious office locations such as London's iconic Gherkin building. On-demand access for incident investigation at each remote site is available for authorised users directly from Standard Life's own Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) in Edinburgh. Fastar allows for visual verification of the alarm source. This level of integration is achieved via Visimetrics Software Development Kit (SDK) to provide direct access to both live and recorded images for display within the Security Management System **[www.visimetrics.com]**