

Gaining a purchase on crime with Axis.

Stratford Square Mall helps local police catch after-hours vandals with Axis HDTV-quality network cameras.



Organization:
Stratford Square Mall

Location:
Bloomington, IL, USA

Industry segment:
Retail

Application:
Loss prevention, safety and security

Axis partners:
Premier Technology Solutions, Milestone Systems

Mission

When new owners bought the busy 1.3 million square foot Stratford Square Mall, one of their top priorities was to install surveillance cameras in the common areas and parking lot to ensure the shopping complex maintained its family-friendly atmosphere. StreetMAC Asset Management Company sought a network-based HDTV-quality solution that would be easy-to-use and shareable with the Bloomington, IL Police Department to help apprehend criminals, find lost children and quickly resolve safety issues such as alleged slip-and-falls.

Solution

The management company hired Premier Technology Solutions, a Mokena, IL-based IT services company and Axis partner, to design and install a surveillance system that included a fiber optics infrastructure and nearly two dozen high-definition Axis network cameras monitored 24/7 from the mall's security command center using a Milestone video management system.

Because the solution is network-based, it enables mall management to give local law enforcement access to live camera feeds and archived video.

Result

Since the video maintains HDTV-quality, even when zooming in for close-ups, Stratford Square has been able to provide evidentiary detail that assists the Bloomington PD in quickly apprehending suspects. Even though the five anchor stores and many of the smaller retail shops have their own surveillance systems, these establishments often rely on the higher clarity of the Axis cameras to help identify individuals-of-interest once they exit their premises.

“The zoom capability of the Axis cameras is great. We can quickly pick out a face, get a clear image of a logo or a tattoo without any pixilation and push those details out to the local police department.”

John Kelsey, Assistant Security Director for Stratford Square Mall.

Bringing mall security into the IP age

Stratford Square Mall in the western suburbs of Chicago consists of 160 retail shops, more than a dozen food vendors, a multiplex theater, a bowling alley and more. The family-friendly destination attracts an estimated 12 million patrons a year.

When new owners bought the property in 2013, they decided to expand mall security by augmenting foot patrols with 24/7 video surveillance technology throughout the common areas and parking lot.

StreetMAC, the property management company, hired Premier Technology Solutions to design the solution from the ground up with a brand-new fiber optic backbone. Power over Ethernet switches gave the installation team the flexibility to deploy cameras wherever they were needed to in order to provide maximum visibility. It also meant that cameras could be easily added or redeployed as the mall layout changed.

Additionally, “being a network-based solution meant we could give the local Bloomington Police Department direct access to our cameras through a secure web portal,” said Doug Kiehn, General Manager of the Stratford Square Mall. Law enforcement is not only able to monitor live footage, but can also push video to the smartphones of officers responding to an incident.

A camera for all seasons

Premier Technology Solutions recommended HDTV-quality Axis network cameras because their broad portfolio of features could accommodate a wide range of environmental conditions.

They chose AXIS Q6045-E PTZ Dome Network Cameras to monitor the loading docks and the employee parking area. The weatherproof pan/tilt/zoom cameras deliver HDTV 1080p resolution with superb 20x optical zoom that allow security to read a vehicle’s license plate some 900 feet away.

They chose wide-angle AXIS P3364-V Fixed Dome Network Cameras for the seasonal area where children visit Santa and the Easter bunny. Because the cameras provide a 105o field of view, security can monitor both the immediate vicinity and the hallways leading to this high-traffic area. Equipped with Lightfinder the cameras deliver sharp, HDTV resolution and full color fidelity even when the mall is dimly lit after hours.

The ultra-discrete AXIS M3014 Fixed Dome Network Cameras mounted into the dropped ceilings keep an eye on the smaller, enclosed areas such as the administrative offices, hallways and entryways into the mall. The AXIS P5534 PTZ Dome Network Cameras cover the entryways into the mall. Using the cameras’ powerful optical and digital zooms with autofocus and 360° pan, security is able to continuously follow an individual or an object as it travels through the mall.

Tracking after-hours mischief

Stores and kiosks are particularly vulnerable to theft and vandalism at night because the movie theater continues to draw patrons to the mall after retail hours. John Kelsey, Assistant Security Director for the mall, recalled how shortly after the cameras were installed they caught two juveniles smashing the glass on a vending machine. “The cameras actually caught them in the act,” said Kelsey. “When the police responded, I was able to provide them with a whole folder of pictures, including close-ups of the offenders, and a CD of the footage with time stamps.” According to Kelsey, the forensic quality of the images was so sharp that the police were able to apprehend the two youths and charge them shortly afterwards.

“There have been other occasions when an incident has occurred inside a store and our cameras have caught a clear shot of the individual as they were coming out,” said Mike Dominguez, Security Director for Stratford Mall. “We’ve shared clips with the police, and they have been quite happy for our help.”

