

Award winning B&Q Warehouse builds in security

B&Q is one of the most dynamic companies in the highly competitive UK DIY retail sector. So it comes as no surprise that the new two-storey B&Q Warehouse in Sutton - the first of its kind in the UK - has been named 'most innovative store design' in the Retail Property Awards 2002. The 150,000 square foot DIY store, costing £15 million to build, offers customers the chance to park, shop and pay for goods on two floors. Opened in March 2002 after a 15 month building programme, the new warehouse is trading exceptionally well, and has been well received by the local authority as providing a striking modern development on a prominent gateway site to the town centre.

B&Q outsourced the security systems and operations of all its premises to specialists Security Support Services Ltd, who became involved in planning the security for the new B&Q Warehouse as soon as the building plans were being drawn up. Mike Cox, Contracts Manager at Security Support Services (SSS) described how he set about ensuring that the security system met the challenge of the new building.

"It's always helpful when the security system is a consideration from the very start of new building planning. There are fewer constraints on the final implementation if we can get involved at this stage, so that we can concentrate on the security issues without distractions. We like to consider the design of the building and the client requirements, and then look at the key security issues of the particular store. From this, we can develop the full system design."



The security system at the new B&Q Warehouse includes both alarm systems and CCTV. The alarm side features motion detectors (PIRs), an IDS (Intrusion Detection System) alarm, voice alarm, personal attack buttons, and alarm panels for the fire doors. There is also a complete fire alert system, plus plant alarms to monitor equipment activity. The opening and closing of the store is monitored, so that SSS know the times when the building is occupied.

On the CCTV side, 50 cameras feed into a central digital recording control room. The cameras were carefully chosen after a testing and selection exercise by SSS. Day/night performance, resolution, and speed were all evaluated for the different requirements of the specific applications within and outside the store. The best performers were selected for the equipment list.

Mike Cox said "It was very helpful to be able to carry out independent tests to select the best cameras. We established early on that we wanted Norbain as our supplier, and they supplied us with a range of cameras for thorough comparisons. This way we could be sure that the equipment was the best available for each application, and our customer was therefore getting the very best system."

Like many modern installations, the two systems – alarms and CCTV - are linked. If the alarm system registers an incident, then the cameras will react with higher level recording in that area. This ability to link to other systems – various alarm and access control systems - is one of the many benefits of a digital CCTV system. Another benefit comes in operation. Digital equipment in the control room is very user friendly, resulting in lower training requirements for staff – a real bonus in most companies – and fewer operational mistakes.



One of the main risks throughout retail stores that a CCTV system is designed to minimise is 'shrinkage' – theft of stock at every stage of the storage and display cycle, and also damage to stock. CCTV scrutiny of all the storage areas, plus close

observation of the till areas and the EAS gates (Electronic Article Surveillance), works together with the alarm systems to cover the risk areas. All these security devices work together to act as a deterrent, and in the event that an incident does occur, the cameras are of high enough resolution to capture admissible evidence of the event – proved during the evaluation exercise.

When security alerts occur, SSS are equipped to handle them in a formal and structured manner. Their Alarm Receiving Centre (accredited to BS EN ISO 9002 1994) receives the alarm calls, and takes responsibility for the dialogue with the police, in accordance with the ACPO regulations.

Mike summed up his satisfaction with the supply of CCTV equipment for the project. "As project managers, it's our job to build a consortium – a partnership of installers, equipment suppliers, and ourselves, all working to meet the client's needs. We chose Norbain as our ongoing equipment suppliers for the project because - as well as being competitive on price - in our experience they do what they say they will do, with the minimum of problems. That means a lot in our business."