

Warehouse security at Russ Berrie

When Jon Richards, Russ Berrie's Director of Operations Europe, visited his US Head Office, he could still see what was happening back at his Southampton warehouse 3,500 miles away. Plugging his laptop into an internet port in New Jersey, he used the new warehouse's CCTV system to view live camera shots and recorded images just as if he were in his Southampton office. CCTV systems have joined the rest of corporate information systems in using LANs, WANs, and the Internet as their communications networks for local and remote access.



Russ Berrie and Company, Inc. has a simple mission statement - to "Make someone happy™ with the perfect gift that captures the spirit and sentiment of any occasion". These gifts include the teddy bears for which they are best known, a growing menagerie of other animals, plus a home décor and gifts range.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that such sentiments and products indicate a small and homespun business. But US-based Russ Berrie Inc has built the business over 40 years to an annual turnover of some \$300,000, operating on four continents in 84 countries, and in dozens of languages, supplying 50,000 retail customers, and individual customers who number in the millions.

Russ Berrie's European sales and distribution operation is headquartered in a splendid new office and warehouse in Southampton, supplying retailers all over Europe with the Russ Berrie product range on the basis of a 48 hour order fulfilment period. That means holding a lot of teddy bears and similar – the stockholding runs to well over £10million at wholesale prices.

Design Parameters

So, as the new warehouse was being planned, what were the design parameters required of the CCTV system? Andy Scowen, Sales Director of Kingfisher Fire & Security, the company responsible for the project, sets out the basis upon which they designed the systems.

“After detailed discussions with the client and other interested parties we set about designing the CCTV system around two principles. First, we needed to cover all



access points on the perimeter of the large building, with high quality images under all conditions.

Second, we needed to ensure that the solution represented the best value for money, with an appropriate level of technology for the level of risk.”

System Specification

“This led to a design based on high spec fixed cameras sited inside and outside the warehouse to cover all access points” continues Andy Scowen.

“We used fixed cameras rather than domes because the system does not have a manned control room with dedicated security staff to operate the domes. For the cameras we chose a mix of Protos Colour and Protos Monochrome, High Resolution, Low Light Cameras with Vista Varifocal auto iris lenses – excellent images for all light conditions. For the cabling we used twisted pair with NVT video transmission equipment to handle some very long cable runs as well as several sources of potential interference in this large building. Finally at the heart of the system we put a Dedicated Micros Sprite Hard Disc Recorder linked to the customer’s network. A robust and sensible configuration for a wholesale warehouse operation such as this.”

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Monitoring

Using a DM Sprite means that some of the monitoring that in a traditional system might be carried out by security staff is undertaken by the system itself. For example, although the recording is time-lapsed most of the time, like most security recording systems, when the reception cameras pick up a visitor, the recording switches to continuous for a period before and after the arrival. This 'event' based increasing of the frequency of recording is used for a number of other defined circumstances to ensure that the system is devoting much of its recording space to the most interesting events.

The DM Sprite also allows all pictures on all cameras to be available to any authorised PC over the company LAN (Local Area Network), rather than at a single monitoring point. Jon Richards, Russ Berrie Director of Operations Europe explained how this is implemented.

"Although we can have any number of people viewing the system 24/7, I don't organise my staff that way. It's not productive to have too many people viewing the system, so I limit the number to quite a small number of the PCs in the building. Most of our use is likely to be viewing an incident after it has occurred, getting identification and other evidence from recordings. The search facilities on digital recordings are of course light years ahead of VCR recordings. We've already used it for a few small incidents, but there have been no major incidents since the system was installed – the deterrent effect is working!"

Another advantage of the system is that the user can configure new settings without reference to the expert installation engineers.

"It's a very user-friendly interface" said Jon Richards "which is very straightforward to anyone familiar with other Windows based applications on a PC. If I want to change the settings of, say, the recording pattern around an event, that's a simple task."



Access Control

At the same time as the CCTV system was installed, Kingfisher Fire & Security also installed an Access Control system using C•CURE 800, to control a mix of 20 internal and external doors. This system also monitors the movements of the fork lift trucks in and out of the building, through an on-board reader on the truck and central logging through the C•CURE system. The selection of C•CURE was based on its flexibility, reliability, room for expansion, and the ability to integrate with the CCTV system when the time is right.

Finally, Andy Scowen summed up his company's approach to contracts such as this – one of many high profile projects undertaken by Kingfisher Fire & Security over the years.

“It has always been our policy to have no ties to any specific manufacturer and this allows us to design systems using the best and most suitable equipment for the job every time. We are very reliant on our suppliers to help us achieve this so that we can meet our deadlines. For the supply of CCTV and access control products we prefer to use Norbain, who can offer a wide range of equipment at competitive prices coupled with excellent delivery and service. We have a good relationship with Norbain which is fundamental to providing quality systems and in turn keeping the end customer satisfied”.