

SUBWAY® finds security is the way to go



Subway is the biggest and undoubtedly fastest-growing chain of sandwich shops in the world. It is a multi-billion pound business, having grown from its modest beginnings in Bridgeport, Connecticut in 1965, to recently celebrating the opening of its 400th store in Britain alone.

One of over 22,000 outlets in some 80 countries around the globe, the shops, with their distinctive green-and-yellow logo, are spreading like wildfire around the UK. The Subway chain's expansion plans are progressing at a phenomenal rate – it is aiming to open another 1,600 stores in the UK and Ireland by 2010, creating 16,000 jobs with an investment of over £160 million. An average of 15 stores opened in the UK and Ireland every month throughout 2004 alone.

As Subway operates a franchise system, small-scale entrepreneurs usually own individual shops. Because all are relatively small traders working in a fiercely competitive market, vying with giants such as Pret a Manger and Kentucky Fried Chicken, security is a vital element in maintaining their profitability.

Abiy Negussie is a typical Subway franchisee. He owns two shops, one that has been open for two years on Shaftesbury Avenue, in the heart of London's theatreland, and a second in one of London's key nightspots, Leicester Square.

National Security Systems (NSS), owned by managing director Dave Naran and brother Vince Naran, installed the security system at both shops. Subway franchisees have rated the NSS so high they have awarded them the approved installer status, making them one of just two companies to have achieved this for London and more recently, Essex and Birmingham. Of the 90-plus stores in London, NSS has installed security systems at 45 shops, and is completing an incredible average of four installs per month.

Remote reviewing

Abiy points out that one of the main advantages to having a flexible security system that can be remotely accessed is the ability to monitor activity in his Leicester Square premises remotely from anywhere in the world via an ADSL line linked to the Digital Video Recorder (DVR). 'I monitored the stores from the US a couple of months ago from an internet café,' he notes

Abiy's need to remain a strong competitor in the fiercely fought London sandwich market means that it is vital for him to control staff costs. 'These are very expensive – compared with the US they are more than double,' he notes. This means that it is important for him to ensure that he gets the best from each staff member and he feels that the security system gives him much-needed assurance, and his staff a vital reminder of his vigilance in this respect. As a mark of the success of the solutions so far, Abiy is planning a third store using the same installer and wireless security solution, in the area between Leicester Square and Neal Street.

A standard install

A typical Subway install features a wireless intruder system, at the heart of which is a Norbain-supplied Abacus 6/14 comm radio control panel from Bosch and three or four wireless x RF940E passive infra-red (PIR) detectors. These are set to cover the front shop and back areas such as the bakery and staff rest rooms, including rear and front access points. Depending on the number of doors in each shop, one or two RF9401E door contacts are also supplied along with an external sounder bell and a Yuasa 7A battery to backup the control system.

The standard CCTV system comprises a package of four high-resolution Vista fixed dome colour cameras (VFD4V9Ce), two sited in the front shop, one in the kitchen and one in the staff rest room. These are linked to a four-channel Samsung SND520T DVR with a built-in quad processor attached to a LAN (local area network, which allows access to the images over the internet). In-store visual surveillance is provided by a 15" Vista PVD1510DG colour monitor.



Franchisee satisfaction

The franchisees have clearly been happy with the service and systems supplied, as installations have been requested mainly via word-of-mouth recommendation. Abiy says: 'The main thing is that we approached a lot of companies to do the security system but the level of support offered by NSS with the help of Norbain was completely different. Little niggles are no problem as now every franchisee knows them. You can call night and day and they are always there. It's a huge help.'

