

07

Security
Investments
Restaurants Should
Evaluate for their
2021 Budget

Restaurant chains have had a roller coaster of a year in 2020 with start-stop recovery and uncertainty about the future going into 2021.

While the short term growth prospects are uncertain, there is no denying the fact that restaurant chains are now pushing the boundaries of service innovation. With delivery-focused micro-outlets to completely redesigned curbside pickup options that cater to drive-through customers as well as those that come in just for pick-up, restaurant chains are going through a massive IT, process and business security overhaul.

Meanwhile, the pandemic has created new safety and security risks for employees and customers while triggering a significant uptick in thefts, burglary and violence.

As security and loss prevention leaders in restaurant chains start planning for their 2021 security budgets, they are working to optimize costs, leverage existing investments smartly, and use innovative security solutions that maximize ROI.



Utilize
Point-of-Sale
Exception
Reporting

Probably the easiest way for restaurants to get a return on their security investment is to implement a point of sale exception reporting solution.

Wherever there is cash being transacted, there is loss. Even if there are no cash transactions and all transactions are virtual or credit card only, there may be sweetheart deals happening when transactions are rung up at much less than what they should be.

With a point of sale exception reporting solution, suspect transactions bubble up to the top and raise a red flag. If an employee voids a \$100 transaction at one of the locations, loss prevention teams can check that out by going right down to the receipt level and see the void. With an integrated system, the team investigating the transaction can also view the video associated with the transaction to see if this was a legitimate void or something suspicious.

At Interface, we have customers that are saving thousands of dollars per location per year by taking every point of sale, overlaying the exception reporting and integrating it with their video systems.

ON

Replace that
old DVR with
an NVR



The focus on curbside delivery has created a compelling need to upgrade perimeter security for restaurant chains.

The best way to get started on this would be to get rid of that old DVR and invest in an NVR (network video recorder) that supports IP and analog cameras. This hybrid approach will allow restaurants to continue using their analog cameras while retaining the option to upgrade to higher resolution IP cameras with video analytics features when budgets allow for it.

Without making a major investment, restaurant chains can get a significant boost in the productivity and effectiveness of their security teams as NVRs come with upgraded features for accessing live and recorded video. Most new NVRs also have improved mobile capabilities, a big plus for resources in the field.

When planning on upgrading analog cameras to IP cameras that typically require more storage and bandwidth requirements, consider upgrading to a solution that's configured for motion-triggered recording and uses the high efficiency video coding (H.265) to keep storage and bandwidth requirements from spiralling out of control.

The best NVRs allow remote access to important clips via a cloud interface, which is extremely valuable when travel is restricted, and enables loss prevention teams to easily share video and collaborate across territories.



Upgrade to
Video Verified
Alarms

Plan to upgrade alarm systems to a video verified alarm. Restaurant chains that already have an intrusion alarm system and CCTV cameras should consider integrating the two systems to maximize effectiveness and minimize false alarm costs.

99.5% of commercial burglar alarm signals turn out to be false with police often taking longer than 40 minutes to respond. Conversely, video verified alarms provide live eyes on site giving law enforcement a play-by-play account of what's happening when an alarm goes off during a break-in or robbery. The police arrive within minutes because they know they've got an opportunity to catch a criminal in the act and they can respond with a lot more intent to apprehend the perpetrator.

That's not all. Integrating video with intrusion detection devices such as motion detectors, glassbreak detectors or even devices used to monitor environmental parameters (at locations where produce is stored) such as water, carbon monoxide, temperature or fire, will significantly improve the speed and precision with which security teams can react to real threats as they happen.

Integrating video with alarms reduces the instances of false alarms and the expenses associated with them. Having a reliable solution to avoid false alarm penalties will more than pay for the service.

Most importantly, key associates won't be frequently called up to visit a location after shift hours to verify an alarm or the operations team won't be busy handling the paperwork associated with paying fines.

04

Deploy
Virtual
Security
Guards

Most restaurant chains have vulnerable locations in challenging neighborhoods. These locations can be plagued by organized crime or have serious internal shrink issues.

While it might make sense to deploy security guards at vulnerable locations, it might not always be the best approach. Just the cost of employing an armed security guard can be in the range of \$60,000 to \$75,000 a year. Tragically, guards are often the first to be targeted by a determined criminal.

A better, more cost-effective approach would be to deploy a Virtual Security Guard solution with a team of remote security professionals monitoring locations 24X7X365 via live video and two-way audio with the ability to hear and speak directly to associates and/or customers.

The Virtual Security Guard can conduct virtual tours of vulnerable locations to check for suspicious activities, remove unwanted people from the property, deter loitering, dumpster diving, and track your employees in vulnerable situations, e.g., during bank deposit runs or exiting the outlet at night during closing.

If required, they can conduct a voice down announcement to check in with employees or warn customers who might be behaving suspiciously. Of course, law enforcement can be called in if needed. All of this can be done discreetly without negatively affecting the customer experience at the location.



Protect your
lone workers

Restaurant workers, especially those working for 24X7 fast food chains, face serious safety risks because they deal with customers when working alone, late at night or during early mornings, and handle cash transactions. Threats to lone workers in restaurant chains can range from gun violence, to volatile customers and accidental burn injuries. Securing lone workers can yield a significant boost to safety standards and deliver added benefits such as increased morale and greater productivity.

Before implementing a lone worker safety solution, formalizing a lone worker safety policy can help the restaurants define the scope and the extent of a lone worker safety solution.

The solution deployed can range from simple, stand-alone panic buttons to connected smart devices with advanced emergency management capabilities. For example, Interface's smart Personal Protection Monitoring solution combines a smart safety device, discreetly worn by lone workers, with a panic button that creates an instant audio bridge with security professionals operating from their Command and Control Center.

The solution can be deployed
in just a few days, is
cost-effective and doesn't
involve large capital
investments.

09

Invest in
video
analytics
capabilities

Beyond motion triggered recording, video analytics can detect line crossing, monitor dwell times, count people in queues, spot when objects appear/disappear and monitor occupancy levels.

The latest AI cameras go further and differentiate customers from employees and can send alerts only when certain people show up at the door. These are extremely valuable tools for loss prevention departments to have as they can dramatically reduce workloads and help security teams do more with less.

As IP cameras are evolving to become comprehensive data gathering sensors, sophisticated video analytics solutions are now available to dramatically improve security and loss prevention team's ability to conduct forensic search without having to scan through hours of video footage. It is now possible to easily sift through video recordings to locate, for example, a perpetrator wearing a red shirt or a lost iPhone in a restaurant.

There are immense benefits to understanding customer or employee movement or behavior inside and outside the restaurant that goes beyond security.

Accordingly, security and loss prevention departments can make a strong case for apportioning the investments needed for implementing a video analytics solution across multiple departments.

Considering the broad-based benefits of video analytics, it's not uncommon to see asset protection teams tap into the budgets of their colleagues in marketing and HR.



Upgrade Your
Network
Infrastructure

It's important to realize that any security solution is only as good as the network upon which it resides. When restaurant locations have limited bandwidth, security solutions end up competing with other mission-critical applications such as credit card transactions or inventory management applications. So no matter how sophisticated the security solution is - IP cameras, video analytics or advanced remote monitoring, it will be difficult to justify the investment if the restaurant chain cannot derive the value from the solution due to network limitations.

One way to mitigate this challenge is to right size existing network bandwidth or roll out parallel 4G/LTE wireless connectivity and optimize security applications so that performance of mission-critical applications are not impacted.

Doing a network audit and allocating the correct bandwidth is crucial to the proper functioning of any security system. A comprehensive network audit will uncover opportunities for improving the overall productivity of all the enterprise applications including security solutions. For example, do the routers support QoS (Quality of service) functions, do certain locations have bandwidth limitations that limit what applications can be supported without performance degradation, or does the network management system have the capability to route network traffic through the best available network connectivity?

These are just a few of the questions that can help restaurant chains understand how to identify network bottlenecks and optimize the security infrastructure.

2020 has turned out to be a watershed year for the restaurant industry and restaurants are bracing for a significant spike in a wide variety of crimes and security threats in 2021. Protecting customers, staff and company assets is crucial to business success. It is possible to make targeted investments that can achieve these goals without a rip and replace approach. The best bet for security and loss prevention teams is to focus on implementing targeted solutions that maximize ROI and improve customer experience.

Find out how Interface helps restaurant chains stay ahead of the curve.

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Interface Security Systems is a leading managed service provider delivering business security, managed network, UCaaS, and business intelligence solutions to distributed enterprises. We improve security, streamline connectivity, optimize operations and reduce IT costs, maximizing ROI for the nation's top brands.



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