

Insurance giant puts safety first with Honeywell and Direct Security

QBE Insurance Group is Australia's largest international general insurance & reinsurance group, and one of the top 25 insurers and reinsurers worldwide.

Outside London, QBE has underwriting centres located in Birmingham, Bristol, Chelmsford, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester and Stafford.

The Situation

Head of European Security, Mark Thompson, joined QBE in 2000, becoming responsible for security throughout QBE.

"It was immediately obvious that there was no "joined up" approach to security across the UK offices," commented Mark Thompson, QBE. "It was disjointed and lacked any clear priorities – ultimately the business and its assets were at risk I therefore embarked on a project to overhaul the system."

The requirement was to upgrade the existing security equipment and to install an integrated access, video and intruder solution.

As a result of the findings of the security audit, a five year plan was produced by Thompson and his team to address the concerns. The key focus of the plan was that each QBE site would use the same video, access and intruder equipment with complete connectivity & integration. It was important from his point of view that his teams were able to monitor each building remotely and obtain the necessary management information.

The business challenges that made the upgrade essential were:

- Multiple offices located around the UK.
- An obsolete access control system that delivered little management information.
- Little or no integration between the access, video and intruder detection systems.

With a good working relationship already established, QBE and Mark Thompson were delighted to put this upgrade project in the hands of Direct Security and Honeywell. Direct Security is a Select member of the Honeywell Systems Integrator program, and has been prescribing and installing Honeywell products for many years.

The Solution

QBE had considered removing the existing Honeywell WIN-PAK®SE access control system which would have incurred a considerable cost to the business. However, Direct Security produced a solution that would allow the WIN-PAK system to continue to deliver considerable cost savings.

With a more integrated system across all sites and better reporting, the expectation was to reduce the need for any additional security guards and to generate efficiencies by providing the staff with comprehensive training on an intuitive, easy to use system. Mark Thompson wanted to see a 20% reduction in maintenance costs over a five year period with a 10% reduction in manpower.

"We were looking to achieve cost reductions over a 5 year period," added Thompson. "This would effectively make the new security system cost neutral, a very sound investment, not just from a business security point of view, but also from a financial perspective. I needed an installer I could trust implicitly. The team at Direct Security provides that in abundance via their consultative approach, expert knowledge and technical capabilities."

Direct Security introduced an upgraded Honeywell WIN-PAK® SE system which would allow the three main QBE offices at Chelmsford, 88 Leadenhall Street, London and Plantation Place, London to be connected and managed together.

"I know the Honeywell product range well having worked with them on many projects," stated Paul Anderson, Direct Security. "QBE was quite insistent on its requirement for a fully integrated security solution that was reliable, robust and easy to manage. The Honeywell products put forward for tender fit the specification as required."

The server for the new Honeywell WIN-PAK system is located at Leadenhall Street in Central London which enables central control and monitoring of all three sites. An upgrade of firmware at Leadenhall Street allowed the existing controllers to integrate with the new Honeywell WIN-PAK system. New door readers were installed in Chelmsford.

"The upgrade gives additional confidence in the system," stated Anderson. "The network connectivity enables QBE to monitor the systems from any site. We will soon be able to monitor the system remotely or run diagnostic tests or reports meaning that we can identify potential problems before they happen and administer the system remotely if required."

The ongoing project will see the remaining UK sites (Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Stafford, Norwich & Manchester) connected via the Honeywell WIN-PAK® SE system. The readers will change to I-class technology. Currently QBE uses standard proximity cards.

The readers and smart cards installed can be programmed for multiple sites which mean that staff travelling between the company's UK sites require only one card to allow them access to all of the sites. The smart card is capable of storing and processing information and so it has multiple uses from cashless vending, personal information storage and control of access to restricted areas - keeping a record of accumulated points for discount purchases and verifying authenticity. Whilst the new cards will predominantly be used for access control, QBE has scope for wider use in the future.

At the London Office located at 88 Leadenhall Street, the Honeywell WIN-PAK Access Server was upgraded, managing approximately 23 access controlled doors using OmniProx™ proximity cards. A further project to replace the existing and somewhat dated digital video recorders is planned to take place early in 2009.

At the QBE office in Coval Wells, Chelmsford, the Honeywell WIN-PAK upgrade was completed, managing approximately 40 doors. Direct Security has since installed the Honeywell Fusion Digital Video Recorder (DVR) enabling security staff to monitor and record remote images using the Fusion Video Management Software (FVMS).

The Galaxy intruder alarm was connected to the main network and configured to operate directly with WIN-PAK. A recent upgrade has seen an improvement to the security stations which monitor all of the sites. A second monitor has been installed at each location which shows the floor plans of all the sites.

The Fusion DVR can now be used for monitoring license number plates of visiting vehicles and logging these number plates in a central database.

The Benefits

The security operation now benefits from a combined systems approach with remote connectivity and integration across all of the UK offices. The access control, video, intrusion alarms and ANPR systems can all be controlled from the security hub in London which allows the team to centrally monitor all CCTV and alarm events whilst being able to run consistent and holistic access control reports from the WIN-PAK application. Importantly, the system is highly scalable, allowing for seamless expansion and development in the future, in line with business requirements.

"When I joined QBE part of my remit was to have a single integrated security solution across our various sites," explained Thompson. "The challenge for me was to do this cost effectively and to demonstrate a return on investment, but to also get the best security solution available for our budget. Honeywell and Direct Security made this possible and now we are reaping the rewards as a business. I trust Direct Security to recommend the right products for the job and for QBE. I have every confidence they will continue to do that. We see the Fusion DVR, WIN-PAK® SE system and Galaxy as setting the standard for the continued development of security & business continuity across QBE in the UK."

Products & Companies:

- **Access Control / Intruder:**
Honeywell WIN-PAK®SE with Galaxy Integration
- **Video:**
Fusion III v3.5 DVR Series