Axis cameras deliver loss prevention benefits to global retailer Paul Smith.

AXIS M3014 Network Cameras provide discreet, scalable surveillance today and retail business intelligence in the future.

Organization:
Paul Smith

Location:
UK and worldwide

Industry segment:
Retail

Application:
Loss prevention, safety and security, merchandising and operations

Axis partner:
A1 Data Comms Ltd., Milestone

Mission

Fast-growing retailer and fashion designer Paul Smith needed to replace an ageing, failing legacy analogue-based CCTV camera estate located in its 45 stores around the world. Paul Smith's IT department therefore took over the management of the legacy cameras with a view to upgrading the whole system to IP video, over a three year period. To meet its targets Paul Smith needed a system that was capable of lasting at least 10 years. Therefore it required a network camera manufacturer which had global support capability, as well as retail sector expertise and a strong focus on research and development to future-proof the new investment.

Solution

After a painstaking evaluation process, Paul Smith selected Axis network cameras. The company specified AXIS M3014 Network Cameras in all stores, as part of the complete IP video upgrade, with most stores fitted with 8-12 cameras. Additionally, store rooms of some outlets were equipped with AXIS M3005-V Network Cameras. A total of over 550 cameras will have been installed by the end of the 3-year IP video upgrade programme in 2015.

Six stores with known loss prevention issues were earmarked for a hybrid CCTV-IP solution to help deliver rapid results. In these stores AXIS Q7406 Video Encoder Blades were fitted into existing local CCTV servers, enabling current CCTV cameras to be integrated into Paul Smith's new IP-based video surveillance system. 64 analogue cameras have so far been brought onto the network in this way.

Result

Paul Smith is replacing an ageing and unmanageable CCTV estate with a state-of-the-art IP video system. This provides 100% store-wide coverage and HDTV 720p images in all its fully owned stores globally. AXIS M3014 is designed to fit into the same size ceiling void as a standard spotlight and is so discreet that it is often mistaken for a spotlight rather than a powerful HDTV network camera. Paul Smith is able to gather high quality images capable of use as evidence in a court of law. In the future it will also provide a platform to integrate video analytics software for dwell-time analysis, heat mapping, people counting, facial recognition and even CRM and Point of Sale systems integration.

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Centrally managed and future-proofed global network video

Paul Smith is one of the UK's leading retail and fashion success stories with major offices and showrooms in the key fashion centres of the world, including London, Milan, New York, Paris, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Düsseldorf, Sydney and a significant retail presence in 35 countries worldwide. It currently has 24 stores in the UK. The company's growth in the US and across Europe is accelerating with plans to open at least five new stores every year for the next five years. The business has annual sales exceeding £400m today. Founder Sir Paul Smith opened his first shop in his native Nottingham at the age of 24 in 1970 and has now established himself as the pre-eminent British fashion designer.

Paul Smith's Head of IT, Lee Bingham, looks for IP -based solutions which are capable of scaling quickly and effectively and can be managed within the corporate network. To simplify management and bring down costs he only specifies new IT devices and services which will last at least 10 years.

Paul Smith's legacy CCTV estate had grown organically as the group expanded around the world. When the IT department was asked to take over the running of the CCTV systems, Lee Bingham insisted that it must be moved to IP, "If it's not IP then it's not IT, and therefore it made no sense to move its management from our Facilities Management team over to the IT department unless images were going to be accessible on the network by authorised managers from their desktops."

Paul Smith's IT department researched the market, looking for robust, scalable IP video hardware and software. After a comprehensive evaluation Paul Smith chose Axis network cameras, together with Axis video encoders to integrate some of those existing CCTV cameras not being immediately replaced. Axis network cameras deliver images which are recorded on new local servers using Milestone XProtect® Corporate Video Management Software. The installation and networking of the new IP video system in 45 stores globally will take three years and is being carried out by Axis Partner A1 Data Comms.

Lee Bingham, Head of IT, Paul Smith, said, "Just days after the Axis cameras were installed in Paul Smith's new store in Beak Street, London, someone bought goods there with a fraudulent US-based credit card. Because the card wasn't 'Chip and Pin' that person was able to complete the transaction but when we were alerted by the bank that this was fraudulent we were able to refer to the new system's HDTV quality images to identify the suspect, show the fraudulent transaction in progress and then hand the evidence to the authorities.

"Our objective, as soon as the new IP video system has been rolled out globally, will be to build on this investment by extending its value beyond loss prevention. We will work closely with our retail management team to explore the power of the new system - potentially deploying techniques such as facial recognition, heat mapping and dwell-time analytics that enable us to better understand and serve our customers."

The new IP video system provides a cost effective platform for integrating facial recognition capabilities. Applications can be uploaded to local cameras, enabling managers to measure the time customers are spending interacting with a new line of clothing or getting advice from staff. Facial recognition can also be used to detect and alert store managers if known shoplifters or fraudsters enter the store.

Lee Bingham continues, "We see specific value in knowing our best customers wherever we are serving them. We want our best online customers to be recognised as such when they come into store. There would be some logic in being able to integrate our CRM system with an IP video-based facial recognition system to ensure high value customers have the best possible experience in-store. Additionally, we know video analytics can be used to study how customers walk through a store. Heat mapping and dwell-time analytics software could be used to analyse which displays are working best to attract and retain shoppers. Managers can use this business intelligence to investigate further and make improvements. It is this sort of capability that we will be looking to offer to managers in the coming years."

Paul Smith

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