Waasland Shopping Center: carefree shopping supported by Axis network cameras.

A safe shopping experience is worth its weight in gold.

Organization:
Waasland Shopping Center

Location:
Sint-Niklaas, Belgium

Industry segment:
Retail

Application:
Safety and security, remote surveillance, license plate recognition

Axis partner:
ESSC

Mission

For over fifteen years, Waasland Shopping Center has been a big name in the retail landscape. When the renovated shopping center opened its doors in 2004, the security system for the complex consisted of 60 analogue cameras which were monitored by means of four overview screens and one main screen. Due to the unavailability of spare parts over time, more and more devices broke down. This led to an increasing number of blind spots, prompting the decision to overhaul the security system and modernize it thoroughly.

Solution

Working in close consultation with integrator ESSC, various options were explored, comparing camera types as well as providers. Choosing Axis was a future-driven choice: the open software guaranteed a swift implementation of any future solutions. In addition, the name and reputation that Axis has earned over the years, as well as its focus on cybersecurity, inspire a great deal of confidence.

Result

The implementation of the Axis network cameras provided comprehensive camera surveillance which is easy to integrate into the overall security policy. The options offered by the new system ensured that the ties to the local police force could be reinforced and that this collaboration would pay off immediately.

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> "We carefully considered several brands, but in the end we opted to go with Axis. It is a reliable, global player with an excellent name and reputation, and they work with open software; that inspires confidence."
> Toon De Meester, Shopping Center Manager.

Breath of fresh air

"A while back, we noticed that it was time to update our camera installation," Toon De Meester (Shopping Center Manager) starts his story. The existing security system had been installed when the original 'Koopcentrum' mall was transformed into the shopping center, currently known all over the country as the 'Waasland Shopping Center'.

At that time, the analog surveillance era was already well into its final days. "We were aware that our previous system was already suffering from blind spots, locations that were difficult or impossible to monitor," De Meester says. "As more and more analog cameras broke down over time, it became clear that it was time to find a new solution."

The shopping center looked for solutions by issuing a call for tenders, which led to ESSC as the preferred integrator. "One of our top priorities was the implementation of a License Plate Recognition system or LPR," De Meester says. "We had wanted to get a better grip on traffic flow in our parking lots for quite some time already. ESSC clearly recognized our needs and came up with concrete solutions. It immediately illustrated their most important added value: excellent advice."

Phased transition

For the switch to the new system, Waasland Shopping Center decided on a risky strategy: they chose to make the switch during the end-of-year hustle and bustle. The analog system was retained during a transitional period, as a redundant back-up system. "But we never ended up needing it," De Meester says. "We divided our available screens between the two systems. Two weeks in, we made the decision to switch completely to the new system, partly because our staff were very satisfied about the increase in efficiency and the improved user convenience."

To facilitate the transition, ESSC also offered a training session. "Using the Axis system makes us much more capable of tracking any perpetrators, from the moment the crime is committed all the way to their vehicle."

Future prospects

"As a shopping center, we have to deal with the changing reality on a day-to-day basis," De Meester believes. "New laws and regulations, geopolitical changes (such as the increasing threat of hackers), which is why we need to continue investing in technology as well as in our people, for instance by means of training courses. Choosing Axis network cameras is perfectly in line with that strategy." The implementation of the security system allows Waasland Shopping Center to add not just additional cameras, but also other forms of security. For instance, they can now incorporate additional software which provides new options for the cameras, or other systems such as radar detection and a more advanced integration with alarm systems.

"The open software used by Axis, offers us prospects for the future," De Meester says. "As an example to illustrate that: our collaboration with local police departments has currently increased both in quantity and quality. We learn from each other and can provide help where necessary. With our old system, that was impossible."

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