Rising above the city with Axis.

Merlin Entertainment incorporates full solution to monitor new trio of attractions including The Orlando Eye.

Organization:
The Orlando Eye (Merlin Entertainment)

Location:
Orlando, Florida, USA

Industry segment:
Hotel/Tourism/Restaurants

Application:
Safety and security

Axis partners:
Milestone Systems, Open Options, Signature Systems of Florida

Mission

With a trio of first-rate attractions opening up in Orlando, Fla., by Merlin Entertainment, the company recognized the need for an unmatched and efficient security setup to help control events and actions across the expansive space. Their 400-foot observation wheel, world-renowned wax museum and nationally recognized aquarium all share the same venue, as Merlin sought a solution that would give them general security use on top of tight access control and maintained flow of traffic.

Solution

Signature Systems of Florida, Merlin's chosen integrator, devised a plan that involved Axis, Milestone Systems and Open Options to make for an all-inclusive and high-end network system. Axis provided over 250 high-definition PTZ and fixed cameras to be accessed through Milestone XProtect® Enterprise VMS, all pulled together with DNA Fusion software and further hardware from Open Options.

Result

As Merlin had previous success with similar systems on other properties, their team has seen continued success and advanced functionality mixing in products from all three partners. The security team on site not only saw results from the system at work from the beginning but also were impressed with the ease of integration fairly quickly.

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> "Axis is far and away our preferred camera provider. I still have not found another vendor that matches their image clarity, and the administration ability to go in with Milestone management to change frame rates and rotations makes them really easy to work with."
>
> Phillip Wallinger, Security Manager, Merlin Entertainment.

Bringing life to the world around us

When Merlin Entertainment debuted their newest series of spectacles to the public in Orlando, Fla., they knew that a top-of-the-line security system would be needed. Operating more than 600 properties globally, this latest site includes three key attractions: The Orlando Eye, a 400-foot state-of-the-art observation wheel, Madame Tussaud's Orlando, a collection of wax sculptures of well-known figures and SEA LIFE Orlando, a premier aquarium that features a 360-degree ocean tunnel.

Merlin has a history with Axis products and the integrated solution they chose here, as among their countless attractions are all Madame Tussaud's Attractions and SEA LIFE aquariums internationally along with the notable London Eye wheel in England. For this project, their team selected Signature Systems of Florida as their integrator on the property, in charge of recommending and integrating a full network video and access control system.

Watching over the tourism scene

With valuable objects throughout the halls and moving parts of the large wheel providing for risk, Merlin's goals on top of general security and reactive problem solving were twofold: ensure good flow of foot traffic on the property and keep unauthorized persons from restricted areas.

Signature Systems of Florida implemented two models of Axis pan/tilt/zoom (PTZ) network cameras, AXIS P5534 and AXIS P5522-E PTZ Dome Network Cameras. Along with the PTZ capabilities, the Power over Ethernet (PoE) feature on these cameras proved very helpful in easing their installation process.

"Introducing PoE and being able to go into a web browser for an individual camera and set everything up like that; that's been a huge benefit," said Wiljo Ridanpaa, Project Manager with Security Systems of Florida.

For the fixed views needed across the property, Merlin installed AXIS P33 Network Cameras. These allow for recording up to 1-megapixel and AXIS P3364-VE gives them an outdoor-ready and vandal-resistant option to operate on the surrounding areas of the premises.

"Axis has gone above and beyond in their arena," Ridanpaa commented when discussing a potentially underrated component of the Axis cameras. "The ability to autofocus may seem like a simple tool, but it's absolutely essential. You don't have to have a guy on a ladder focusing the lens while you're talking to a guy that could be at a monitor with lag time. That feature alone is worth its weight in gold."

Integrating a system with ease

Selecting Axis along with Milestone Systems as the VMS provider and Open Options as the access control supplier was an appealing trio to Merlin due to the easy integration of all three technologies into their system. They saw the complete solution as not only top-quality and cost effective selection, but also appreciated the flexibility and quality of the Axis cameras performing within the Milestone platform.

An important step for Merlin as well when executing this system was the adaptability for the future, as the company maintains plans to improve and upgrade as needed down the road. Merlin has plans to enhance the combined effort of the Axis, Milestone and Open Options products, starting with an ID verification process to further secure specified areas.

While one can see NASA's Vehicle Assembly Building from the top of The Orlando Eye on a clear day, it remains top priority to the team at the heart of the attraction to manage and protect their own property while others continue to observe the surrounding Orlando region.

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