

PRESS RELEASE

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A Managed Service programme delivers state of the art security and fire safety without risk of technological obsolescence

Managed Service methodologies have a proven record of improved operations, reduced ownership costs and the ability to migrate technology over time. Head of Enterprise Solutions for Siemens Building Technologies, Tony O'Brien, examines how this approach could impact the security and fire safety industries.

How robust is your security and fire safety technology roadmap? A recent global survey conducted by Siemens Building Technologies found that over 60% of customers considered changes in security and fire safety technology to be their primary concern. The pressure to adopt new technology innovations, finding the cash flow and resources needed to implement, run and maintain it effectively, can prove to be overwhelming.

An important learning point for keeping up with rapidly changing technology is to work closely with a chosen supplier who should act as a guide, trusted partner and mentor. That supplier can then help to harness complex technologies and create a manageable contract to deliver integrated services, so that organisations can continue to focus on their fundamental business activities.

Key questions that organisations need to address when planning a technology roadmap

Who is best placed and has the necessary skills to implement a roadmap strategy?

Should we focus on our core business, or on the details of implementing, running and maintaining fire safety and security technology?

Is our time best spent implementing and integrating technology, or learning how to use it to meet our goals?

What is the best way of obtaining faster returns on investment, using existing capital or seeking returns from a funded solution?

An alternative and flexible method of working

Effective technology suppliers work closely with their customers to gain a deeper insight into their security and fire safety requirements, as well as associated operations. From this they can then identify strategic objectives and a defined common purpose that incorporates risk assessment, potential cost savings and performance targets.

Any Managed Service programme should be designed to respond to the business needs of an organisation, providing different price scales for different offerings. At any stage, the parameters of the contract should be adapted to the needs of the customer: examples include installing further technology, extending the term of the agreement, or moving to a different level of service. At Siemens, we take a modular approach from simple equipment financing and call-out response, to a fully outsourced solution.

The advantages of outsourcing part or all of a security and safety operation have been recognised by organisations across both the private and public sector. Examples include the London Borough of Bexley*, the first local authority to outsource CCTV services and staff management, and The Centre* at Livingston,

one of Scotland's largest shopping centres, where a Managed Service programme facilitated a major security upgrade.

The conventional approach is often for customers to retain their security and fire safety asset until it becomes obsolete and is subject to uneconomical maintenance costs, before they consider replacement. That replacement then requires another capital outlay, as well as the procurement and personnel costs involved in tendering and implementing a new project.

In contrast, the Managed Service solution ensures continuous system availability and functionality. Rather than investing in technology that may be superseded within a short period of time, customers benefit from a planned upgrade of their technology to keep pace with new developments, thus enabling state-of-the-art safety and operational services without incurring large capital costs.

Technology is fully maintained and system functionality and reliability remain constant over a period of years. Customers pay regular, fixed instalments, which frees up cash flow that can be directed at core business and enables more efficient budget planning.

It is an alternative and very effective method of working and success relies on a strong working partnership between customer and supplier. Close dialogue with customers enables assessment of the best method of financing to meet the exact needs and cash flow of each organisation. Furthermore, clearly defined strategic objectives including a full asset risk assessment should identify potential cost savings and assist in setting performance targets.

The optimum Managed Service programme take a modular approach, providing customers with real choice, from simple equipment financing and call-out response to a fully outsourced solution. These programmes have a flexible and scalable approach that enable security and safety systems to be expanded,

integrated or upgraded at any time. Services can be tailored to suit all budgets and maintenance requirements.

Key to the success of any security and fire safety solution is the initial design that supports the technology. Through careful engineering customers can achieve a lower total cost of ownership, improve operations by greater efficiencies in infrastructure and capitalise on the benefits of converged technologies.

There are many advantages in outsourcing part, or even all, of a security and safety operation; importantly, the customer remains in control and everything else becomes the responsibility of the supplier. That supplier has to operate as a trusted partner, managing areas such as out-tasking, monitoring, migration and service in a single performance-driven contract, allowing customers to focus on key tasks whilst having the tools to manage and direct the execution of multiple projects and services over a period of years.

* London Borough of Bexley and The Centre at Livingston case studies available on request.

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Notes to editors

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