

SAFE AND SECURE

Hotel security solutions are ensuring that guests have a stay that is safe and secure, and technology is doing its bit to make this happen

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO



➔ Inserting a key card into an electronic hotel door security lock to unlock the door.

From the moment a guest enters a hotel till they leave, safety and security are now integrated into every aspect of their stay. Often one may observe some of these measures first-hand, but there are many touch points where this is working in the background.

HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS

Right from the entry point, when a mandatory vehicle check happens before any vehicle enters the hotel premises, body frisking, scanning, security associates, cameras, and encryptions are all part of the hospitality security angle. Being an international brand and currently, the only operational representation of Marriott International in Navi Mumbai, Four Points by Sheraton Navi Mumbai, Vashi, has exceeded the type of systems installed and introduced to the Navi Mumbai market among its competitors. IP-based CCTV cameras, which include dome, bullet, and PTZ, have been installed adequately to gain optimum coverage in every nook of the building. In contrast, outdoor cameras cover the outer periphery effectively. ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition) system has been installed at both the vehicle gates (entry and exit), which recognises and records the vehicle's registration plate and stores it for future incidental purposes. Boom Barrier



➔ Naved Shaikh, Multi Property Loss Prevention Manager at Four Points by Sheraton Navi Mumbai and The Resort Madh-Marve

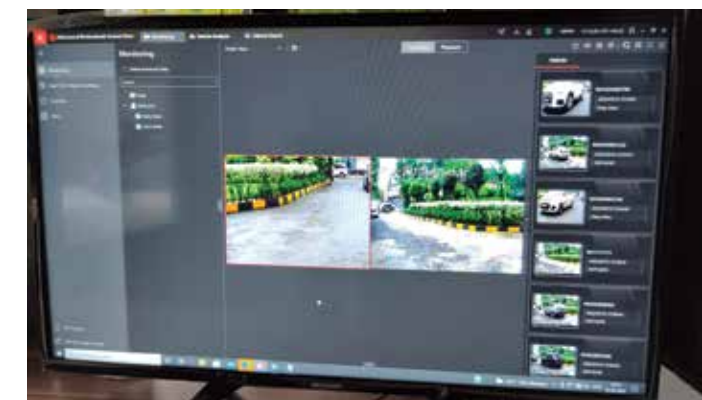
has been strategically located at the hotel's gates for enhanced security and controls traffic flow. A baggage scanning machine has been installed at the hotel's main entrance to scan packages and baggage. Naved Shaikh, Multi Property Loss Prevention Manager for Four Points by Sheraton Navi Mumbai and The Resort Madh-Marve, adds, "Both the security and engineering departments use the GTMS (Guard Tour Monitoring System). It is a hand-held device that helps the personnel effectively patrol the property's internal and external areas. It uses RFID tags installed at strategically identified locations by both the departments as per their function. License Free Walkie Talkie is used for effective communication among the security team, which effectively has more than enough cov-

erage throughout the property, thus reducing the license cost. Duress alarms have been strategically installed at various high-risk locations such as, but not limited to, cash storage areas, data storage areas, handicap rooms, and steam rooms, which are terminated to the Command Center. In addition to this, door frame metal detectors (DFMD) are also installed at every access point."

NEWLAUNCHES

Under vehicle scanners that automatically scan the vehicle and detect any explosive or weapon present inside the car, intruder detection systems are usually used in the manufacturing or corporate industry. But now, the same system is recommended and used in the hotel industry, especially for resort properties which are spread out across a few acres. Smart, intelligent surveillance is advancing rapidly. With the advent of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and 4K video resolution, today's security equipment is evolving.

"Web-based security management is a new form of electronic access control. Wireless access control systems, global security data visualisation platforms and other similar security applica-



➔ Security solutions installed at Four Points by Sheraton, Vashi.



➔ Jose Thomas, Security Manager, Conrad Bengaluru



➔ Nitin Kohli, Director, Ambuja Neotia

tions, which provide real-time security solutions, are a few to talk about," says Jose Thomas, Security Manager, Conrad Bengaluru. Security cameras are also smaller and more discreet, allowing them to be placed at eye level instead of being shoved high in corners. This allows for a better view of faces, which can help police identify and catch culprits.

SAFE ENVIRONS

Hotels should have a strict policy and right to admission reserved for the guests who don't cooperate with the hotel's security policy. Hotels need to adhere to guest photo ID verification before they check in the hotel room; there must be a photo identification system, just like software installed in immigration checks. There must be access control for all the guests entering the premises with only the common areas and the dedicated room floor. The guest should not have access to any other guest floor apart from theirs. This also applies to all the employees who should be given the correct access key issued by the LP/Security Manager as per their job roles.

"Improved workforce management software, facial recognition software, touchless access systems and security robots can help security professionals perform tasks as part of their daily routines," says Nitin Kohli, Director, Ambuja Neotia. Mobile keys mean added security for guests. "Building management system (BMS) facilitates integrating all security-related software and hardware. Fire & Life Safety protocol (FLS) is another framework that identifies the various components that must work together to minimise risk and help prevent any loss, injuries, and death from fire, electrical, and other hazards," says Raman Kannan, Corporate Director - Safety and Security, South India, International & Expressions, Taj West End.

DATA PRIVACY

Cybercrime is also a serious problem, and hotels are working on improving and adding advanced firewalls, limiting who has access to data, and



➔ NETGEAR recently introduced its Cloud Managed Tri-Band WiFi 6E Access Point (WAX630E) the most powerful SMB access point in the industry. With WiFi 6E, a new 6GHz band added to WiFi 6 making it the fastest WiFi available

securing employees' mobile devices. Data breaches occur when employees use their personal cell phones to access the company's sensitive information. Credit card trails, web check-ins and online bookings help in determining the validity of the booking. Suspicious details are recorded instantly, and it also helps the hostel avoid fraud. Video analysis via CCTV also helps maintain security.

Apurv Kumar, Head of Operations, The Hosteller, a backpacker hostel brand says, "We require guests to sign into our WiFi system and get authenticated. This way, we can complete guest verifica-



Taj Palace, New Delhi is nestled in the heart of the capital, close to the seat of the government and is in close proximity with embassies and diplomatic missions.



Raman Kannan, Corporate Director – Safety and Security, South India, International & Expressions, Taj West End



Apurv Kumar, Head of Operations, The Hosteller, a backpacker hostel brand

tion and protect their internet privacy. Another vital part of hostel security is guest data protection, as we receive a plethora of guest data, including names, numbers, card information and government IDs. Since unethical hacking has become more mainstream, we must invest in hard data protection software to ensure that their or their guests' privacy is not breached. Many of our hostels have female-only dorms for female backpackers and travellers. Male guests are not allowed to enter these rooms. Our staff is rigorously trained to understand the nuances of guest safety and security. We provide them training on how to solve security-related issues, how to keep guests safe and evacuation plans, and we also sensitivity train them to enhance communication with guests."

TECHANGLE

The latest technologies available in the market have changed the whole perspective of the security systems in all businesses. These advanced systems have been introduced to calculate businesses' current and near-future risks and demands to mitigate them in a particular environment, region, or type of industry. These technologies have been created only to lessen the physical burden on the manpower and let Artificial Intelligence work cohesively with human intervention in a very subtle manner, making the workforce handle their responsibilities efficiently.

Sunny Prabhakar Jathan, Security Manager, Novotel Pune Nagar Road, says, "Technology plays a crucial role in elevating the safety and security of the hotel. CCTV cameras are installed in all the hotel's common areas and the service area behind the hotel. Thus, the movement of all the guests, visitors, contractors, and employees can be tracked. Another use of technology is installing boom barriers and metal gates at the hotel entrance to stop any forced entry; hand-held metal detectors have also proved very handy. Door frame metal detectors and baggage scanners accurately detect any suspicious material or product which



Technology plays a very important role in hostel securities. Without tech security advancements, it is not possible to keep guests secure all the time.



A lot of security measures have become more technologically advanced, which in turn means that they are harder to hack or breach. Credit card trails, web check-ins and online bookings help hostels in determining the validity of the booking.



Building management system (BMS) facilitates integrating all security-related software and hardware.

cannot bypass or enter hotel premises." Rajkumar Chaudhary, Security Manager, Taj Palace, New Delhi, avers, "Technology is both a facilitator and an amplifier as far as security as a function is concerned. Technological solutions are like silent keepers that perform their responsibility of security and safekeeping without impeding day-to-day operations. We believe that the need of the hour is a proactive security solution that can help prevent threats before the latter impact our operations and business. People deployment, a synergistic outlook amongst hotel security teams within the same geography, risk assessment, and threat mitigation plans can help create a more proactive security approach rather than a reactive one."

INTERNET INTENT

Winning in hospitality with wireless means going beyond meeting basic connectivity needs. It requires careful consideration to select a WiFi solution that will deliver the fast, easy to use, reliable and secure connectivity that guests demand. "WiFi Protected Access (WPA) is a wireless security standard developed by the WiFi Alliance. WPA technology encrypts user data and protects wireless networks from outside threats. WPA3 is the latest security standard from the WiFi Alliance. It is an improved version of WPA2 in four main areas: a more secure handshake (when a network device

connects to a wireless access point), an improved system for adding WiFi devices, increased security on public networks and also enhanced security for enterprise environments," says Marthesh Nagendra, Country Manager - India, ME & SAARC, NETGEAR. NETGEAR recently introduced its Cloud Managed Tri-Band WiFi 6E Access Point (WAX630E), the industry's most powerful SMB access point. With WiFi 6E, a new 6GHz band was added to WiFi 6, making it the fastest WiFi available. It offers the features such as higher performance, lower latency, and faster data rates.

RETROFITTING VIBES

Although hotel security is always manned 24/7, CCTV backup must be stored at another alternate command centre. Security systems that are introduced or installed can be retrofitted with one or more different security systems, thus reducing the cost of procuring individual systems and increasing new possibilities for the security industry. The efficacy and efficiency need to be ascertained as upgraded and new technology can be far more user-friendly and cost-effective. Retrofitting is becoming more popular with time, and it's even more needed now when the world is facing a global economic, health, and environmental crisis. The need of the hour is a proactive security solution that can help prevent threats before the latter impact our operations and business. People deployment, a synergistic outlook amongst hotel security teams within the same geography, risk assessment, and threat mitigation plans can help create a more proactive security approach rather than reactive. The importance of safety and security can hardly be over-emphasised, and the current times that we live in have heightened that expectation. This is also why hotels are primarily on the front foot when creating a safe and secure environment for guests. After all, safety cannot be compromised, and hoteliers know this better than anyone else. ■



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