

CASE STUDY

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Service Sector: Integrated Security Systems (Technology)

Client: Palletline PLC

Overview

Palletline PLC is the UK's leading palletised distribution company, specialising in the transportation of pallets around the UK and Europe via their network of 75 member haulage companies.

Having outgrown their previous central hub in north Birmingham, both in terms of scale and technical sophistication, the company fully refurbished a new site at Starley Way, a superbly located and generously proportioned facility near the NEC and Birmingham International Airport, and within a few minutes of the M42 motorway. This significant investment required similarly state of the art security to help ensure that Palletline continues to deliver its customers' pallets safely, on time, and without outside interference.

The Brief

ISD-Tech in partnership with **Servoca Secure Solutions** needed to understand, in detail, how Palletline's operational flow functioned in order to design a system which would protect and secure the assets of both Palletline and their members; without interfering, delaying or complicating their day to day business. The security system needed to melt into the background, but remain optimally effective at all times.

The new hub was broken down into different operational sections, and risk analyses were undertaken in each to understand the threat of loss, damage or incident to pallets, vehicles and personnel at each different stage of the flow.

A key challenge was to provide a visual audit trail of each of the approximate 8,000 pallets making their way through the system each day.

A major innovation was the 'QC' or quality control zone; a six lane scanning station which logs vehicles and pallets into the process using a warehouse management system via a bar and colour coded system.

The QC inspection gantries are just five feet from the 45 foot long, 14 foot high double-height trailer units, so a number of live trials were performed to provide images of the pallets and their labels.

IP cameras were chosen to provide high quality, crystal clear images of these pallets in the QC. The IP cameras have pan tilt functionality, programmed in conjunction with a set of active beams to go on a preset tour when a vehicle enters each lane. There is no user discretion over these tours and no 'blind spots' despite the extreme proximity of the cameras to the subject.

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The Journey

On leaving the QC, vehicles and their pallets are traced around the site roadway by 18 strategically positioned cameras, providing a record of the route each pallet takes. The vehicles then enter the hub and pallets are unloaded to the individual loading bays, waiting to be then loaded onto the destination vehicle.

Fifty seven hub cameras work in conjunction with the powerful search facilities of the digital recorders to be able to trace each individual pallet should it be misrouted.

CCTV cameras are used to record the pallets journey; providing a high resolution image, in a variety of different lighting conditions.

Once each pallet is loaded onto the trailer units, they complete their journey around the site, back through the QC and onto destinations around the UK and beyond.

This complete audit trail ensures that Palletline members' requests for potentially misrouted or damaged pallets can be processed with ease.

Digital Storage and Management

After trialling a number of different digital recording solutions a PC-based hybrid digital recording system was selected to complement the camera design and permit Palletline's management to easily trace the pallets throughout the hub in the minimum time, without fuss or complexity.

The hybrid recorders easily accommodate the different platforms of the security system; recording IP cameras; analogue fixed and fully functional cameras and a wireless IP cameras. The system is linked to a Redwall detection system and remote monitoring station providing the ability to remotely interrogate the site, issue audible warnings and escalate to required personnel.

The new system – like the new hub itself – is a great success; with processes streamlined, efficiency much improved and with a video audit trail which gives great confidence to customers using the hub. In its first six months of operation the system has repaid the investment made with 'wins' in loss prevention, health and safety, and management time savings.

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