

Seven Factors to Consider before Choosing an Access Control System (2019)



Written By: Ilan Frank

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Over the years, security has become an important necessity most business organizations have to invest in. For several businesses, playing cat and mouse with organizational threats has required technology advancements to develop at a rapid pace. Businesses now face new security threats and entrepreneurs realize that there is a need to proactively protect assets, data, and employees of their company in addition to its' reputation.

A mere physical security solution will be a basic approach in solving the modern-day security threats, but making use of a modern physical security solution provides a more expansive approach in protecting a company's assets.

An access control system is one of such modern security solutions a business needs for an additional layer of protection. It is a modern physical security solution that restricts unauthorized individuals from gaining access to a company's property, data, and assets.

One misconception of a powerful security system is that owning an access control system not only protects assets, but enables freedom which in turn leads to increased productivity and higher performance among employees. For example, with an access control system, a business is able to track or create an audit trail of individuals that have access to various systems and specified areas. By designing such system, businesses create an operational process that allows for scalability and protection

amongst employees. This type of system reduces unnecessary confusion by streamlining access and resources for job functions absolutely needed to complete ones area of responsibility.

Before we take a deep dive into some of the factors that are necessary to be considered when selecting an access control system, we are going to highlight some of the importance of the access control system itself to businesses

Importance of the Access Control System.

The objective of an access control system is to minimize the risk of unauthorized access. It is a simple way of enhancing security and at the same time managing the flow of people in and out of your business premises.

A security expert will tell you that an access control system is important to your business because it solves the following problems explained below:

1. Prevents Unauthorized Access and Hinders Criminal activity

Intrusion can come in a form of employees or visitors, who are intentionally trying to gain unauthorized access to restricted areas, or impostors trying to infiltrate your building.

There are also cases where intruders duplicate the keys to a lock mechanism in order to gain access to a business facility. An access control system has that distinct feature that controls who has access to the system and what periods the system can be accessed in order to keep out intruders. When it comes to hindering crime, the access control system is a very important tool to use. Business owners are constantly faced with security challenges ranging from burglary, vandalism, and arson to identity theft and fraud. All these threats can be greatly reduced by implementing an appropriate access control system.

For instance, the use of CCTV surveillance cameras can cause psychological intimidation on people with criminal intentions. A door that requires specific key cards or passwords to be inputted can also deter crime.

2. Provide logs and Muster reports

An access control system logs every access made by personnel and visitors to the building. These logs are useful for companies that like to keep an audit trail of the employees present in the building. The logs are also useful when there is an ongoing investigation for a crime committed within the building premises.

In cases where there is a need for evacuation of the building, an access control system provides muster reports that list all the personnel currently on site. The muster report allows you to tell who is still in a building, and the physical location of the individual.

3. Allows Business Owners to Schedule when the building can be accessed.

An access control system can ensure that individuals are not accessing premises 24x7. For example, some individuals may not need to be present during off evening hours and weekends. Access control system administrators have the flexibility to set up time schedules for its personnel. For example, short term access can be granted to a janitor to access certain areas of the building. If an unauthorized individual is on site at an irregular time, a log will be generated and further investigation can be conducted to better understand abnormal activity.

4. Remote Access and Permissions

There are cases where someone who has been contracted to carry out specific tasks in the building needs to do so, but there is no one onsite to allow him/her into the building.

An access control system makes it possible for the administrator to grant remote access to the contractor who needs to carry out his/her task in the building. It also allows the admin to keep track of the ins and outs of the contractor through the various stages of the project.

Access Control Considerations:

It is important for business owners to put in a lot of consideration and research before buying an access control system.

Areas To Consider Before Implementing Access Control

Important decisions and considerations have to be made when choosing an access control system because unlike a padlock and key, a high degree of planning and design needs to be incorporated into a system to maximize security and minimize potential risks. Not having the right access control system can be a costly mistake and only creates more security challenges for the business, instead of solving them.

A common challenge heard from business owners is the lack of information and resources available to make the right choice regarding an access control system that addresses individual needs, provides scalability over time, and offers real time monitoring to ensure safeguards are in place for future security audits.

When thinking through an Access control system, we suggest meeting with a vendor to explore various options with you. Specifically, you should cover topics such as:

- Scalability
- Cost
- Level of Service Provided
- Flexibility
- Monitoring
- Accessibility

- Portability

Cost:

At the top of the list of factors to consider when selecting an access control system is the cost of the system and value exchanged in return.

This shouldn't be a surprise because any business owner that is researching security solutions will keep in mind the amount of money he/she has to spend on acquiring a suitable access control solution.

For example, a small business because of cost might consider using a card-based or keypad system in preference to the biometric system a larger organization would use.

A business that spends above the amount appropriated for the purchase might end paying off debt for years, at the same time, a business that goes for a subpar system with the hope of trying to save money will eventually spend more money in the long run.

Accessibility and Portability of the Access Control System

Before choosing an access control system it is important to ask the access provider about future flexibility, portability, and training required for each system. An access control system that isn't user-friendly would require unnecessary time for software training and sometimes cost you more in the long run.

Integration and onboarding

Before purchasing an access control system it is possible that you might have some of the access control tools such as CCTV already running. It is important that the access control system you purchase is able to integrate with these existing tools seamlessly.

Business owners should keep in mind that they will have to look beyond an entry-level access control system if they want to be able to integrate security functionality with CCTV video, alarms, fire alarms, and an HR system. For example, an access control system that is integrated with an HR system will grant or deny access privileges to an employee once he/she is added or removed from the HR system.

Another example is having the ability to track visitors' movement in the building by integrating a visitor management system with the access control system so all door transactions will be managed and recorded. Having an access control system that can integrate will help your business boost security and make work easier.

Estimate of Employees and Visitors that will be Accessing the Building

The greater the number of people that have access to your building the greater the security risk it will face. It is important for a business owner to select the right type of

access control system that can accommodate the number of personnel who will need to gain access, as well as the amount of traffic from users that will need to be managed at any one time.

Before buying the control system you have to think about the flow of people in and out of the building during business hours. This will depend on the kind of company you run. Additionally, you should review future growth projections to ensure your system is flexible over the course of several years.

For example, the building of a financial institution will have more traffic than the building of a science lab during business hours because of the number of walk-in customers and visitors.

The Access system you want to purchase should be able to collect all entry data, time logs, users, credentials, and permissions as regards your traffic in one portal without any problems.

Number of Entry Points To be Monitored

The risk pertaining to having a greater amount of access points in your building is similar to having a greater number of employees as discussed above. The ideal access control system should be able to support a standalone access point or even multiple doors.

Before selecting the right access system, the number of entry points as well as restricted areas (stockrooms, network rooms, employee areas) that need to be monitored simultaneously have to be considered.

The Access Control Systems Scalability

When we reference access control system scalability, what we mean is the control system is flexible enough to accommodate growth in the number of employees, traffic or size of the facility and changes in technology over the next 10 years or so.

It is important to consider the future growth of your business and see if the access control system you want to purchase can adapt to those changes that will occur over time. Selecting the right access control system can be a tedious process as well as a necessary one. Fortunately, this article has provided some answers to questions you might have in order to secure your business.

When you install a Crime Alert Access Control system, you're investing in a team that is always there for you. We take care of all aspects of your security so you can focus on your core business without having to worry about day-to-day security operations and system updates. Beyond installing your equipment, our professional staff

configure your systems, maintain procedures, rapidly respond to threats, repair hardware when it is needed and train your team on operating all aspects of your system. We are there for you 24x7 protecting your business and keeping you secure.