

Keeping Security Tough As Diamonds

International Gem Tower Achieves Reliable Security Video with Viakoo

Problem:

- Security video used to protect hundreds of workers and millions of dollars in assets
- Tenants specifically chose IGT because of its advanced security
- Security video can never be down, not even a single camera

Solution:

- Proactive identification of security video stream issues by using Viakoo
- Real-time situational awareness available through Viakoo mobile app
- Diagnostic information from Viakoo used to improve reliability network-wide



Located in the heart of New York City's famed Diamond District, the 34-story International Gem Tower (IGT) was developed specifically to provide the global diamond, gem and jewelry industry with upscale office condominium space. Opened in June 2013, the sleek, modern building is in stark contrast to the older, smaller buildings in its "Jewelers Row" neighborhood along 47th Street, between 5th and 6th Avenues. IGT's most notable tenant is the Gemological Institute of America, which owns three floors where it rates gems and offers classes for those interested in becoming gemologists. A 12,000-square-foot retail triplex located on the ground floor features 80 feet of street frontage and houses 50 stalls where vendors offer gems and jewelry.

For those who work in the gem and jewelry industry, protecting people, property and assets is critical. Given the value of the assets IGT houses, a main draw for tenants is the building's tight security policies. When planning and constructing IGT, New York real estate developer Extell made security a top priority to provide tenants with assurance that their people and property would be protected. In addition to the peace of mind the safe and secure environment provides, the building's advanced security solutions help businesses save on their insurance premiums as well.

To design and deploy a system that could deliver the nearly unprecedented level of security it sought to provide, Extell turned to security systems integrator G4S Technology. As a leading provider of integrated security, G4S draws on their extensive experience to foresee, identify, control and prevent problems in today's technologically complex and evolving security environment. Over the last 20-plus years, the integrator has completed more than 1,500 complex security projects for clients who require very high levels of security, including critical infrastructure government facilities and corporations.

Prior to designing the video surveillance system, G4S worked with Extell and a number of office condominium owners to assess the unique security requirements of IGT and its tenants. In addition, G4S looked into the security programs, systems and requirements of other trading centers around the world to establish benchmarks that the IGT system would surpass. Upon completing these assessments, G4S custom-designed a proprietary system that would meet IGT's specific needs by combining its premier security personnel and the latest, most state-of-the-art security technologies. G4S has also been contracted by Extell to monitor and manage security at IGT, which the integrator performs from a high-quality command and control center with workstations that are equipped with individual monitors and a video wall consisting of large flat-screen HD monitors for viewing live video from anywhere in the building.

A prime example of the high-level security IGT's integrated system provides is the iris readers located in lobby turnstiles that eliminate the need for individuals to locate and scan an ID card to streamline identity verification. Integration with the building's elevator dispatch system ensures that once the identity of an employee, visitor or vendor has been verified, he or she is able to access a designated elevator that will take them directly to the floor to which they have been granted access. This extra layer of security is most effective because each floor is occupied by a single tenant.



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Complementing this advanced access control system is a state-of-the-art video surveillance system for monitoring activity and recording high-resolution video. The camera infrastructure consists of a combination of high-resolution megapixel, HD, fixed and PTZ cameras on each floor, as well as on the outside of the building and at the front and garage entrances. The video security system utilizes 10 purpose-built enterprise servers as recorders, and a 360TB enterprise storage area network for archiving the video. The high-quality video allows security staff to focus in on a particular area and/or apply analytics to locate video from specific times and locations for investigation or review.

The surveillance system's many features and functions make it incredibly valuable for monitoring and managing video, but the potential for camera and device outages is a concern given the number of cameras deployed throughout the building. Even a single camera going offline diminishes the crucial situational awareness G4S relies on to secure the property, and introduces potential risks that could compromise the entire security and safety program.

"Extell has invested in the latest IP video surveillance technology, and G4S has created a security system that's unlike anything that's been seen before. Extell also relies on us to make the best use of the advanced system to mitigate risk and create a highly secure environment," says Frank Drake, a G4S Video Network Administrator who is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day security monitoring and management for IGT. "Because of the potentially complicated nature of IP equipment, camera outages are an unfortunate reality – and if video is not being recorded, then we're not providing the level of security IGT requires."

A key aspect of Drake's job description is to maximize the video system's uptime to avoid the risks associated with camera outages. To ensure this, G4S selected Viakoo, a solution created to bring reliability to the existing IP video network by quickly detecting video failures, diagnosing problems and alerting Drake and his staff with information necessary to repair or correct any issues.

The proprietary technology and human expertise behind Viakoo allows Drake and his staff to gain critical insight into the behavior of IGT's video network. Viakoo collects thousands of points of diagnostic information end-to-end from across the video infrastructure, capturing valuable performance metrics to provide intelligent, actionable information to the command and control center. The intelligence Viakoo provides enables security staff to resolve potential network and system issues quickly, eliminating the problem of missing video. Diagnostic data is updated by the software every 20 minutes to keep information current, while a mobile app puts information and communications at users' fingertips 24/7.

"The ability to reduce risk by being aware of how the video system and infrastructure are performing at any time and from anywhere is incredibly valuable. When there is an issue that needs attention, we're able to rectify it quickly to make sure we're not losing valuable video," Drake says.

Since implementing Viakoo, G4S has benefitted from real-time situational awareness about system infrastructure, as well as the ability to deliver the high level of security, service and support Extell contracted the company to provide.

"Viakoo allows us to take preventive measures and immediate actions to reduce the risk of missing video," Drake says. "Since we implemented the Viakoo app, it has identified and notified us of failures that would typically have gone unnoticed, including archive disk failures, camera failures, network bottlenecks and bandwidth issues, and video archiving issues. In just a short time the solution has already delivered incredible value."

