> ## "We had the infrastructure in place for the network, and wanted the scalability for future growth."
>
> **- Ashraf Selim, Chief Information Officer**

Rosenthal & Rosenthal moves their security surveillance from analog to digital IP network.

Rosenthal & Rosenthal, located in busy mid-town Manhattan's Herald Square, is the largest privately-owned financial factoring company in the USA. Founded in 1938, they now have over 200 employees. Just over a year ago, they began implementing proper automation of the business, increasing revenues with greater efficiency.

Part of this business strategy included making the decision in 2002 to replace an analog-based security system that recorded on video tapes. They wanted a solution that is digital and scalable to allow for branch expansions. In the summer of 2003, R & R established a branch in California, installing the equipment to be hooked up with a secure connection, with central control from the New York headquarters. Connecticut and Florida are on the future agenda.

"We decided to choose a digital platform because we want to be able to furnish security to our entire organization, to be ready for the expansions as planned. Because of the digital technology wave, you have so many solutions in the secondary market you now can buy. You have more flexibility to view the images faster," states Ashraf Selim, Chief Information Officer at Rosenthal & Rosenthal. "When it came to our security decision, it was based on one main focus: What was our target? Was it to have cameras to scare people off? If only that, we could just put up some dummy cameras! But we needed to have better images – that's why we got the Xprotect solution. It's like the black box in an airplane: if the unfortunate incident happens, we need to know what happened. If we have a poor solution that doesn't provide us with this information, it defeats the purpose of the whole thing."

No more bad videotapes

The company's previous co-axial analog setup was very old, recording images onto videotapes in black and white with very poor quality.

"When we viewed the tapes, basically all you could see was shadows: you could tell someone's height and general size but that's about all!" explains Jose Aponte, Technical Services Supervisor at Rosenthal & Rosenthal. "Now we can convert files to AVI and save them on DVD so if somebody wants to investigate, they get the best results. I want to give the authorities involved PC-compatible image files that are equivalent to the videotapes available before."

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Finding the solution

Jose Aponte was operationally responsible for the IP video surveillance project at R & R, including the installation.

"I did the research on it myself and found Milestone through Google on the internet; there was only one other possible competitor. Philip Mumford of Mumford Associates has been very cooperative as a partner. He came and demonstrated the software for us and had the expertise to give us information for determining which cameras to use," Jose reports. "I was especially impressed that Xprotect is able to view multiple cameras on the same screen."

Fast installation

"Installation was accomplished in June and July 2003 and only took about one day for the software, while the cameras took about a week or two including the cabling. We tested it twice to be sure it worked smoothly," says Jose Aponte, who was assisted by Nestor Medina.

The old analog setup on Panasonic cameras, running parallel with the new Axis network cameras while they carried out the installation of the new system, served as a backup until they could get all the new cameras up and running smoothly. They have ensured coverage of all doorways, reception areas and stairwells.

Rosenthal & Rosenthal has security guards and three receptionists in addition to the IT administrators Jose Aponte and Nestor Medina – all having access to the system. They report that training in using the system went fast.

"It was quite easy to set up the multiple users with different kinds of access."
- Jose Aponte, IT Administrator at R & R

Protecting the premises

The building where R & R has their offices includes different business occupants on other floors, so there are actually multiple security systems within the whole complex. The Milestone Xprotect solution used within Rosenthal & Rosenthal is for protecting their own two floors.

Storage of image files

R & R has set a high resolution on their cameras that takes lots of disk space, so they have invested in a new Snap Alliance server with a high storage capacity of 720 Giga Bytes.

"We save our images for 3 months, but only those images where motion has been detected, converting them to AVI files stored on DVD for quick availability by anyone - the drivers for this format are now available for free from any website," says Jose Aponte.

Aponte continues: "If someone needs to see recordings from last Sunday for cameras 1, 3 and 12, it's ready for them right away off the shelf. Stocking AVIs on DVD is also good against the risk of blackouts – like the big one we just had! You can have any UPS running Notebook to retrieve the images."

Nestor Medina adds: "We still look at the JPEG images before converting over to AVI – the recording options in Milestone Xprotect give us the ability to preview the video for this purpose, which is very good."

Increased coverage

Rosenthal & Rosenthal now has significantly increased their security coverage from 5 to 15 cameras, recording 24 hours a day. They know that they are ready for the future of the company as it expands, and the option of remote access with central control from headquarters.

"We may call it not security, but more like insurance. We know that if something goes wrong, we have enough information about the issue – and that's the whole point: forward thinking and being prepared, reducing risk."

Ashraf Selim summarizes: "I think our setup would be very similar to other mid-size financial organizations – and there are many of us in the United States, who are using either analog, building security guards, or nothing at all. The issues we are facing don't include hazardous environments like production sites or deal with lots of cash creating danger for employees, but it's about normal day-to-day procedures for a financial organization and what that requires: that in case of an incident, we have the evidence that can help us to resolve the issue."

Solution description

Rosenthal has Milestone Xprotect Busienss version 3.1 for a 16 camera license for now, and the PMA to ensure they always get updates of the newest versions. They know they can easily upgrade in the future with more cameras when needed for other locations. R & R has installed 16 new digital Axis 2100 cameras (four of these Axis cameras are using the new Power Over LAN solution). They are running their surveillance on a Compaq Evo D5S PC server Pentium IV, with the Snap Appliance 440.

For more details see www.rosenthalinc.com, www.mumfordassoc.com, www.axis.com, and www.milestonesys.com.