An Introduction to

ENTRANCE SECURITY FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS

How to Avoid the Common Mistakes Other Sites Make

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Introduction

Effective entrance security for public access buildings isn't as simple as it sounds. Whether it's a library or a museum, a transport hub or a town hall, there's a wide range of risk factors to think about from theft, vandalism and civil unrest to terrorism.

Unlike office blocks and government facilities, public access buildings are open to almost anybody who has a valid reason to be there – often a staggeringly large and diverse group of people.

Both architects and security specialists have to think carefully about how to effectively manage the flow of people into and out of a public site.

This is not always easy. Some entrance systems can be over complicated and even exclude some members of the public. There is also the risk of unintentionally leaving gaps in security that invite unwanted and dangerous individuals onto the premises.

This brief introduction to entrance security for public buildings highlights the major **mistakes** sites make so that you can try and avoid them.

MISTAKE

△ 1

Rolling out the entrance security solution too quickly

SOLUTION

Phase delivery and train staff in advance

Imagine you're responsible for the security of a building like a library, where there's a heavy flow of semi-regular visitors on a daily basis.

One day, those visitors turn up to find that a complex and scary-looking turnstile system has been installed overnight. It's an obstacle they weren't expecting, and they're not 100% sure how they're supposed to use it.

So, they do the sensible thing and ask your staff for guidance. Unfortunately, the staff don't know either — they weren't involved in setting up the new system, have had little to no training and don't fully understand the problem the entrance system is intended to solve.

Install solution in stages

Fully train staff

Guide the public

How could you have prevented this state of affairs?

Adopting a phased delivery process would have ensured that members of the public were gradually made comfortable with the new system and that members of staff were trained to use it from day one. You could have installed parts of the solution earlier but left them inactive, for example, allowing visitors to get used to walking through them.

2

Failing to apply different levels of security to different parts of the building

SOLUTION

Think zonal security

Almost all so-called public access buildings will have areas that aren't intended for public access at all.

In some buildings, such as hospitals, they may even outnumber the areas that are open to the public by a significant margin. Think of back offices and meeting rooms, supply closets and lost-property departments, for example. These areas should have the same level of protection as their counterparts in office blocks and other buildings that aren't open to the public.

This could mean installing locks, card readers, alarms — whatever is proportionate to the risk. In public access buildings, it's never safe to assume everyone who comes in through the front gates has good intentions.

Create security zones with defined access rights

3

Ignoring the balance between speed and the anticipated volume of visitors

SOLUTION

Make sure you know the peak flow rates

For reasons that should be self-explanatory, the speed of an entrance security solution is an issue that very much comes to the fore in public access buildings.

We've all seen how long the queues can get in airports or outside of tourist attractions like museums and galleries. If your system can only manage four or five transactions per minute and you're looking at a peak flow of two dozen people within that same timeframe, there's going to be a bottleneck.

Bear in mind that in public access buildings, there's a bigger chance you'll encounter visitors who need staff assistance to use, what is to them, an unfamiliar entrance system. These hold-ups have to be factored into your speed of entry too.

Plan to avoid bottlenecks

4

Installing an overly intimidating entrance solution

SOLUTION

Think about the visual impact from a user perspective

As mentioned above, some entrance security solutions aren't exactly friendly in appearance.

In fact, some top-of-the-line turnstile and airlock systems are downright intimidating in their size and complexity, and it can take a while for people to feel comfortable using them.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing in some high-security facilities, but it's generally not desirable in public access buildings. Not only will a scary-looking solution slow down visitor flow, but it might also imply a higher level of risk than is really present. This can make members of the public feel uncomfortable for the duration of their visit, not just while entering the building, and therefore detracts from their experience as a whole.

A **friendly** appearance will create a better user experience

5

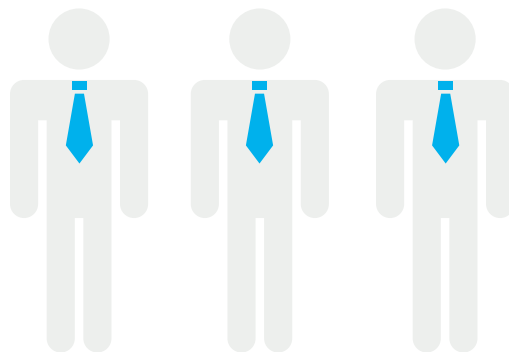# Allowing members of staff to ignore or bypass security rules

SOLUTION

Make your staff part of the security strategy too

Finally, it's a mistake to think that entrance security solutions for public access buildings are only intended for members of the public and nobody else.

If you allow your employees or management to bypass an automated or manual system freely and with no valid reason, you're only going to degrade your overall level of security and leave a crack in the door for more severe infractions.

Eliminate any cracks in your security

When you're rolling out a new solution, explain to your staff that they're part of the security strategy too. They're obliged to ensure the system is used correctly, to report any instances of suspicious activity and to abide by the same rules as everybody else.

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