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# SECURITY SALES<sup>®</sup> & INTEGRATION

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## What Are COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS Looking For?

A Partner to Help Them Sell  
Their Organization on Security



### YOUR NEW SALES STIMULUS PLAN:

- Expanding Into Residential Access & Video (page 44)
- Surefire Closing Tips for These Tough Times (page 50)

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 #789573011 2# SR 0812 21  
 \*\*  
 THOMAS MARINO OWNER  
 ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES  
 12552 ARCHERY DR  
 BATON ROUGE LA 70815-6515





# New in POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL

While few may think of residential business encompassing access control and video surveillance solutions, there is money to be made out there for those who do. Cashing in requires knowing what to recommend and how to sell homeowners on it.

BY THOMAS MARINO

**E**xpanding your services to include camera surveillance and access control in the residential arena can be fraught with issues and pitfalls. However, residential customers are looking for these services and a security company with market savvy can easily diversify into these areas. If you are purely a security company with mostly commercial experience than this article is for you.

The greatest difference in supplying residential systems is the fit and finish of the supplied gear. Target your marketing to medium to luxury homes. Starter homes rarely have the funds for camera systems and access control. Having said that, don't discount condominiums and small luxury homes because of size, but focus on the price per square foot of the homes in a particular location. Use your judgment and client interviews as to the customer's wants and needs.

According to *SECURITY SALES & INTEGRATION's* 2008 Installation Business Report, installing security contractors attribute 10 percent of their video surveillance





**FIGURE 1**  
Aesthetics play an important role in deploying video surveillance solutions in a residential application. Sensible choices include lipstick cameras (inset) and small dome cameras.

system revenues to residential business, and 5 percent of their access control income to residential clientele. Clearly, despite the housing lull there is not only money to be made in this realm but also a tremendous growth opportunity. Let's take a closer look.

#### HOW VIDEO HELPS OUT IN THE HOME

Working in the residential market means you must specify products that will be aesthetically pleasing to both interior designers and spouses. Box cameras with housings are out. Instead use small domes and lipstick cameras (Figure 1). Also, black-and-white cameras are out; it's the 21st century. Day/night cameras, at night, produce the only acceptable b&w images.

Now we ask the question, "What kind of system does a residential consumer want?" Camera systems may be as simple as a front-door camera connected to the video input of the main TV, to as elaborate as multiple pan/tilt/zoom (p/t/z) dome cameras (typically for multimillion-dollar mansions).

Let us now consider camera priorities, or what to focus the cameras on.

Normally, the front door has the highest priority. Customers like to see who's at the front door before opening it. Gone are the days of the peephole. Be prepared to offer the customer an up-

grade to an intercom system with the camera, and to integrate an open door/gate button. Panasonic and Aiphone have some good products for this.

The next priority is the pool. Having a camera system with audio monitoring at the pool is highly desirable. Parents can monitor kids on the main TV and listen for emergencies. Another good use for a camera with audio monitoring is the famous baby cam or nursery camera. A third priority would be a driveway camera.

Follow the first three areas with outdoor perimeter monitoring, inside common areas, and in a family with teens, the liquor cabinet. Customers expect to be able to view their cameras over the Internet now, so discuss the requirements to make this happen (e.g. static Internet connections or DNS services).

#### INTEGRATING CAMERAS WITH SECURITY

As mentioned above, security systems, and their sensors, can be integrated to trigger the camera systems. Camera system DVRs have contact closure inputs, so all one has to do is assign a security system sensor to a DVR contact closure.

For instance, a driveway probe triggers the driveway cam to be viewed and/or recorded (Cartell is a good source), or the front doorbell triggers



**FIGURE 2**  
A popular application for sensors and cameras is when a car or person approaches the home the system engages the TV's picture-in-picture to display the appropriate camera on the split screen for 15 seconds.

the front-door camera, etc. This maximizes the storage space on the DVR, ensuring that cameras record only when there is a target present.

**Example of a customized video surveillance solution** — Driveway and doorbell sensors along with security sensors are installed to trigger the camera, audio/video switchers and HAI automation systems. The integrated system alerts the resident by voice and elegant doorbell tones, informing them that visitors can be immediately viewed on the television, projector screen, computer monitors, or Elan touch screens. In fact, when these particular sensors are triggered, the camera views come up automatically on the Elan touch screens.



**FIGURE 3**  
One way to blend commercial devices into a home's décor is the careful use of paint. The security provider must oversee this since an uninformed painter may ruin security parts.



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If the main TV is on (and it always is) the system engages the picture-in-picture to display the appropriate camera on the split screen for 15 seconds (Figure 2). If the front door bell is pressed, the front door bell tone is heard and its camera's view is displayed. If a car drives up the driveway, a voice says, "Driveway activè," and the driveway camera's view is displayed.

Integrating monitored home alarm systems with surveillance cameras is also a viable means to verify intruder alerts and reduce false police dispatches. More than 90 percent of all intrusion alerts are the result of user or system error, which can lead to a lot of lost manpower and money for responding agencies. Consequently, many municipalities are now requiring a second form of intrusion verification, which video can provide. This is another potential source of additional business for the home security contractor.

### ACCESS: MIGRATING BEYOND LOCKS

Like camera systems, access controls are not usually specified into smaller homes. Plus, residential customers generally prefer camera systems over access control. However, there is some interest and it remains a largely untapped market. After all, every residence already has basic access control in the form of lock and key.

Residential access control systems range from door and gate openers to multisite, remote operated systems (ideal for summer or winter homes). Once again, aesthetics are extremely important. Customers don't want to see an ugly stainless-steel maglock on a \$10,000 hand-carved wooden door, or big red buttons to exit.

Instead, install automated wired/wireless deadbolts or door hardware designed for residential use. Many companies make these parts, such as Schlage, Marks USA, ASSA ABLOY Door Security Solutions and others. These devices can be remotely controlled to let visitors/maintenance staff in, as well as to arm and disarm security systems. Typical placement points of access controls are doors, gates and garage doors.

A word of caution is in order regarding access control for garage doors as it is somewhat tricky. Get rid of the openers that come with the garage doors and replace them with a security system remote control. Although Chamberlain makes many of the low-end openers the company is also a good source for enhanced, higher-end solutions. These more sophisticated remotes can allow an event log to be created and provide for the easy administration of timed access and denials/user deletions.

In addition, when looking to sell access control don't forget about: firearms rooms; wine cellars; pantries; liquor cabinets; home theater rooms; pool gates; control rooms; safe rooms; and security guard gate houses.

### TAILORING COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS

Occasionally you may need to specify a commercial product for a residential application. For example, large mansions may require a large commercial system. In such cases, be sure to do your homework. Find a system that integrates card swipes and offers request-to-exit devices that fit, or closely fit, the décor. →

“I've been battered,  
frozen, scorched,  
pounded, pelted  
and doused.”



“Oh, the things I do to live up  
to your customers' demands.”



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Another method of blending commercial devices into the décor is the careful use of paint (Figure 3). The security provider must assume an overseer role here, since an uninformed painter may ruin parts (e.g. painting over infrared windows and LEDs). Don't forget to add these details when calculating your proposal.

Also consider the training of an estate manager to administer the adding and deleting of users and programming. A service agreement may be in order (think recurring revenue).

#### Example of a customized access control solution for a mansion —

This example describes an installation with four garage doors, two gates and one entry door. Three of the garages have specific vehicles in them and the fourth houses a tractor. Each vehicle has an eight-button remote that is specifically programmed to that vehicle's garage door. Also, each remote has different buttons for each gate, as well as the tractor door.

The gate lights illuminate upon actuation and garage door lights illuminate outside and inside the garage door. An arm/disarm key and a lights-on/lights-off key on the key fob are also provided. Because the remotes are administered through the security system, they can be deactivated upon loss. Because the remotes are the keys to the kingdom, the users must be warned of the delicate nature of this much control on a single device. If lost, immediate deletion must be performed.

HAI has a new access control system designed for residential and small commercial systems. It completely integrates with the main security/automation system to seamlessly provide relays for garage doors; lighting control for door lighting; wireless key fobs; voice annunciation; card readers/keypads; and outdoor, waterproof stainless-steel keypads. The card readers/keypads allow for arm/disarm status and arming and disarming of security. The HAI systems are capable of doing the above installation with ease and should not be overlooked.

## How to Match Wall Plates to Décor

WHEN WORKING IN A RESIDENTIAL environment, maintaining aesthetics is equally as important as system functionality. One of the ways to accomplish this is by matching Decora wall plates to the décor.



FIGURE 4



FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6



FIGURE 7

Decora wall plates can be customized to serve as excellent camera covers. They come in an endless variety of styles from chrome to brass to stone to copper. They allow you to give inexpensive board-cameras an elegant finish (Figure 4). To achieve results like this, first get a glass shop to make a tinted glass plate to fit your wall plate (Figure 5). Use clear silicone to glue the glass to the back. Install a board-cam or small wide-angle (120°) camera in a receptacle box that has had its back removed (Figure 6). Take a Decora insert, cut the ends off and install it on the box (cut on red lines) (Figure 7). This takes up the difference with the screw hole offset (Figure 4). You may have to inset this part so the wall plate will lay flat against the wall. You might also want to get an outdoor cover plate and use the foam gasket for waterproofing. Congratulations, you're done!

#### MANAGING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Now that we've addressed the technology, let's get down to some brass tacks regarding working with homeowners or consumers.

Residential work is different than commercial work in that residential clients are spending their own money. Therefore, costs are scrutinized much more. They try to get change orders for free (scope of work creep) when they change their minds. They will Internet shop and then ask why they should pay more for the same product they can source online. You can tell them about the differences in features and performance, but they may not remember what you told them at the beginning of the project and demand unreasonable cost breaks.

To ensure this doesn't happen, conduct thorough interviews with your clients and get a signed contract complete with a scope of work. Show them pictures of the planned visible parts and get them to sign off on the design. Some clients are penny-pinchers to the det-

eriment of the job. They don't question spending \$100,000 for a vase, but will bicker over an extra \$50 for a better or more beautiful card reader or camera.

Some clients you should run away from as fast as you can. As the old saying goes, 10 percent of the clients cause 90 percent of your trouble. If they don't cost you actual money, they'll burn up your time in meetings, letter writing and change orders. Don't cut corners. Your name is on the work. Stand your ground with cheapo customers.

One final note about dealing with residential clients: remember the basics. Don't track mud or dirt into the house. Respect homeowners' privacy and knock on doors before entering. And remember, if you or your employees knock over that \$100,000 vase it will put you out of business, or at least create a very big insurance claim and a furious client. ■

Thomas Marino is owner of systems integration firm Advanced Technologies ([www.advancedtechnologiesbr.com](http://www.advancedtechnologiesbr.com)) of Baton Rouge, La. He holds multiple licenses, certifications and awards. He can be reached at [thomas\\_marino@hotmail.com](mailto:thomas_marino@hotmail.com).