



**ALLEGION™**

Industry insights

## The role of a futurist

Integration Insider interviewed Allegion Futurist Rob Martens on his role—specifically what a futurist does, the training needed for this visionary role, what issues he grapples with, and how integrators can benefit from Allegion’s future-oriented mindset.

### **Integration Insider:** What is a futurist?

**Rob Martens:** As a futurist, I identify the trends, technologies and processes that will benefit or affect Allegion—or the broader industry—in some way in the future. A futurist is not about predicting the future but, instead, trying to plan for potential scenarios that could occur. So, part of my job is telling stories about opportunities that may happen so the organization is expecting the unexpected.

### **II:** What training does a futurist have?

**RM:** My core job history is incredibly diverse. I have experience in the financial, IT, academic and start-up realms. This wide berth has helped me develop a global view. And, these unique, varied experiences provide me with a greater understanding of the patterns in the chaos of history. Another core element of being a futurist is being an active listener and learner. Finally, because so much information is coming at you, it’s necessary to determine what is significant and what’s not. As a former CIO, I’ve learned to place a premium on getting to the point, understanding what something is going to do, and what impact it is going to have.

### **II:** What do you evaluate?

**RM:** There is a timing, pace and rhythm to how industries, companies and people operate. While I’m not a big believer in everything repeating itself, there certainly are variations or cycles. The concept of a never-ending circle is a real thing. So I not only look at products, but also service models, distribution channels and design and manufacturing processes—and then I explore how all of these may evolve in the future. An example of the latter is 3D printing technologies and how they may enhance—or disrupt—some traditional manufacturing models.



### **II:** Tell us what a “typical” day of a futurist looks like.

**RM:** Allegion puts no constraints on my exploratory vision. This allows me to really go and explore wherever I perceive the inherent value is going to be. I do quite a bit of reading—academic, mass media, research studies. Plus, I have lots of conversations with product teams, industry analysts, academia, consumers and customers. I also speak to peers and other industry influencers such as the Apples, Googles and Honeywells of the world. All of this helps me formulate strategies on how to improve products, enhance user experiences and increase margins. My goal is always the same: Do whatever is in the best interest of Allegion for that given day.



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**//: How far into the future do you look?**

**RM:** Generally, I look forward about 7-8 years. That length of time is enough to work in the possibility of disruption, cultural change, growth, recession, geo-political events and more.

**//: What issues does a futurist grapple with?**

**RM:** From a security perspective, I wrestle with the number of people putting smart devices into the security ecosystem without properly vetting them. We are all only as secure as the weakest link in our ecosystem.

**//: How do the security products we're using today, as well as the ones in development, reflect the trends you're seeing?**

**RM:** I believe that much of the technology exists today, but what will change in the future is the way we apply technology to change functionality—how something's used. Connected, smart devices are absolutely the future, whether we want them to be or not. That said, there is still no surrogate for understanding physical access control. Even in a connected world, physical security must be applied well.

**//: What value do futurists offer integrators?**

**RM:** Like Allegion, integrators want to take care of consumers and add value to the customer relationship. Because the hardware on or around a door stays for a long period of time, it's critical that we help customers make the right decisions—for today and tomorrow. With a futurist helping engineers, designers and product teams think about what it will be like in the future, Allegion is developing products and software tools that will stand the test of time—that should give integrators confidence. Our solutions provide a personal, valuable and exceptional experience, giving integrators the opportunity to exponentially change the security landscape.

**//: Are you optimistic about the future?**

**RM:** Yes, and integrators should feel optimistic about the future, too. There is a need for heightened security and improved customer experience. As they enable the interaction between locks, devices and people, integrators have the opportunity to deliver some fantastic things in the coming years.

If you want an Allegion integrator sales rep to assist your client, contact us today [online](#) or by calling 888-758-9823.

## About Allegion

Allegion (NYSE: ALLE) creates peace of mind by pioneering safety and security. As a \$2 billion provider of security solutions for homes and businesses, Allegion employs more than 8,000 people and sells products in more than 120 countries across the world. Allegion comprises more than 25 global brands, including strategic brands CISA®, Interflex®, LCN®, Schlage® and Von Duprin®. For more, visit [www.allegion.com](http://www.allegion.com).

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