Ensuring the safety and security of your employees and visitors poses some formidable challenges today. Many would argue that small business owners should place safety and security at the top of their priority list. However, fiscal realities often force one to assess investments in improving security systems through different parameters.

In general, a proposed investment for electronic access control – including both software and hardware – must reflect the benefits of the investment, as well as the costs. Some measures may be relatively inexpensive to implement, such as training and the increased visibility of security technology in your office. However, the cost of other improvements may require a more long-term budgeting and planning approach.

Here are some questions to ask as you assess the costs and benefits of a security initiative:

- What is the financial impact of inadequate security to my business?
- On average, what is the cost of financial losses without adequate security?
- What is the worst-case scenario of financial loss without adequate security?
- How does my business protect its assets?
- How much security is appropriate?
- What security measures are most cost effective?
- What types of security measures are needed?
- What impact will security have on the productivity of my employees?

Any analysis of a proposed expenditure should include the cost to purchase, support and maintain equipment, programs or technologies. This gives you a Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) – the total of all the expenses associated with deploying, maintaining and troubleshooting the system and its components.

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TCO = \text{cost to buy} + \text{cost to install} + \text{cost to operate} + \text{cost to maintain}
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Important issues to consider in your TCO analysis include:

- Hardware
- Software
- Infrastructure
- System planning
- Implementation and deployment
- Training (initial and ongoing)
- Maintenance
- Support
- Upgrades
- Staff costs
- Asset management

Keep in mind that costs vary substantially depending on several factors, including:

- The number of openings requiring access control
- Existing software applications, if any
- Technical environment
- Available resources
- Amount of customization required

You also need to assess the direct benefits of your proposed investment. For example, a proposal to automate or consolidate a security system into a single workstation may result in reduced space needs, savings in wiring and communications infrastructure, automated system maintenance and upgrades. Taking it one step further, web-based access management systems allow you to save money on infrastructure and enjoy the convenience of centralized management without the need for a dedicated machine. That's because bright blue is a Web-based system that allows you to manage your security from any networked computer with no need to dedicate a machine or workstation just for security management.

Indirect benefits are equally important factors in a proposal. These benefits do not obviously relate to the investment. For example, the addition of surveillance cameras has indirect benefits, such as deterring illegal actions and reassuring personnel that security measures are in place. Productivity improvement also adds an indirect benefit to a project.

Upgrading to a networked security system can result in many indirect benefits, such as reducing the manual labor involved with replacing or re-keying locks and assigning new keys, assigning access privileges, revoking access privileges, preparing compliance and regulatory reports, maintenance and emergency communication and notification.

By analyzing cost and benefit data, you will be well on your way to determining the return on your security investment and the value of a technology initiative. Allegion can help you evaluate your building/office space and needs, make suggestions about how to implement simple electronic access control within your budget, and show you how easy it is to manage your own system smoothly and effectively.
Learn more about ROI and security

For more information about optimizing your investment in security, please contact a professional security consultant in your area by calling 888.758.9823 or fill out the Contact Us form on our website at allegion.com.