

## Building automation: An opportunity on every corner

In every building that has an integrated security and access control system, an opportunity awaits to also integrate the building's energy and water use, ventilation and more. Smart buildings are on the rise, not only because of the possible cost savings, but also because more companies are considering their environmental impact.

Advances in technology have broadened the definition of the integration customer beyond security or facilities to also include the CEO and CFO. Understanding where the security integrator can step into the mix may be the key to your company's growth as the demand for smart technologies continues to grow.

There is a business opportunity in every building and access control is just one piece of that potential business. Consider a building where employees scan a badge or present a smart phone-based credential for access. When access is granted, the building's other systems are triggered to turn on the lights, adjust the temperature and alert security that someone has accessed the building. During the day the network monitors water use, sending an alert to facilities if a restroom faucet is left running or if a normally locked door is left ajar. At the end of the day, the access credential is used to exit the building, triggering the reverse actions of the morning—lights are dimmed, temperatures are lowered and doors are locked. While access control may be the "trigger" for all of these functions, the entire system is based on a sophisticated network.

The difference between then and now is that every aspect of a building's operation ties into a network, from lighting to intercoms, access control, video, fire safety and climate control. In most cases, all of these functions have some shared equipment, even if they don't always have a shared "customer." You can conquer this potential divide by offering diverse services that add up to significant cost savings for the end user, as well as enhanced security.

To expand into building automation, it is important to grow your business with strategic partnerships. Just like partnerships with building automation firms can mean an earlier foot in the door, so can good relationships with manufacturers like Allegion.

One of the challenges, however, is getting past the IT director's fears of putting all their eggs in one software basket. When a building is fully automated and networked, a failure in one area can cause failure in others. Getting past this concern can be managed through detailed communication and concrete information about how the building's systems can live side-by-side and how integration can benefit the customer in the long run.

### Creating ROI for end users

In order to effectively sell a multi-part integrated network, it's critical to be able to pinpoint the end user's possible return on investment (ROI). This can be achieved by a detailed cost analysis that compares current use and expenses to the results that can be achieved through upgrading equipment and integrating technology. And the results aren't limited strictly to energy savings:

- Upgrading to stand-alone intelligent controllers can reduce lighting expenses by as much as 40 percent.\*
- Buildings with strong southern light exposure can adjust HVAC and lighting based on actual conditions, rather than a fixed schedule, taking advantage of natural heat and light to reduce energy use.
- A study by The World Green Building Council Found 81 percent of workers have a difficult time concentrating if the temperature is higher than the norm, while 62 percent say it takes up to 25 percent longer to complete a task when they are too hot.\*\* However, with a lack of air and energy control, it can cost a company millions to maintain.
- Buildings with door and window sensors can detect when doors and windows are open, signaling the system to automatically turn off the HVAC system while also alerting security personnel to a possible unauthorized entry.



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These examples of ROI are significant whether your customers occupy large commercial office buildings, healthcare clinics, restaurants and hotels or even manufacturing facilities.

The first step is to show your customers the potential savings by conducting a thorough cost analysis. When surveying you should look at everything from air handlers and chillers, irrigation and what types of lighting they have. Be sure to also include details like moving to LED lighting, and updating compressors and chillers, and show the total potential cost savings.

Buildings waste a lot of energy—propping a door open can cause the automation system to go into overdrive, pumping out air and creating significant energy waste. The ROI on building automation can sometimes free up money for other projects, while enhancing technology, comfort and security. This can be a game changer for customers in the education, healthcare, and government markets.

### Make buildings smarter one step at a time

Getting customers to a fully optimized smart building may seem overwhelming at first. Although it may be part of the overall budget in new construction, it may require a phased approach when retrofitting an existing building. Start the conversation by setting goals with milestones set for the next 60 days, then six, 12 and 24 months out.

- **60 days**—Set goals for improving efficiency. Compare energy costs across multiple locations or conduct a study of energy use in one location to establish a baseline of use and areas of loss/waste. Establish a test case by installing appropriate sensors, equipment and network technology in one location.
- **Six months**—Use the data gathered from your test location to establish an initial ROI, look for areas to further improve and target other buildings or other areas within a building to implement the new system.



- **12 months**—Track energy use at all locations to measure energy savings and establish an overall ROI. Consider adding a building management system to increase efficiency and savings.
- **24 months**—Develop a long-term plan for energy savings, including how to integrate new facilities into the overall solution.

Ultimately, the goal is to bring the customer cost savings, followed by a connected system that allows every part of the building to share information, and be more efficient and effective.

\*Energy Star

\*\*Thermal Comfort, The World Green Building Council, 2003

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