

E

lectronic Security

Successful security comes from a realistic assessment of risk, followed by the selection of appropriate countermeasures. The right security balance demands an awareness of options relevant to the risk. These fall into three broad categories, physical security, electronic security and security guarding services. A combination of all three types of security is usually the best solution depending on the threat.

Once limited to simple burglar alarms and lighting, technology is now a major element in every facility manager's security strategy. Electronic solutions such as a basic, monitored intruder alarm can make a big impact in deterring a criminal from entering a building and will alert a monitoring centre if an alarm is triggered.

Access control and CCTV systems should not be overlooked as an affordable means to prevent loss, deter crime and detect incidents. For many businesses, a simple CCTV system of one or two cameras may be sufficient, and basic access control may, for example, purely be used to prevent access by the public to unauthorised areas.

More complex systems might include advanced solutions like biometric controls, automatic number plate recognition, pedestrian monitoring systems and facial recognition software. The new technologies have created a wealth of opportunities for sophisticated security strategies that were science fiction just a few years ago and are now becoming commonplace.

One of the most significant movements of recent years has been the growing trend towards integration, where technologies work together to achieve mutually complementary outcomes. This capability has leapt forward with the advent of digital technology and video-over-IP, which has both removed the former constraints of physical distance in areas such as visual surveillance and introduced economies of scale that has reduced its cost.

Security technology is in a state of constant, rapid evolution and the FM and security industries play an essential role in setting benchmarks, not only of technical quality in manufacture, installation and maintenance, but also in the management of its social implications by support for human rights and data protection legislation and through the development of applications such as masking systems designed to prevent infringements of privacy by surveillance cameras.

The British Security Industry Association is the trade association covering all aspects of the professional security industry in the UK. Its 570 members provide over 70% of UK security products and services and adhere to strict quality standards. For more information see www.bsia.co.uk