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Maximizing Success With Video Surveillance Technology Initiatives

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The Technology During the early 90's a new technology was presented to the marketplace: Digital Video Surveillance. DTT recognized the opportunity to successfully implement this new technology and deliver the solution through a creative managed service offering. Functionality such as having remote access to real-time video within all store locations, and instant access to all of the video, audio, and POS data, presented us with new resolutions to old business problems. Enhanced features were designed with data mining of databases that archived POS data along with video. This allowed internal loss prevention audits to be completed with a higher degree of accuracy and in a timely manner. At this point video surveillance technology started to demonstrate substantial value to operations beyond risk management and simple robbery deterrence. The next phase in evolution of video surveillance included the delivery of relevant, actionable data to operations in consolidated daily exception reports. Restaurateurs were also given access to loss prevention audits prepared by experienced loss prevention specialists. The audit reports presented objective information about all events in the operation; including cash thefts, inventory shrinkage, guest service, food safety and handling, workflow, restaurant cleanliness, compliance, and many other areas. As DTT introduced greatly enhanced, proactive technology elements, new operational opportunities were identified, with increased revenues and improved profitability recognized by restaurant operators.

The Business Problem As with all emerging technologies, there was excitement generated with the vision. Most surveillance companies understood how to craft a sales pitch but few had qualified resources that understood the unique hospitality space and how to implement, educate management, and recommend best practices to accomplish the end results. Vision without execution usually spells failure and disappointment over the dollars invested in technologies. Unfortunately many organizations invested in this new technology but failed to effectively use all the actionable data by engraining its use in operational execution. Therefore, many brands missed out on a potentially greater ROI. In many cases, brands made a large capital investment, with more infrastructures to manage, lack of adoption from the management team, and very little knowledge on how to best use the information that this technology provided to meet the organizations' business objectives. The newer developments with video surveillance technology introduced new opportunities that require follow through from both the vendor and the brand management team. Some challenges are common when new technology is introduced within the restaurant environment; however, there is a true path to success and DTT's best business practices help achieve your objectives and maximize your return on dollars invested.

The Project In today's challenging business environment, project-oriented companies must overcome tightened budgets, manage cost overruns, maximize resource allocation issues, deal effectively with

complex project challenges, and deliver timely results. It's easy to lose track of an initial goal to deliver technology initiatives in a way that shows immediate returns and helps drive maximum profits. The ultimate success with the technical implementation rests on operators adopting its use with daily business practices. Having a technology vendor that understands how to develop, deploy, and educate end-users on best practices with their technology is essential to the success of any project. Just as important is preparing your team members to help select the right technology partner that can understand these goals. Creating a technology project team, and maintaining the vision of the project is critical. Ten best business practices for helping to successfully manage any technology project are as follows:

1. Project managers must focus on time, budget, and quality.
2. Planning all phases of the project is essential; Training, Implementation, Live Support/Post Installation.
3. Project managers must emphasize the importance of having all business section stakeholders engaged during all phases of the project; operations, IT, finance, and senior administration.
4. All project deliverables and all project activities must be clearly defined and processes documented.
5. Projects require clear approvals and sign-off by end-user after technology has been understood and handed off to the customer.
6. Project managers must manage their time effectively and ensure the stakeholders are scheduling sufficient time to get familiar with the new technology and understanding how it will change and streamline their processes.
7. Project managers must actively communicate with all levels of management and ensure that their job function is integrated with the appropriate pieces of technology.
8. Project sponsors and stakeholders must be active participants, not passive customers.
9. Projects typically must be actively used and sold internally.
10. Top management must actively set priorities and define objectives.

The Business Solution Well, you have invested in video surveillance technology and the installation of your new DTT system is complete. Now what is expected to happen in the restaurant locations? When will the technology provide greater revenue and profits? How well have you controlled the implementation costs and has the technology been delivered in scope and on time?

Do not wait until after the installation to answer these vital questions.

1. Prior to deployment you need to have process and policies in place to use all of the technology features to reach their full benefit.
2. Define the users in your organization, and the role they will be playing in their daily operations with this new system. Determine how much time each person from your management team of stakeholders will dedicate each day with the valuable information that this system provides.
3. Evaluate all the available reports and determine who is responsible for acting on the data that these reports provide to the brand locations.

4. Specifically, what action should management take with the data from these reports?
5. Put a system in place that documents what action was taken by whom in your company.
6. Determine corrective steps if appropriate actions are not taken and re-evaluate the process.

The Business Execution Listed above are all points that need to be finalized with your surveillance provider before any deployment or roll out. Sounds simple, but if the video surveillance system and audited data are not incorporated into daily business practices, the brand will not recognize the full potential of the DTT surveillance investment. Planning how management will implement processes to employ the data for improving business practices is as critical as the installation, support, and cost.

Select a project lead from your operations that understands the flow of process throughout your organization. This is essential to the successful deployment of any new technology. All too often companies select IT or Loss Prevention to direct a video surveillance implementation project. Unfortunately, sometimes they run into more barriers than resolutions because of lack of ownership where the processes are written. Remember, all stakeholders must get involved early and stay involved during the project, and also help deliver collective results after the implementation is completed. Everyone must act on information provided.

To help you understand the *types of processes that will need to be implemented internally*, consider the following. What do you do with a customer complaint that comes into your organization? You have multiple customer complaints that the food quality was horrible at one of your locations. Do you call the store manager or the district manager? Did you perform a follow up to see if there was an action item? The management and processes that you use in this scenario could be incorporated into your surveillance practices. If you do not bring visibility into these policies during the project, much of the valuable data created by the technology could be overlooked, which would certainly have an impact on the ROI. *The surveillance technology and services can be a great tool to take your current processes to higher level accuracy and execution.* By getting the right data into the right hands in a timely fashion the data can be intelligently analyzed to fine-tune your business operations, taking profits to the next level in the process!

Companies need not only drive their technology projects but also ensure that they incorporate the data that is relative to each individual operation within a company. Profitability comes from closely matching the technology to the company's business model. The more the operations team is actively engaged and participating on a day-to-day basis with the technology and services, the higher the ROI. *Repetition is the key here.* The better a vendor understands this fact, the lower the cost of ownership. A project that does not incorporate these very basic technology practices will have limited ROI, and high transparent costs of ownership. If the company you select is the right one its team members will be able to speak to these points with proven action plans.