



Bigger is Getting Better

SMG/The Moscone Center undertaking complete security renovation

By Ralph C. Jensen

There are a handful of amazing things that set San Francisco apart from other world class cities. Notably, there is the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz Island, Fisherman’s Wharf and Chinatown; the Twin Peaks overlooking the city, San Francisco Bay, and yes: The Moscone Center.

Just how does a convention center fit into the list of places to see in beautiful San Francisco? It is the largest convention and exhibition complex in San Francisco. It includes three main halls spread out across three blocks and 87 acres in the South of Market neighborhood. The convention center originally opened in 1981 and has gone through several renovations. It is currently upgrading its security system to reflect a best-of-breed, state-of-the-art solution.

Securing the Facility

Security at the SMG/Moscone Center is handled similar to the security at a Tier 1 airport; however, clients who use the facility are required to provide their own inside security. When the doors are open to the public it plays host to people who want to come in and look around.

“We are responsible for facility security inside and on the perimeter outside. This is considered a soft target, so we do everything possible to harden the security,” said Damion Ellis, director of security at the SMG/Moscone Center. “The time is right for us to take out the old security system, including the old analog camera system. Our new security system will provide analytics, and the ability to look at



the images in real time.”

Like any major metropolitan area, there are issues that have to be dealt with that aren’t pleasant and keeping track of the homeless population and what they are doing is one such issue.

“We are able to place the new IP cameras in places where the homeless population congregates on the outside, in dark corners of the facility,” Ellis said.

The Moscone Center complex consists of three main halls. Moscone South is located to the south of Howard Street and is three stories tall.



It opened in 2017, replacing the original Moscone Center building that opened in 1981. A Keith Haring sculpture stands outside the hall at the corner of 5th and Howard streets. Moscone North is located to the north of Howard Street, and Moscone West is a three-level exhibition hall located across 4th Street from Moscone North.

“One of the most compelling reasons Moscone deployed CompleteView video platform was the integration with Honeywell’s ProWatch access control platform, as well as newly designed multi-sensor cameras,” Salient’s regional sales manager in the Bay Area, Cindy Doyle said. “The ease of use and intuitive software allowed the guard staff to use maps in the system to identify where triggered events took place for guard dispatch.”

Monitoring Door Alarms

ProWatch is currently being used to monitor door alarms throughout the property and triggering video call-up and/or alarm video event when there is a forced or held open door.

In order to keep track of outside foot traffic and provide interior and exterior security, an analytics option was foremost on everyone’s mind, and integrator Microbiz Security Co., dove in with an initial site survey to determine the best course of action. Microbiz has partnered with the SMG/Moscone Center for several years.

“Our goal was to take a look at what it would take to secure the facility, but to do it properly,” said Todd Chritton, president of Microbiz Security.

“The integrator had some suggestions in terms of offering better security coverage in some areas,” Microbiz Security vice president of operations Marco Escobar said. “What they knew was three buildings needed to update from its current 2002 technology, and upgrade to 2018 technology. It also was beneficial to the integrator having worked on site for several years and also having worked with Ellis during his tenure with the Hilton Hotel chain.

“We’ve been a long-time vendor at the convention center, and we offer a pride of installation as well as using the best of the best security solutions. We began by updating current cameras to Arecont Vision

multi-sensor and multi-megapixel IP cameras and Salient Systems’ CompleteView VMS, Dell integrated server with RAID6 configuration and CompleteView Enterprise software. The VMS is a fully open architecture, enabling convention center security staff to seamlessly leverage existing technology investments and minimize disruption.”

A Real Suite Deal

“The Salient software runs the entire security suite,” Doyle said. “The software is able to talk to all the various solutions, and it is easy on the security operations staff, even with little tech experience or knowledge. It also includes mapping features, which allow the operations team to follow all movements in real time.”

The Microbiz staff have a great track record for supporting the end user, and “we will always do what it takes to make the installation right,” Escobar said. “The staff at the SMG/Moscone Center quickly latched on to the new solution. It is simple for the end user to become familiar with. So far, it’s been a breeze.”

In a city where the landmarks are truly world class, the SMG/Moscone Center stacks up quite nicely. Security concerns have been upgraded over the years. The original convention center opened in 1981 on the site that is now known as Moscone South. The exhibition hall was placed underground to minimize the controversial convention center’s visible footprint. Expansions of Moscone North and Moscone West took place in 1992 and 2003, which added 600,000 square feet of space to the original 300,000 square feet of exhibit space. In 2012 a two-year renovation project was completed, and now a \$551 million expansion is underway, including a demolished Moscone South, to be replaced by a more spacious structure.

The updated security solutions will also enhance the renovated SMG/Moscone Center as tradeshow, conventions and tourists continue to find the space attractive. ■

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