

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

GOING THE EXTRA MILE: SECURE RECYCLE

Recycling operations get a boost at the head end

By: Ralph C. Jensen

Savers Thrift Superstores are all about offering great quality, gently used clothing, accessories, and household goods. With more than 300 locations in North America and Australia, security also is top of mind for company executives.

Security must place a key role as the company resells and recycles quality merchandise, giving communities a smart way to shop, and it keeps more than 700 million pounds of used goods from landfills every year. Savers takes their recycling efforts a step further by helping more than 100 nonprofit organizations, purchasing their donated goods and providing them with a source of revenue.



Known as Savers in the United States and Australia, they also market their holdings as Value Village in the United States and Canada, Unique in the United States, and Village des Valeurs in Quebec. More than 21,000 employees must be kept safe and secure while on duty.

With this many stores and more coming online all the time, Savers has and is purchasing numerous cameras, more than 17,000 in all. The upgrade in cameras is in full swing, and when a new store is built, it is outfitted with an all IT system. This ambitious plan also includes upgrades at the company's distribution centers (trucking) and recycling centers.

To make this all work and provide quality image resolution, Savers staff called on an old friend and trusted partner, Salient. With old DVR systems failing continuously, Salient installed a completely new head end solution that would manage all video feeds, including those that come from the collection of analog cameras. Replacing the outdated storage system will be Salient's PowerChoice LP.



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According to Blake Albertsen, Salient’s regional sales manager for the Northwest United States and Western Canada, “the solution is a 1U rack-mountable server. Its use varies from the capable delivery of analog camera streams to the latest IP camera technology.

If and when Savers builds a new facility, an all-new IP network system is installed, including the PowerChoice system. For existing stores, it has become a replacement for worn and out-of-date DVRs/NVRs.

“Our goal has been to improve and receive better quality video in every store,” said Brandon Aho, director of IT and application services at Savers. “We are including Axis IP network cameras in our new installations, and when the time comes, this is the preferred system as we retrofit. We’re seeing our investment already taking off.”

The Canadian stores are smaller than those found in the United States; however, each facility is placing 20 to 24 cameras per site. Video surveillance systems have become extremely useful for the company loss prevention staff. Each LP officer works in an assigned district or region. Obviously, a staff member can’t be in every location at the same time, so high-quality video has become a valuable tool for that person.

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Loss prevention officers can pull up video feeds no matter the location they may be working that day. They are able to act quickly to thwart items “walking out the store,” or follow up from a theft. The video feeds also are sent to corporate offices in Tukwilla, WA.

Almost half the stores and locations have made the conversions to PowerChoice, and because each location has different needs, such as storage and frame rate specifications, the efforts have an individualized touch. As expected, COVID-19 has slowed the installation process somewhat; however, slow but sure, each location is getting the attention needed.

“Despite COVID-19, we expect to have everything in place on time, which is having all NVRs out by late 2021,” Aho said. “Perhaps the highest priority in this install is providing all support resources that the end-user could possibly need, along with an ease of use value proposition. We’re able to meet the specific needs of each store, each location separately, and make sure the analog equipment remains productive and provides clear images until the upgrades are complete.”



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