

VIDEO MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

ELEVATING SECURITY FOR WILLIS TOWER

Willis Tower, an iconic symbol in Chicago for over 50 years, has undergone significant transformations to become a modern workplace and community hub that delivers the best experiences for its tenants, area residents and visitors. Originally known as Sears Tower, it was renamed Willis Tower after a change in ownership in 2009. Major renovations took place in 2017, culminating in a complete transformation in 2022. Today, Willis Tower offers a range of amenities from short-term workstations to traditional leases, as well as dining, retail, and entertainment spaces. The Skydeck on the 103rd floor, 1,353 feet above street level, provides breathtaking views of up to 50 miles across four states, attracting millions of visitors annually.



As part of Willis Tower's transformation, the structural separations between the office and Skydeck areas were eliminated, creating a more open and accessible space for visitors and tenants. Recognizing the need for a customized strategic security plan, Director of Security Keith Kambic, CPP, spearheaded efforts to find the right partners to ensure the safety and security of tenants, visitors, and employees. Kambic's first step was to engage with the national security and technology consulting firm Guidepost Solutions. The next priority was to establish a strong partnership with a Chicago-based integration partner and to identify the best security solutions in the market.

Kambic chose 4S Security as the integration partner because of their holistic approach to achieving optimal results. The partnership with 4S Security elevated the security measures at Willis Tower to new heights.

"We are different than the average integrator," said Leor Elfassy, Director of Business Development at 4S. "We have software developers on staff who write integrations, and as a matter of business principle for the last 30 years, we only work with software manufacturers that allow us to do so."

The upgrade to Willis Tower involved retrofitting the access control system to a cloud-based solution and the new video management system (VMS), Salient CompleteView, was selected based on its ability to integrate seamlessly with the access control platform. “In the end the client wants a single pane of glass that they can work from and Salient’s CompleteView is well-designed to let integrators bring their vision to life,” continued Elfassy.



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Salient’s open architecture was an essential factor in the decision, along with product features like Dynamic Resolution Scaling (DRS), a powerful bandwidth management tool, and agnostic integration to analytic platforms for future system enhancements. Specific features like snapshot and CompleteView’s interactive mapping feature were also important selection factors. While all of these product capabilities are important, in the end it came down to the personal attention of Salient team members – from the President to the system engineer – and their efforts to go above and beyond in every way. Salient’s dedication to working cohesively with the Willis Tower and 4S teams created an effective partnership that propelled the project forward.

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Both Salient and 4S provided learning tools prior to implementation to ensure a seamless transition to the new VMS for the Willis Tower security team. 4S created customized training videos and pamphlets and held onsite training sessions, while Salient educated the security team through its YouTube training videos.

The result of the partnership between 4S and Salient was a 40% reduction in bandwidth usage across the Willis Tower network. In addition, the integrated system provided immediate awareness of events such as forced-open doors, tailgating, and panic alarms. Ongoing top-notch local support from both Salient and 4S ensures smooth and timely software release updates and exploration of new technological capabilities, advancing video surveillance through CompleteView. Pleased with the results, the Willis Tower team attests to the success of the partnership, efficacy of Salient’s product, and outstanding level of service from Salient both before and after the sale.

