Managing More Profit with Managed Access Control

Successful security companies are always looking for new services to offer, new ways to grow, and new sources of revenue.

In 2009, ADS Security was looking for new services to offer. After considering their options, they decided that managed access control presented the brightest prospect. They chose Entré CS™ Access & Security Management System Software from DMP as their technology partner, a decision that's proven to be very profitable for ADS.

Managed Access Control

Security firms and their customers are increasingly aware of the benefits of electronic access control. Conventional locks are replaced with electronic locks, and physical keys replaced with access cards or other credentials. Access rights of system users are programmed into the system, and can be changed or removed in an instant, offering total, system-wide control over who is allowed to go where and when.

These electronic access control systems require computer hardware, special software, and trained administrators. Most businesses don't want to invest in and maintain these resources, so they are increasingly turning to security firms able to provide them as a service. Most customers gladly pay a monthly service fee to have security professionals manage these important activities.

Bringing the Managed Access Service Online

Anytime you launch a new product or service, you hope for the best but prepare for the worst. For ADS, their solid preparation and Entré's reliable performance resulted in a trouble-free startup.

"I was expecting some sort of glitch, but it never happened," recalls Tom Szell, Senior Vice President at ADS Security.

> "Our pricing structure for managed access control was set up so that our payback was almost immediate. Instant ROI. It's a very profitable revenue source for us."
>
> Tom Szell
> Senior Vice President,
> ADS Security

"Bringing our Entré-based managed access service online was pretty seamless. There was nothing really that hard about it. We brought the first customer on with no problems, and subsequent customers have been just as trouble-free."

Szell says he was surprised at the high level of customer satisfaction, and the low level of customer issues.

"They love the service," Szell says, "and they didn't really call us much for help with it. We thought we would get slammed with lots of phone calls and questions, but it's been kind of quiet. I think that shows that, if the service is set up right, the customers will be very happy and we won't get inundated with questions and requests."

An Integrated Solution

For ADS, one of the selling points of the DMP solution was that it makes it possible to integrate access control and intrusion in a single system.

"DMP provides an integrated security platform," explains Jim Hawthorne, Regional Manager for DMP. "The DMP XR500 panel combines access control, intrusion, and commercial fire in one panel. Having all this technology, plus network and cellular communications, creates many advantages for the dealer and the end user. It reduces installation time, labor costs, and equipment costs while increasing functionality and performance."

"The integration feature was important to us," Szell says. "When our customers come to us for managed access, it's easy for us to also do security. Of course, any vendor can add security to an access system, but they'll do that by adding another panel. That solution isn't as clean as the DMP integrated approach."

Making Money from Day #1

When you add a new service, the bottom line is the bottom line. For ADS, their bottom line showed a definite improvement.

"We charge a monthly fee to monitor the comings and goings of our customers' people, and to manage their schedules," Szell says. "That's given us a new, recurring monthly revenue stream that we didn't have before."

Prudent companies do a thorough ROI calculation before making an investment in a new product or service. It didn't take much effort for ADS to make those calculations for their managed access service.

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"Traditional access control systems include hardware installation, the purchase of a head-end software program, and daily maintenance and management by the end user," says DMP's Hawthorne. "Managed access control is far better for everyone. The end user only purchases the hardware installation, so their entry price is reduced. The security company provides the service, manages the system, and retains a recurring revenue fee. Given the choice, most business owners prefer to focus on their business and let the security professionals manage their security."

Unlimited Opportunities

"We ask customers why they would want to spend time managing their access system instead of devoting their time to managing the business," Szell says. "Customers really respond to that question."

When talking with his sales team about prospects for this service, Szell tells them that "the possibilities are endless!"

"Our biggest customer so far was a 16-door installation, but it also makes sense for customers that have only one door," Szell says. "Some of our prospects are companies that need to keep track of who comes and goes, or have to take special steps to protect their client or patient records. Prospects include companies that operate more than one shift, are open 24 hours a day, or that have different schedules for employees. Also companies that have multiple locations or outbuildings.

"When it comes down to it, any company that has employees is a prospect for managed access control services. It seems like that's a very broad potential market, but that's what we're finding."

Considering Managed Access Control

Szell says he's answered many calls for his advice from people thinking about getting into managed access control.

"I tell them to do the research and pick the vendor that's right for you. For us, that was DMP. We were already using their products and we knew that they were a great supplier. That gave us a comfort level as we got into this new managed access service."

Szell goes on with some additional advice that typically surprises callers.

"Expect to train your sales force at least three times. When I was considering managed access and I got that advice, I said 'You are kidding me!' But it's absolutely true. Because it's new, the sales people usually don't get it the first time. Be prepared to do extensive training."

Finally, Szell advises that security firms do the groundwork for a successful new service launch.

"Managed access control has a lot of moving parts. We created a team of eight people to put our service package together. You need to include everyone; your sales, IT, marketing, and monitoring staff."

Szell is clearly pleased that his company was one of the first security firms willing to venture into managed access control services, but he knows many more will follow.

"It's the wave of the future, and it's a great revenue stream!"

Entré CS

Entré CS works with many DMP panels, relying on their network capabilities to monitor and manage customer facilities anywhere via Web or standard clients. Entré CS users can offer a full range of services with no additional computers, software or related maintenance at their customers' sites. Managed services relationships provide closer, long-term relationships with clients that create both reliable revenue streams and regular opportunities to present additional products and services.

Additional features:

- Expandable to adapt and grow services to accommodate changing customer needs, from a single area or building to multiple facilities at geographically dispersed locations.

- Remote panel programming that reduces the need for on-site service calls.

- Multiple customer management capability from a single workstation.

- Optional modules to create profitable customized service offerings, including card/badge production, video system management, and others.

ADS Security

Headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, ADS Security (ADS) is one of the top 25 largest electronic security firms in the nation. Established in 1990, it serves over 70,000 businesses, industrial facilities, and residences throughout the southeastern United States.

ADS provides a full range of burglar and fire alarms, as well as video surveillance and access control systems. Each ADS Central Station Operator has earned the Five Diamond Central Station Certificate, the highest training certification available in the industry.

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