

Securing Petrol Stations — More Than a “Quick Fix”

A typical modern gas station is an expensive, multi-functional retail facility. Security systems intended for petrol stations must help provide a consistent, clear view of operations throughout the entire complex, assist in solving disputes, protect the station from crime and other incidents, and generally raise the profitability of the business through reliable and high-quality service. When owners of a petrol station network choose Axxon Intellect Enterprise, they receive effective monitoring as well as an integrated tool for security and centralized management throughout all subsystems.

Most modern gas stations provide services and convenience products in addition to gasoline sales. Typically, a gas station has a small retail store as well as an ATM, pay terminal, and snack bar or cafe. Warehouses and utility spaces are spread outside, along with service spaces and car wash hangars.

Each of those resources is vulnerable to illegal activities. Blackmail and robbery, attacks on cashiers, fraud, and vandalism happen too frequently at petrol stations – especially in remote areas. In addition, as a high fire risk area, a gas station can explode from one sudden spark, leading to a serious emergency. As a result, it's vital that petrol station owners make their businesses as safe as possible by installing a security system that cuts losses and protects the premises from crime, accidents and emergencies.

A Valuable Lesson Learned

The board of Nefto, a gas station network covering Moscow city and area, decided to provide its sites with security systems to reduce the risk of negative incidents and consequent losses. Initially, a limited budget had led to a cost-driven decision. Basic monochrome cameras and DVRs were installed, and after a year of poor operation, the client knew something had to change.

Vladimir Timakin, CEO of Lilana, a security system installation company, explains how both the client and the previous system installer discovered the system to be completely ineffective: “During that year, several cars had been damaged at their stations and incidents of theft and robbery had occurred – but the system was unable to assist in investigations and solving cases. Since security was not provided, the investment in cameras and DVRs ultimately proved useless.”

Rather than savings, the client received losses instead – both direct (the ineffective video surveillance system were replaced) and indirect (their reputation was compromised due to theft and damage, which in turn led to decreased profits and increased costs). What's more, the faulty system not only led to technical trouble, it also caused additional emotional and business tensions within the company.

Fortunately, the board learned a valuable lesson from the experience. Despite budget limitations, they agreed to fix the problem rather than repeat their mistakes.

Axxon Intellect Enterprise: The Petrol Station's Security Solution

Lilana was selected as installation partner of choice to implement Axxon Intellect Enterprise. Lilana has worked on security systems since 1992 and has extensive experience in fire/burglary alarm installations for the energy, healthcare and heavy industry vertical markets. Company specialists develop a wide variety of production management and perimeter protection systems, cameras, and technological controllers as well as buildings and facilities and infrastructural networks.

Vladimir Timakin explains, “We decided on a step-by-step deployment of the system to overcome budgeting limitations. Fortunately, the Axxon Intellect Enterprise system is capable of a staggered installation.”

After establishing the normal operation of all component systems, Timakin proposed using Axxon Intellect Enterprise software to integrate all subsystems into one entity. The Axxon Intellect Enterprise platform now controls video surveillance, fire/burglary alarm and access control systems across the customer's sites.

After the petrol station project was completed, Lilana received a contract to provide a security system for the Nefto's head office. Here the advantages of the Axxon Intellect Enterprise system became even more obvious: in addition to managing access control, fire detection and video surveillance subsystems via a single, unified interface, Axxon Intellect Enterprise supported highly detailed interactive office premises maps and a notification management system.

The powerful integration capabilities of Axxon Intellect Enterprise enabled Lilana specialists to customize their solution. The building had previously housed a bank, and legacy ACS and Italian locks were still present. The client wanted to keep the equipment, but it was non-standard and difficult to maintain and/or replace. Despite this, Lilana's professionals were able to connect all locks to Zolotye Vorota ACS controllers, which were integrated into the Axxon Intellect Enterprise system. Everything worked perfectly.

Timakin notes, "At the moment, the gas station and head office systems are separated from each other. The next task is to network them. For me, the main success is the customer's confidence in Axxon Intellect Enterprise. Now that they have a very complex example of an Axxon Intellect Enterprise-driven system at the head office, the client has had a positive and effective experience with both Axxon's platform and the equipment controlled by the system."

Real Benefits

Installation of the Axxon Intellect Enterprise-based system at both the gas station and office sites has literally brought the company's customers peace of mind. Stable and reliable operation, high-quality video images from the surveillance subsystem, a video archive with simple fragment retrieval, total control from a single GUI, scalability and integration capabilities, and a multi-stage deployment that reduces the financial load - these are just a few elements of the value the customer received for the money invested.

At the same time, the Axxon Intellect Enterprise video surveillance system provides high quality video evidence that's easy to retrieve. Captured footage is useful for solving disputes and incident investigations, which means lower costs in case of theft and similar minor incidents.

Timakin adds, "We've shown that the Axxon Intellect Enterprise platform is capable of building a system using the stage-by-stage principle without any loss of functionality. This is a wise investment, allowing smart planning and multi-phase budgeting rather than a sizeable up-front capital investment. Once you choose the right direction and right platform to work with, it's simple. Axxon Intellect Enterprise was the smart solution."

Best of all, the customer realized direct profits from the new system deployment. Timakin estimates that the Axxon Intellect Enterprise system installation costs were roughly two times lower than the total costs of the previous system.

The Future

"We intend to continue our collaboration with this customer," Timakin says. "The next significant step will be the introduction of an integrated monitoring system across the rest of the same brand of gas stations. One control center will manage all locations. We're conducting the assessments so we can define the optimal system configuration for this project."

In the short-term, Lilana is creating the integrated monitoring/security system required to cover all petrol stations and head office of the client company. Both groups are looking forward to making the petrol station's future even more secure - and even more profitable