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P A C E U N I V E R S I T Y

PICKING UP THE PACE
S6

Cover Story

By Ralph C. Jensen



PICKING UP THE PACE

Idesco Corp. started in the security business in the early 1940s. They began with ID badging for the Department of the Army. Well, times have changed, a lot, in the past seven or eight decades but one constant is that Idesco is still involved in security.

In fact, company president Andrew Schonzeit says Idesco's biggest asset, as an integrator, is that they "stay one step ahead." They have to because the company is involved in some of the highest profile installations in New York City, including Pace University, City University of New York and New York University. They also are involved in Madison Square Garden, New York City Police Department, The New York Yankees, and many other installations known worldwide.

"It is obvious that our sweet spot is New York City," Schonzeit said. "There is more than enough work in the city to keep us busy. We work with dozens of agencies within the New York City government, but our strongest vertical is higher education."

Currently, Idesco is involved with Pace University. The school deploys 250 analog cameras and 150 Vicon IP cameras. Also in place are wireless locks and an access control system designed by S2 Security Corp.

WORKING WITH FRIENDS

Idesco and Pace University are not strangers to one another. In fact, the two institutions have been working together for so long that Idesco's security team has been vetted and badged as contractors on the campus. While the two have an ongoing services contract, Idesco is currently working on a new security installation in a residential dormitory on campus. The 36-story tower is in the heart of Lower Manhattan and the entire security system is being installed as the facility is being built.

If you haven't heard of Pace University, perhaps you weren't listening. The university is well known for its undergraduate business school, theater and arts, and a law school.

Since 1906, Pace University has produced thinking professionals by providing high-quality



education for the professions with a firm base in liberal learning amid the advantages of the New York Metropolitan Area. Pace is a private university with campuses in New York City and Westchester County, enrolling almost 13,000 students in bachelors,

masters, and doctoral programs in its College of Health Professions, Dyson College of Arts and Sciences, Lubin School of Business, School of Education, School of Law, and Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems. The university

also has a campus in White Plains, where it offers graduate programs.

GETTING A HEAD START IN SECURITY

Pace Institute began its transformation after World War II into a mod-

ern university with emphasis on the liberal arts and sciences. The university's leadership and fiscally sound management, grew from rented facilities and few resources into one of the largest universities in New York State, with a multimillion dollar physical plant, an endowment of more than \$100 million and a reputation for excellent teaching and talented, ambitious graduates.

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Only a few years ago, the relationship between Pace and Idesco came to fruition.

"Service from Idesco's team of security professionals has changed everything for us," said Thomas A. Tresselt, associate director of Safety and Security at Pace University. "Idesco helped us understand the need for a standardized access control system. We are now standardizing on the S2 Access Control Platform. They have also introduced us to remote access to our cameras. This is something we use on a daily basis."

Pace has been working closely with Mike Troiani, Idesco's Service Manager. Troiani has been recommending new technology and working with Pace to ensure that all solutions answer their needs and fit their budget.

"Our objective is to guarantee that their security system is functioning 100 percent of the time," Troiani said. "We want to be quick

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and efficient so we are ready to intervene at any time. We schedule installations when students are not in the premises so that we do not disrupt the school's activities."

Idesco's installation team has played a major part in the success of

this project. "Keeping such a big structure safe and secure is a team effort," Troiani said. "Brian Simpson, our operations manager, and Sergio Rocha, who oversees installations, have helped anticipating and implementing the right security solutions for Pace."

"Idesco offers us 24-hour a day service," Beatty said. "Because of their willingness and ability to help us prevent a security breach, they have remote access to our camera system, and if there is a problem, their technicians can get online and

fix any problems with the cameras.

"They also have helped us standardize our access control entry cards. We had been using HID and AWID card systems, but we have transitioned to a one-card HID system."

Pace University has deployed its own secure network over a VLAN where security officials can take remote tours of the campus, and the system has been used by NYPD to view the surrounding area in cases where criminal activity has taken place.

University officials are sold on campus security primarily because residence halls are always full whether school is in session or not. When university is out for the summer, high schoolers attend various activities and events hosted by the university. And, the university is no stranger to high-profile events, such as the 2003 Democratic Debates, held in the university's 750-seat theater.

"There were 10 candidates in this debate and we found the biggest problem we faced was with the media," said Vincent Beatty, University Director of Safety and Security in the Department of Administration. "The Pace Security department has all former NYPD officers, and we have a great working relationship with the NYPD."

New York based, Schonzeit feels that Idesco's strongest vertical is in higher education. In order to understand what technology is available to their growing portfolio of contracts, company officials attend multiple tradeshows and depend upon their suppliers to keep them up to speed on trends and technology.

"Security is a fast growing industry," Schonzeit said. "Our job is to separate the theoretical from real life, and what is reality from the hype. That's why we depend upon our suppliers, and why we have preferred products in all that we do. We do prefer to work on IP networked solutions, but we also understand if the end user wants to keep the existing legacy system in place. We honor that request, of course.

"Certainly, there is more bang for the buck using IP networked solu-



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tions. When the decision is left up to us regarding what equipment should be used, we pretty much decide what camera and VMS, for instance, we will use. We often work as the consultant and the system designer.”

Schonzeit also said there is no

one camera for every situation, but is pleased with the relationships the company has built over the years with numerous camera manufacturers. He is quick to say that he and his installation experts often talk to product manufacturers, offering

them suggestions to make upgrades. Field technicians also talk to the manufacturer, asking for ideas to make the project even better.

BUSINESS IS STRONG

Many businesses in the country are

finally bouncing back from the recession of 2008. Idesco weathered the storm pretty well. Schonzeit said they took a little bit of a hit, mainly because there were fewer new construction projects, but he said, “Security is almost a recession proof industry.”

“Our business has been very strong and is growing,” Schonzeit said. “What we are seeing now is that there are bigger and more projects being bid on. It is a good time to be in the security industry. We also see biometric offerings growing, but I don’t believe they will be a mainstream solution just yet.”

Idesco, much like any other security integrator, watches for bids and often gets referrals from pleased end users. One of their newest contracts is furnishing a security installation and a service contract for British Airlines at New York’s JFK International Airport.

“One thing we keep in the forefront are the needs of the customer,” Schonzeit said. “We want to be sure to handle areas of our expertise, and provide the customer with a professional experience.”

With the customer in mind, Idesco recently added Michael Perlow to its staff. Perlow didn’t stray far from the company because he had worked for Idesco before. He worked for a global security solutions provider for a while overseeing national sales, when Schonzeit called him and asked for a “cup of coffee.”

Their discussion meant something to Perlow, who accepted a new position as vice president of sales at Idesco. Ironically enough, one of his goals is to increase Idesco’s visibility in the market as a solutions provider that provides cloud-based solutions, service plans, well-trained technicians and an intimate relationship with clients. His goals are clear, meaning he wants to streamline the processes on the sales side, and raise profitability. His top goal is to build on maintenance contracts, serving the customer to the best of their ability.

CHANGES IN THE INDUSTRY

Perlow is a forward thinker. He clear-

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ly sees a path where customers can manage systems remotely, and include a cloud-based storage plan. His plans include having a heart-to-heart conversation with Idesco clients, showing them all the options that are available to them with new technology.

“Every company must have a strategic plan,” Perlow said. “Part of our strategic plan is to update our internal processes and finding better ways to be a strategic partner and trusted advisor to our clients.”

For Idesco, it’s all part of picking up the pace of today’s security world.

It all comes full circle back to Pace University, which is probably the most visible end user on Idesco’s books. Because of the university’s commitment to security, campus officials were able to offer their facilities to First Responders during the 9/11 attacks. They also were ready to help during the more recent Hurricane Sandy, where First Responders were able to rest after a long day’s work.

Pace University has established its own security approach.

The first approach is through the employment of a professional in-house security staff with many years of law enforcement and private security experience.

The second approach is through the use of a uniformed security guard company. Both are on hand 24-hours-a-day to provide professional support and security services. In addition, the university has developed a Security Awareness Program. Campus officials address various groups and use the Pace Intranet and school newspapers to send alerts, update information and furnish tips on safety and security.

With New York City as its playground, Idesco has a wealth of opportunities. The city is growing and construction is booming again. Security integrators in the city are able to pick up their pace. *DS*

Ralph C. Jensen is the editor-in-chief at Security Products magazine, and is the content director for the Security Division at 1105 Media Inc.