

REAL ESTATE WEEKLY

Vol. 51, No. 30

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2005

Building owners weigh costs and options the day after new security systems are installed

BY STEVEN RINDNER
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
KASTLE SYSTEMS

At a time when x-ray machines, metal detectors, flashing marble-encased turnstiles and retinal scanners are making their way into office building lobbies across the U.S., visitors might easily believe that building security is all about the technology.

But building owners will tell you that excellent security is about *managing* the technology — a vital, ongoing hands-on process that even the shiniest new bells and whistles can't replace.

Building owners have two primary goals for their security systems: protecting and enhancing the asset; attracting and retaining tenants. The challenge they face is to create and maintain a security program that achieves both those objectives without generating costs that offset the benefits.

The solution: Outsourcing — specifically, outsourcing to experts the operation of custom security systems.

Outsourcing isn't a new concept to owners, who look outside their firms for janitorial and cleaning service, HVAC operation, web hosting, elevator service and landscaping.

Outsourcing isn't even new in the security arena. Most owners already turn to consultants for advice, design and installation of security hardware and software.

But once the equipment and systems are up and running, consultants pack up and leave owners with enough system operations responsibilities to warrant full "in-house" departments.

With a new and expensive security system in place, property owners are left with only two options: run the system themselves or outsource.

Some owners choose to run the systems themselves, and establish new "cost centers" within their operations or each individual property to handle ongoing security system management. Responsibilities include perpetual program-



ming, operations, monitoring, administration, maintenance, and system changes — everything from the issuance of card keys and constant updating of tenant/building information, to the upgrade of equipment and programs.

The duties of this "new department" are vital. First, each facet mandates steady and direct tenant contact so it must be executed with precision and professionalism. Second, this work is absolutely necessary to protect the owner's investment in the security system and the property itself. Without comprehensive ongoing management, every security system — no matter how advanced the technology — will fail.

Left unmanaged, even a \$500,000 cutting edge security system with a promised lifespan of 10 years begins to deteriorate the day it's unveiled, and the system's longevity is severely compromised. Once the information and systems fall badly behind, tenant relations and capital budgets come under tremendous strain.

Some owners recognize the importance of system management and operations, so they take on the additional costs — and liabilities — by adding staff because they know the job has to get done just right.

But most property owners don't want to dilute their professional focus or their Net Operating Income. And for them, there's only one solution: Outsourcing the ongoing system management and operations to experienced professionals, specialists in the world of commercial real estate security and asset management. And that means turning to Kastle Systems, the only experienced security system management and operations provider in the country.

In the last six months, Kastle Systems has worked with an increasing number of building owners in New York, Washington, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Chicago to replace in-house security resources through outsourcing system operations to Kastle's team of professionals.

Across the board and across the country, office building owners report that by outsourcing the systems operation, they have reduced their overhead, have been able to focus exclusively on the business of buying and managing property (not security systems), and have improved tenant satisfaction.

Cost savings at individual properties through outsourcing operations to Kastle Systems start at \$100,000 in the very first year.

Another benefit, more difficult to quantify but equally valuable, is that tenants immediately report greater ease and comfort as they interact with the security system operations.

There's no question that security and security systems are top of mind for building owners nationwide. Tenants, visitors and investors demand excellent security programs and systems,

and landlords are becoming expert in the costs and challenges of providing the most effective solutions.

The next step is to embrace the familiar concept of outsourcing within the relatively new arena of building security.

This "new" idea — which Kastle has practiced for 33 years — is being embraced by building owners who understand the serious and expensive work of ongoing security system operations.

These owners know that bells and whistles may entertain an audience for a while — but the excellent, long-term delivery of every service requires substance and stability. That's why they're ringing bells for outsourcing and for Kastle Systems.

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