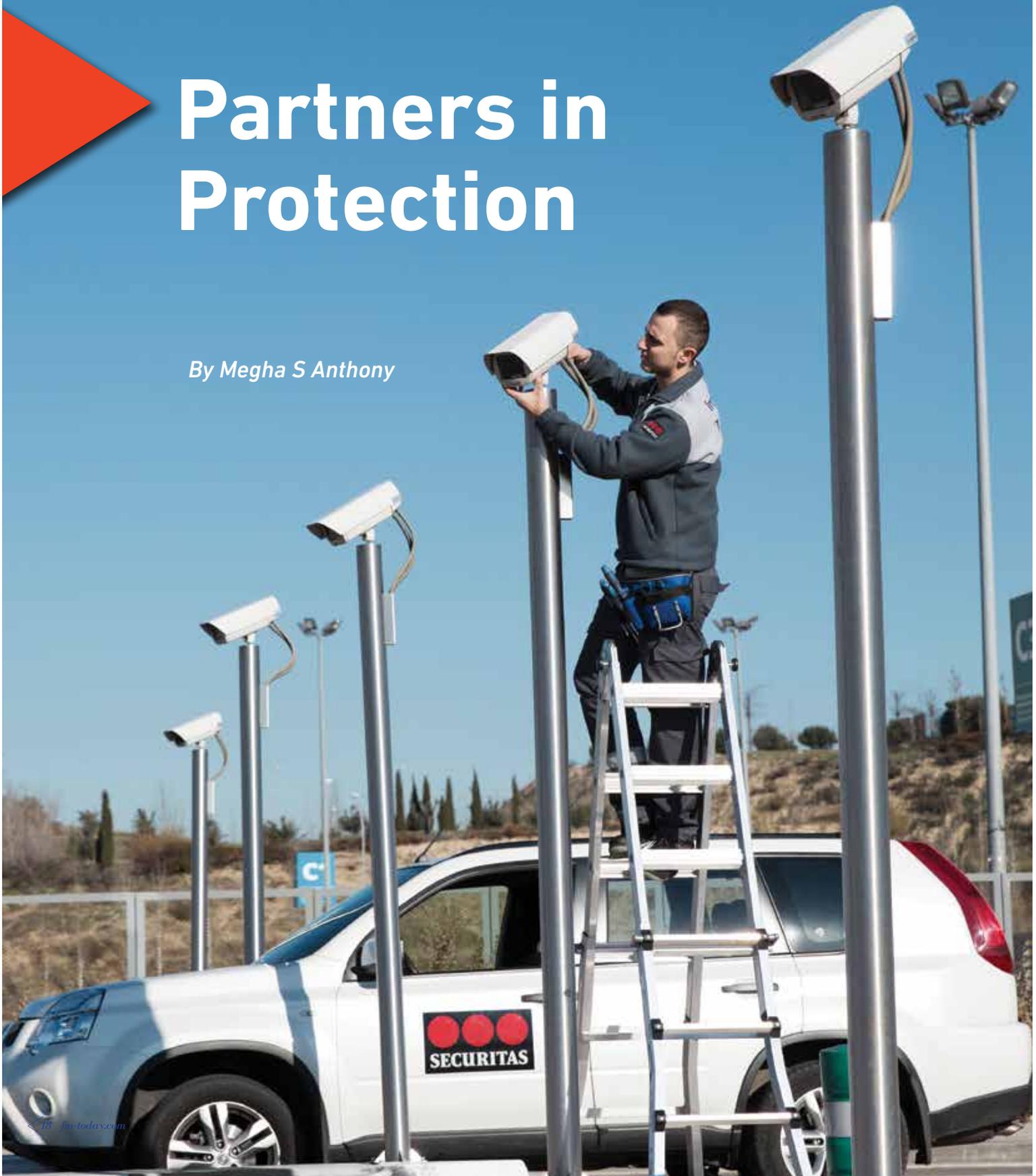




Partners in Protection

By Megha S Anthony



SECURITAS

From securing the premises of blue chip companies, banks, hotels, oil and gas facilities and shopping malls to protecting high net worth individuals, the Middle East's security services market is big business - particularly in rapidly growing markets, such as the UAE.

While a report by G4S predicted the Middle East security market to be worth more than US\$ 7 billion this year, another report by Frost and Sullivan stated that the Middle East's homeland security market will see a compound annual growth rate that is three times the global average and hit 34 billion dollars per year by 2020.

The FM Company's security arm has definitely garnered a lot of attention over the years and now with standards put in place the industry is experiencing a lot of growth in the region. This growth is driven primarily by economic diversification and massive scale-up in infrastructure projects; in addition to hosting mega-events such as the Dubai Expo 2020 in the United Arab Emirates and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

Evolution and changing perception

The growing infrastructure has increased the demand of security and made it a top priority as a service. With that also comes new plans and ideas on how to protect one's company and



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yourself. Like any other service, even security as a service has evolved and changed over the years. The threats and threat levels are continuously changing so the companies should find ways to adapt to the ever-changing environment. Different companies are now finding different ways to adapt to the changing environment.

At Securitas, UAE, the company provides specialized guarding, electronic security solutions, mobile services, monitoring, consulting, business intelligence and risk management services. The company is always looking for ways to match the unique security needs of their customers with the best solutions. Their security models have been designed with the optimum combination of labour and technology to provide the most comprehensive, cutting-edge solutions. Says Gaetan Desclee, the country president, Securitas UAE, "With security becoming more important amidst rising crime and terror reports, the need of the hour is to offer the most secure technology, customized and cost-effective services, and a greater focus on risk management and transparent, prompt reporting, something which Securitas offers with excellence." He goes on to add that security is becoming more of a combination of services and electronic solutions supported with detailed and real-time reporting. "The





customers' expectations are changing and they are demanding complete solutions supported by the adequate manpower," says Desclee.

Emrill too has established a solid reputation as one of the region's most effective providers of security. The company provides services to all sectors including hospitality, residential, and corporate. And they provide security management, supervision and guarding on a static or mobile basis for their clients. When it comes to how the security service has changed in the industry over the years, Alex Davies, Operations Director, from Emrill says, "Security services continue to evolve with the ever increasing demands of the region. At Emrill, we continue to raise the bar of our solutions and increase the use of technology in the deployment of our systems to meet and exceed the demands of our clients."

MAB Facilities Management provides security in Sharjah and Dubai as part of the TFM services. According to Ashok Mathew, Deputy General Manager, MAB, security service has been more of a guard service and not security. "Over the years electronic security has become a critical part of security with static manned security to operate and monitor the guard control activities. In this region with a lot of emphasis on

automation that has helped in solving many criminal acts it has been proven that electronic security with minimum manning is the way forward," he adds.

The security landscape has changed over the last decade with the industry shifting towards offering integrated solutions as opposed to standalone products. Following the initial consultation of the site to assess what type or level of security is needed for the customer. "Honeywell will provide them with a 360-degree recommendation on both a hardware and software solution, which will all work seamlessly together. This has allowed us to gain a competitive edge in an increasingly connected world. Our IP solutions provide real benefits and enable our customers to control their security and safety systems in real-time all at their fingertips," says Dr. Rida Hamza, Regional General Manager at Honeywell.

Hamza goes on to add, "The other area where security technology has changed is its shift from reactive systems that provide evidence once the incident has happened, to a more proactive system that helps predict and alert the user before their security parameter has been breached."

The perception of guarding has also changed in the region. Desclee observes

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that now many companies know the concept of "specialized guarding"-- a specially trained security guard performs services tailored according to the customer's business and needs, and they vary greatly. They may involve various types of access/exit control with or without technical support, or service-oriented services, for example, in public environments, or monitoring business-critical equipment.

"More and more companies understand the importance of properly trained guards. A professional security guard is actually the face of the company, the first person that customers and employees see when they walk in the door. Thus training is critical to ensure the security officers are prepared for their daily duties and, of course, unexpected challenges," adds Desclee.

Challenges

When it comes to delivering security services efficiently there are bound to be challenges. Mathew says that each Emirate has different requirements for security operations. "This unless centralized will be a challenge in terms of operations for e.g if a contract with a bank for all its Emirates is awarded, a company certified in Dubai may not be able to participate in other Emirates due to varied regulations. With the changing security scenario, new guidelines are included more frequently thereby leading to companies being challenged on adaptation and amendment to their operational procedures. Technology has advanced a lot to get better results on security leaving manpower only as operators of systems," adds Mathew.

Many like Desclee believes that in today's world, specialization is the key. At Securitas, that strategy is very clear: to integrate on-site, specialized guarding services with technology solutions to achieve a higher level of customer satisfaction through cost-efficiency and added value. "The major challenge is analyzing the environment thoroughly, understanding the customers' needs fully and delivering the best solution possible within the targeted budget," says Desclee.

Emrill strongly believes that security is the face of any organisation and the guards' first impression matters a lot. "Therefore, security staff must be approachable and alert to look-out for any suspicious activity," adds Davies. Providing a safe and secure environment for their clients is a top

priority and the biggest challenge in any organisation. "To provide this safe environment, we at Emrill ensure that the staff must go through a rigorous recruitment process and they even receive the highest training standards to meet the demands of such high profile roles," says Davies.

Skillset

With such demands in the market, the standards of security too have to be high. But with so much competition in the market there are a few key skill sets security personnel should have. Firstly, they should meet the standards set by Dubai Police but security goes much further than this. A customer focused and approachable manner are key attributes along with the ability to keep a calm head whilst under pressure. The ability to work as a team is key to collaborate with all parties including residents or tenants, management and other key departments such as MEP technicians.

"Emrill security personnel work closely with our other technical teams, for example, security patrols will identify and report areas of improvement or technical faults to the relevant departments in order to have them addressed and fixed as soon as possible," says Davies.

At the end of the day to have the right skill set, training is the key. "We believe in proper recruitment, extensive training, ongoing coaching, good remuneration and well fare. We strive to help our employees develop to their full potential in the security industry. We offer a wide range of training



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Emrill**

programs consist of mentoring, on-the-job training, classroom instruction, and e-learning to ensure our officers are knowledge leaders in the security industry," says Desclee.





New innovations

The ever-evolving security market embraces new solutions every day. From CCTV cameras, alarm systems, Drones, to GPS security devices, innovations in the market have seen a huge leap recently in development with no sign of slowing down.

“At Honeywell we are continuously coming out with more integrated products that connect not only security systems, but all the various elements of a building, factory or home’s different devices to become synchronized and accessible from one point,” says Hamza.

“We have launched a number of key products in the market that do just that. With the new Lynx Touch, for example, it has a home controller with a touch-screen display. This controls the security system, thermostats, lighting controls, window shades, wireless locks and various other devices. We will also be launching the Total Connect Remote Service in the Middle East, allowing homeowners and businesses to connect to their home or office through their tablet or other smart devices. This will give them the ability to access cameras in their house or office and keep them connected any place any time. With countries like the United Arab Emirates looking to continually build on the goal to build a smart city, Honeywell products are playing a vital role to make it a reality for every person in the Middle East,” adds Hamza.

With companies spoilt for choice in the market, each one picks their products according to the requirement. Within Emrill, they have deployed smartphones to security personnel with bespoke software which enables them to monitor the effectiveness of patrols, increase accuracy and timeliness of security reporting, whilst giving control rooms and supervision the ability to instantly hear and see what a security officer can see on ground through closed protocol systems. “These key systems run in parallel to the ever increasing effectiveness of CCTV and alarm systems,” says Davies.

According to Desclee, video surveillance is still the most popular solution since it has the benefit of acting as a deterrent as well as keeping a log of recorded surveillance. “No need to say the components are getting better each day,

we see more and more high definition cameras, smart recorders, very efficient compression technologies and in many cases systems equipped with certain video intelligence features. Access control solutions supported with cutting edge readers and credentials are highly sought after. Biometric readers are more commonly used since they provide a more secure way of identification,” adds Desclee.

Technology Advancements vs Diminishing Manpower

As technology continues to advance, the question arises whether technical security will diminish manpower? There is a lot of mixed reaction to

staff monitoring different cameras on a screen, as the system will identify potential risks and flag them on the screen instantaneously. This will enable staff to focus on critical activities such as on the ground support and make an appropriate judgment and take action, rather than a large number of personnel having to remain in a CCTV control room to monitor activities,” adds Hamza.

Adds Hamza, “Other than the security staff, the new systems in place help maintenance programs run more effectively, with more reliable products that are easy to install and maintain. This helps maintenance teams better utilize their time. Some systems only



this. Says Mathew, “Most manpower securities are just posted to observe and support in terms of emergencies while technology has been leading in providing security across businesses, homes etc. Training provided to security are to respond to fire-related incidents, elevator entrapments, gate security to allow access and monitoring events. However, technology has been more effective in controlling and capturing events etc. Manpower will be required to oversee and operate security systems while continuing to provide support in emergencies besides being guards.”

Advancements in technology provide opportunities to better utilize resource and allow them to focus on other productive tasks. Hamza mentions that security solutions are shifting to be more proactive, identifying potential risks automatically without human input. “What this means is that you will no longer need a large amount of

require one person to install them and means that a specialist engineer only needs to check once on the installation.”

Many feel that whilst technology can increase the effectiveness of security there is no replacement for highly trained security personnel throughout a facility. “Optimization through security solution means that we can reduce the manpower and guarantee the same or higher level of security for less money. In short, we can do better with less. However specialized and skilled manpower will always be the core of a security program,” says Desclee.

Davies adds, “In addition, technology cannot replace the key role security has in an integrated facilities management offering; a friendly face and a helping hand in time of need such as first aid provision or conducting an evacuation of the building occupants.” ■