

Some 25 million visitors are expected at the Expo



PREPARING FOR DUBAI EXPO 2020

Lee Copland Managing Director Maxxess EMEA, examines the more ambitious approach to tech being adopted

If Dubai succeeds in its ambition to attract 25 million visitors for next year's Expo 2020, then its already highly developed hotel sector will play a key role. World Expos are now held every five years and are, of course, an opportunity for host countries to take centre-stage for a few months.

For some it works – Milan's Expo 2015 was widely seen as an over-hyped disappointment but Shanghai in 2010 attracted record visitor numbers and is held up as a success. Dubai has invested heavily, determined to follow the latter, not the former. Just as with the Olympics, the prize is an economic boost and a chance for national re-branding – not just during the event itself, but also the legacy that follows.

The hospitality sector will be key. Hotels are being looked to not just provide accommodation, but to contribute to positive visitor impressions – the aim is to impress. In the security arena some interesting examples are emerging of integrated technology being used to link front and back-of-house functions, to enable smoother and – it is hoped – more impressive customer service.

For example, Bluewaters Island (an ambitious USD\$1.6-billion project developed by Meraas Holdings,) will be notable for its use of some of the most advanced, integrated security and operations management platforms yet

developed. Among other areas, these are protecting the new landmark Caesars hotel complex, associated retail outlets, and ongoing engineering and construction operations.

The operating company wanted to find the most efficient way to integrate all major security, safety and building management functions, streamlining what is expected to become a very large system. In other words, it wanted a solution combining front and back-of-house operations, giving the ability to manage, organise, monitor and control devices from a single platform. It also wanted to analyse the data provided to prevent crime, quickly identify suspects and help preserve security and public order.

Maxxess eFusion was chosen because of its ready compatibility with a wide choice of surveillance, intruder, access and fire detection systems enabled a highly efficient level of integration. The first phase, now completed by several integrators including IT and security specialist company Omnix International, ties together hotel door access, intercom, surveillance, ID badging and building management systems.

The solution includes full integration with an AssaAbley Vingcard system to secure more than 700 doors and it allows a unified system approach, with a single enrolment protocol for both front and back-of-house access. The hotel

benefits from centralised management of room safes, mini-bars and wardrobes and control of all alarm transactions.

Integration with Zenitel Intercom enables video and transaction data to be called up automatically in the control room as soon as any user presses a call button. For maximum efficiency, the system allows the operator to unlock doors and communicate with the user remotely, with full activity logs kept for audit.

Surveillance is integrated too, with SeeTec VMS and NVRs allowing seamless control of over 1,800 high-definition Hikvision and Hanwha cameras. A mixture of indoor and outdoor bullets and domes feature IR and true-WDR, to allow operation in all lighting conditions, and cameras link to the door access system, with video pop-up triggered by pre-defined events. The technology also gives operators complete PTZ control, playback and video functionality all from a single platform.

This solution was chosen by Bluewaters instead of a more costly PSIM route because it uses versatile, open-technology software not requiring bespoke integration, says Maxxess, adding that the eFusion platform will be fully scalable as needs change the future.

If this is the case it will deliver the kind of legacy benefit that, on a much larger scale, the Dubai authorities are looking to gain from their infrastructure investments for Expo 2020 ●