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Expert Opinion: Service

An Interview with Michael Rosa

What would you do if your security system stopped working today? Seems like a simple question, right? But do you actually know the answer?

Unfortunately, many organizations have not thought about the answer to that question. Many do not think about servicing their security system until the worst happens: their system stops working.

Service is, or at least should be, something you think about from the moment your system is installed. What should you do if something fails? Who should you call to fix it? How will it impact your business? What is your emergency back-up plan in case a system critical function fails? And what are you doing to ensure system critical functions do not fail? Having the answers to these types of questions prepared before an incident happens is a part of being proactive about your system's service, instead of relying on a reactive approach to fixing what's wrong only when it fails.

At ASG, we frequently receive questions from our clients asking how they can minimize downtime and liability when their security system fails. The answer is simple, service your system before it fails. We call this approach "Proactive Service." To help our clients understand the value of proactive service, we conducted an interview with Michael Rosa, ASG's Director of Operations and unofficial Service Expert. Here is his Expert Opinion when it comes to security system service.

ASG: What exactly is 'proactive service'?

Rosa: What we call 'proactive service', some people might call 'preventative maintenance.' But we feel there is more to it than just that. Proactive service is about your business continuity. It is about the sustainability of what you planned for and purchased. It is about professional leadership and accountability. Our clients need to establish a strategic position within their industry and we give them the ability to establish a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to what has widely become a 'break and hope to fix' methodology to service.

ASG: What is 'break – fix' and why do organizations view service that way?

Rosa: 'Break – fix' is an approach to service that is just like it sounds, you wait for your system to fail and then hope to fix it. This tends to occur because the security industry has had difficulty quantifying the value of a proactive approach to service in the past. No other department within a well run organization would treat their mission critical systems this way.

ASG: How would you quantify the value of a proactive approach?

Rosa: There are many ways you can quantify the value of a proactive approach to service.

One way is to look at the amount invested in the system over its lifetime. In many cases, our clients have spent \$1,000,000 or more on a solution that has a life cycle of about 5-10 years before becoming obsolete or irreparably breaking down. Yet for an

Continued on reverse

About Michael Rosa

With over 30 years of experience in the Security Industry, Rosa has been involved in security from almost every angle. From Service Technician to System Engineer to Operations Manager, Rosa has accumulated a vast amount of knowledge and experience which he uses to ensure the continued success of ASG's Proactive Service and Emergency Service Departments.





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additional investment, over time, of about 20-40%, existing systems could have been maintained and gradually improved using new technology in order to increase the system's life cycle to 15-20 years.

Another way to quantify value is to measure the performance of your system. In most existing systems, 15-30% of the system is not performing up to the minimum standards of the original design intent. By proactively monitoring and servicing your system, you can ensure that 100% of your system meets your current standards.

Finally, measuring the impact of system inoperability on the organization's employees, clients, and resources, not to mention the liability risk factors involved in a gap in service all provide enough ROI to more than validate a proactive approach to service.

ASG: If that is true, then integrators must normally be focused on service, right?

Rosa: The answer, unfortunately is no. Traditionally, security integrators are either unable or unwilling to make the business case for proactive service. Who wants to fix things when you can sell a new system? Think 'manufactured obsolescence.' What they don't understand is that by managing the sustainability of a security solution you are able to provide value to your clients beyond that of a 'system installer.' The idea that you must strive to maximize the value of your client's solution is critical to becoming their trusted security advisor. At ASG, our entire Path to Value methodology centers around maximizing that value to become your trusted security advisor.

ASG: How do you know your proactive service approach is working?

Rosa: We have integrated a number of technology elements into our proactive service toolbox that allow us, and our clients to know exactly how their systems and their service are working. We have created a consistent methodology around servicing

each element in a security system. We are able to record the design intent for each device, document it, audit its performance, and then aggregate all of the information into an electronic report that allows the client to know exactly how their system is performing at any given time.

ASG: Why are you so passionate about Service?

Rosa: ASG has given me an opportunity to lead the industry to a higher level of accountability. Our corporate culture is to strive to advance the security industry, not just reside in it. I want service to be one of our key differentiators. But even more, I want it to be a key differentiator for our clients as they move security into the board room of their organization.

ASG: What advice would you give to someone who wants to begin implementing a proactive approach to service right away?

The first step to correcting a problem is to identify that problem in the first place. What you need to do is sit down with your Security Integrator and find out exactly what your system is doing. An initial inspection and device testing is a good place to start. Once you know exactly what you have, how it's functioning, and what its purpose is, you have the ammunition you need to put together a reliable, proactive service plan. This plan will give you the ability to schedule regular system inspections and maintenance to ensure that each device is functioning at the minimum standards necessary to fulfill its function. These inspections allow you to repair or replace any device that is not performing up to those standards before it fails.

Of course, you could just do it the easy way, call ASG and let us do it all for you.

About ASG

Aronson Security Group (ASG) is the premier independent integrator of enterprise security solutions. Building on a strong reputation for engineering and service for over 45 years, ASG provides engineering excellence, world-class service, and security expertise to premier regional and national organizations.