

Dealer of the Year Employs a Multi-Faceted Approach

An effective false alarm program requires cooperation from every department in a company, says Pam Petrow, senior vice president for Vector Security, which has several offices nationwide and was named *SDM's* 2003 Dealer of the Year. "We had commitment from the top down and the program involved everyone from central station operators to senior management."

Vector's information technology department was enlisted to write an application that provides real-time statistics about false alarms by account. Service technicians were queried about specific types of equipment they felt were most false alarm-prone and, based on that, were provided with a list of devices that were to be replaced on every service call. And central station personnel took on the task of implementing second-call verification. "For the past year-and-a-half, customers were required to go on second call verification unless there were extenuating circumstances that were approved," Petrow notes.

The new system has reduced dispatches dramatically. Forty-nine percent of alarm signals that would have generated a dispatch under

Vector Security created a dedicated team to focus on its worst false alarm offenders.

the old system, in which only the premises was called, no longer result in a dispatch. By calling a second number – such as the owner's cell phone – central station personnel often are able to determine that an alarm was tripped by accident.

Disappearing Dispatches

	Jun-03	Jul-03	Aug-03	Sep-03	Oct-03	Nov-03	Dec-03	Jan-04	Feb-04
■ Disp = 5+	279	351	341	308	296	335	339	317	229
■ Disp = 4	284	289	293	324	263	314	280	263	203
■ Disp = 3	669	706	762	706	608	730	655	677	497
■ Disp = 2	1955	2162	2365	2189	2043	2056	1865	1824	1611
■ Disp = 1	8859	9867	9857	10029	9500	9279	8738	8131	7357

Source: Vector Security Inc.

The figures above represent the number of customers who have experienced a number of dispatches throughout the months indicated. Vector has been able to reduce their dispatches by over 16 percent.

Vector also created a false alarm team charged with calling people who have had false alarms. "They started with the biggest offenders and worked down the list," Petrow says. Common solutions include extending the exit delay time on a door, adjusting the opening schedules for commercial accounts and ensuring that cleaning companies are properly trained.

"The coordinators have enough authority to make sure the problem is resolved," Petrow says. For example, a coordinator could make sure that a service call to resolve a false alarm problem receives priority. Every branch has at least one false alarm coordinator.



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