



4 Reasons Restaurants Are Implementing Video Monitoring

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“Video monitoring... provides quick, around-the-clock access to restaurants that leads to increased efficiency and effectiveness.”

The chorus of Rockwell’s lone hit provided a bit of foreboding back in the 1980s. “I always feel like somebody’s watching me” isn’t a sense, but a reality in many of today’s restaurants.

Outfitted with an array of cameras – most obvious and some inconspicuous – video technology is giving companies eyes on their facilities to ensure smooth functionality, verify operational compliance and even nab wrongdoers.

Video monitoring has proven to be a game-changer, companies that deploy camera systems say. It provides quick, around-the-clock access to restaurants that leads to increased efficiency and effectiveness.

“Managers and owners can’t always be in their restaurants physically, especially when they have multiple locations over a wide footprint,” said Matthew Umscheid, chief executive officer for Envysion, a leading provider of video monitoring solutions. “Video capabilities offer invaluable evidence of everything unfolding in a restaurant to illustrate the good that takes place every day and identify opportunities for improvement.”

Here are four reasons restaurants are implementing video monitoring.



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Loss prevention and asset protection

Theft directly contributes to one in five restaurants failing, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Both internal and external theft are major concerns for operators, costing the industry some \$50 billion in losses annually.

Video cameras serve as a gateway to seeing nearly any metric of a business – for any day and for any time of day. They’re in place as much to prevent loss as they are to protect assets.

With restaurants constantly working to combat intentional and unintentional loss, sophisticated monitoring technology pairs high-definition visuals with register inputs to enable managers to witness transactions as if they were standing alongside a particular employee.

Solutions such as those by Envysion enable users to quickly search and flag footage from the start of their video system deployment, as oftentimes loss stems from actions over an extended period of time. In fact, operators can find exact interactions with video motion search or filter recorded video by transaction, location, day and time. They can zoom in on certain areas within a specific camera’s viewing range, listen to audio and easily share video, reports and cases with fellow managers and company leaders.

The system produces daily and weekly reports that summarize transaction data to display basic profit and loss, review discount redemptions and show refunds across an entire enterprise, per location and per specific employees. And when questionable activity surfaces, providers such as Envysion afford their video clients to engage auditors to pore through their monitoring files to identify fraudulent activities, mitigate future loss and allow owners, general managers and district managers to focus on other aspects of their operations.

“It used to be that if we detected what we thought was theft, we would have to get in the car, drive to the location and go into the office, hoping that store had a good video system,” said Dan Lieberman, director of loss prevention for Southeast QSR, which operates 250 Taco Bells across the Southeastern United States. “We’d have to sit in the restaurant office looking at video for hours and hours in front of the people we’re investigating. Now, I can do that at my desk in my office in a fraction of the time with no travel and no impact to business.”

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Safety and security

Although crime rates have fallen across the United States, break-ins at small businesses – including restaurants – have increased in some cities. In Houston, for instance, burglaries are up 19% since March.

When a string of overnight burglaries wrought havoc on several restaurants in that city this summer, with the savvy offenders breaking in undetected by somehow avoiding monitoring sensors, managers turned to their video systems to shut down the thefts. They tapped into simultaneous live feeds across multiple stores during the early morning hours, and when they saw the perpetrators gaining entry, they phoned authorities, who caught them in the act.

Cameras provide access to monitor the interior and exterior of restaurants, allowing managers to see when wrongdoing is taking place – whether from intruders, staff members or customers.

Captured video provides concrete evidence that has been used in terminations, to ensure employees are practicing protocols that keep them and the restaurant safe, refute accusations of visitor injury and in criminal cases. Companies that use monitors say they even work periodically with law enforcement, providing them video surveillance of wanted suspects and missing persons.



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“A managed video solution is essential to our daily lives, particularly in businesses that are susceptible to lawsuits and potentially frivolous claims of all types,” said Toyin Fawehinmi, director of loss prevention for Mitra QSR. “It’s always smart to have them in your business.”

Operational excellence

No matter the effectiveness or efficiency of a restaurant, there always are opportunities for improvement. Video monitoring positions leadership to scrutinize every part of an operation, from its smallest to its largest parts.

Auditing capabilities as part of monitoring packages make evaluating restaurants for compliance and consistency easy, but also provide a platform to identify exceptions and incidents that can be used later coaching and follow-ups with staff members.

Those capabilities are particularly critical for restaurants of all types that have specific, proven ways of doing business. And leaders want to ensure all workers follow those practices.

After providing training to staff, managers (including those at higher levels than the store leaders) can watch to see if their workers are practicing what they’re taught. When certain workers are not, they can be coached or offered additional training. When a store or multiple locations isn’t adhering to prescribed methods, leaders can delve deeper to pinpoint other potential problems not resulting from training.

A single slip or fall, harassment case, worker’s comp case or break-in can cost the owner multiple thousands of dollars. Video can be used as concrete evidence in criminal cases by clipping, saving and sharing surveillance footage.

Because cases typically are difficult to prove on eyewitness testimony alone, video evidence can lead to quicker resolutions and save thousands of dollars in court and litigation fees.

Health and hygiene

In the age of COVID-19, states across the country have issued a flurry of mandates requiring restaurants to follow in order to reopen and, most importantly, stay open. Those orders include social distancing among customers and staff, the wearing of masks for patrons and workers and limited occupancy.

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Monitoring systems enable operators to verify – at any point during the day – that those procedures are being followed. When they are not, managers can take immediate action to ensure compliance.

In fact, a recent poll of QSR LP leaders showed that 89% of respondents said their top concerns post-COVID are health and safety among their employees and customers.

“This is a high-energy business, and with video you don’t have to question whether something happened,” Lieberman said. “You have the ability to quickly show pictures and video, and it’s a five-minute conversation. You don’t have to do lots of research. You can talk with staff about the consequences and correct the activity, rather than have a lengthy investigation.”

ABOUT THE SPONSOR:

Envysion® is the authority in managed video solutions for restaurants and retailers. We have transformed video surveillance into a strategic operational management tool by integrating video, audio and data from POS and other business systems. Its managed video solution provides access to live and recorded video across multiple locations, streamlines loss prevention investigations, and facilitates convenient operational audits – all via one robust platform. Envysion protects your business and employees by using video to reduce loss, mitigate risk, transform your operating culture, secure your brand promise, reduce employee turnover, and empower your staff with actionable information to drive better management decisions.

The Envysion logo, featuring the word "Envysion" in a dark grey sans-serif font, with a small orange dot above the 'y' and a registered trademark symbol (®) to the upper right.