

Oil and Gas Company Creates Global Roadmap for Physical Security

Customer Case Study



Ferguson Group Ltd builds safer workplace on secure network with video and access control solutions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Ferguson Group Ltd

Industry: Oil and Gas

Location: Kintore, Aberdeenshire, Scotland

Number of Employees: 186

Challenge:

- Standardize physical security across growing number of bases worldwide
- Provide day-and-night IP-based surveillance of high-value equipment
- Maintain competitive advantage by keeping pace with industry security standards

Solution:

- Cisco Video Surveillance Manager records live, high-quality footage of its facility
- Cisco Physical Access Gateways provide IP-connected door locks and readers
- Cisco Services offer anytime access to enterprise-level support

Results:

- Helped enable management to access and review footage from mobile devices
- Helped keep employees safe
- Worked with valued Cisco partner to maximize investment in physical security

Challenge

Founded more than 35 years ago in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, Ferguson Group Ltd is one of the world's leading suppliers of containers, accommodations, and workspace modules for the offshore energy industry. In recent years, the company has expanded its global reach, with major operations in the United Kingdom, Norway, Australia, United Arab Emirates, and Singapore. Ferguson Group maintains its competitive edge with a steadfast commitment to creating safe, innovative, high-quality products, all delivered with the highest level of customer service.

These days, the company is growing faster than ever. Recent months have brought new operational bases in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, with planning underway on a base in Karratha, Western Australia. "When we first began expanding internationally, we had not thought too much about how best to standardize technology across all of our bases," says Hayley Yule, group marketing manager at Ferguson Group. "But as a fair proportion of bases were located in more remote places, the issue of standardization has become more important. Our colleagues in Australia don't want to be operating in isolation, we want to make sure that everyone on our global team has a common set of high standards across all areas of the business."

Ferguson Group is concerned about the standardization of physical security across its global bases, particularly for the provision of day-and-night digital surveillance on the large, valuable equipment in its ports and storage yards. "For years, our headquarters in Scotland relied on an analog video security system," says Graham Cowperthwaite, director of operations at Ferguson Group. "That system wasn't meeting our needs in terms of image quality and remote accessibility. For example, our board members are often travelling between bases, and want to have the ability to check back on facilities from any networked location, even from an iPad. We simply couldn't do that with an analog system. The Ferguson Group has always prided itself on a commitment to high-end technology, and that commitment becomes especially important in such a competitive space. To stay relevant, we simply must aspire to exceed the industry standard in terms of technology and security."



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Graham Cowperthwaite
Director of operations
Ferguson Group Ltd

Solution

In switching from an analog security system to an IP-based solution, the Ferguson Group team thought far beyond cameras and door hardware. They also needed to consider the security and reliability of the network on which camera images and access history would be transmitted and stored. “We looked at other physical security offerings on the market, but nothing came close to Cisco in terms of comprehensiveness,” says Graham Cowperthwaite. “Only Cisco could provide us with a total combination of Cisco IP video cameras, door readers, firewalls, and routers, all available globally with the highest levels of vendor support. We were already a Cisco house in terms of our network infrastructure, and the interoperability of these solutions fit in perfectly with our goals for standardization.”

Ferguson Group now relies on the Cisco® Video Surveillance Manager to monitor its entire facility in Aberdeenshire, including doors, buildings, and the many valuable assets in the company’s storage yard. Supervisors on the Ferguson network can access live, high-quality footage on a laptop or mobile device. They can even review recorded footage as necessary. Cisco Physical Access Gateways provide IP-connected door locks and readers throughout the facility, helping enable supervisors to review employees’ access records on demand through the Cisco Physical Access Manager. The backbone of Ferguson’s physical security system is a centralized desktop infrastructure using Cisco Desktop Virtualization with VMware (VXI), all running on the Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS®).

Mobile capabilities were an especially important consideration. Ferguson Group is one of the world’s first oil and gas companies to standardize all laptops and mobile devices on Apple products, and many employees do a great deal of day-to-day work on iPhones and iPads. “Our colleagues based in Dubai and Abu Dhabi cover an extraordinarily large area, including Brunei, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan,” says Hayley Yule. “They need to have access to our servers and documentation directly from their iPads, and it all needs to be as secure as possible.”

To take full advantage of the solutions and services available from Cisco, Ferguson Group worked closely with its longtime Cisco Select Certified Partner, Clark Integrated Technologies (CIT). That company leverages the Cisco SMARTnet® Service for flexible hardware coverage and anytime access to the Worldwide Technical Assistance Center (TAC). Meanwhile, Cisco OnPlus™ Service helps CIT remotely monitor, manage, and maintain globally distributed networks for medium-sized businesses such as Ferguson Group. “Our relationship with Ferguson Group has evolved over the years from simple break-fix support to fully managed services,” says Austen Clark, sales director at CIT. “We’ve worked collaboratively to become more proactive than reactive, and we have a detailed roadmap in place for future growth requirements.”

Results

With IP-based security cameras and swipe-card entry systems in place at Ferguson Group’s headquarters, management enjoys better peace of mind. “Our board of directors spend time on the road and they like to feel connected to headquarters, checking on our day-to-day progress in the storage yards. Having access to our Cisco IP cameras, to view both live and recorded footage via Cisco Video Surveillance Manager, gives the board an enormous amount of comfort.”

Better yet, the Cisco solution helps enable managers to keep employees and contractors safe while holding them more accountable. “In the event of any adverse circumstance, such as a break-in or an accident, we now have footage that our

leadership team can review from anywhere on a tested and reliable network,” says Donnelly. “Shortly after the implementation, we noticed that our security contractors were neglecting to check our facility on a regular basis as they’d agreed to do. We were able to challenge them with clear evidence that they weren’t meeting their obligations. That’s just one example of how we can leverage video surveillance technology for greater accountability across our organization.”

By working closely with CIT to plan and implement a physical security solution, Ferguson Group gained access to technologies and services that otherwise might be unavailable to a medium-sized business. “We consider CIT part of our core team,” says Graham Cowperthwaite. “They’ve provided critical guidance on the types of technologies we should use, and they’ve connected us to Cisco Services so that we can benefit from the same resources as any large enterprise. That level of collaboration with a first-rate systems integrator enables us to focus more time and energy on our core business, and worry less about IT and security issues.”

Next Steps

Ferguson Group is ready to expand its Cisco Physical Security solution from Aberdeenshire to the rest of the company’s bases around the globe. “We’ve had a very successful pilot here in Scotland,” says Hayley Yule. “Now it’s a matter of bringing those benefits to the Middle East, Australia, and so on. Once that’s complete, an employee will be able to travel from our offices here in the U.K., fly to any of our bases around the globe, and access local Ferguson Group offices with a simple swipe of his or her card. We’ll have a clear record of everyone’s whereabouts, all stored securely and accessible remotely. CIT will be with us every step of the way to make that goal a reality. And best of all, the whole system will be supported by the strength of the Cisco network.”

For More Information

- To read more about Cisco Physical Security Solutions, go to: www.cisco.com/go/physec.
- To find out more about Cisco Services, visit: www.cisco.com/go/smallbusiness.

Cisco Services

- Cisco SMARTnet
- Cisco OnPlus

Cisco Products

- Cisco Video Surveillance Manager 6.3.1
- Cisco Video Surveillance IP Cameras
- Cisco Physical Access Gateways
- Cisco Desktop Virtualization with VMware (VXI)
- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)



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