

SYKES

Securing 72 global offices with one unified view



Industry
Enterprise

Location
Tampa, Florida, United States

Products
Security Center, Synergis,
Omnicast, Streamvault, ClearID,
Plan Manager

Partners
GC&E Systems Group, Microsoft,
Mercury Security, Vanderbilt
Industries



SYKES standardizes on Security Center Synergis access control and upgrades corporate security across all worldwide locations

SYKES was founded in 1977 with a desire to help other people. Over 40 years later, the company has become a leading provider of business process outsourcing and IT support services. With headquarters in Tampa, Florida, United States, the organization now serves some of the world's largest public companies from 72 locations around the globe. Though SYKES has expanded its international reach and service portfolio over the years, the company's core purpose remains true in everything they do—'We help people, one caring interaction at a time.'

The challenges of securing a global organization

Securing a large globally distributed organization comes with unique challenges. SYKES has over 55,000 employees worldwide and effectively managing the changes in the workforce is critical to its security operations.

The problem was that each office had an independent access control system. While juggling many tasks, local badge custodians were responsible for removing or updating access rights as soon as employees left the company, were terminated or transferred to new offices. For the physical security team at SYKES, also known as the Agile Team, it became difficult to oversee this process and ensure all protocols were being handled promptly across their global operations.

Another big challenge for the Agile Team was handling scheduled maintenance for their stand-alone access control systems. There was no way to streamline the process since all updates and upgrades needed to happen one system at a time. Not only did this drain resources on the Agile Team, but renewing the individual maintenance agreements became very time-consuming and costly.

To remedy these issues, the Agile Team wanted to upgrade and standardize the access control technology across all SYKES locations. They also saw an opportunity to centralize security operations, and leverage cloud capabilities to make it happen. This would help them significantly reduce the costs associated with purchasing, storing, and maintaining server equipment.

Security Center Synergis saves SYKES over \$680,000 USD in upgrade costs

After consulting with their long-time security integrator, GC&E Systems Group, the Agile Team at SYKES felt confident moving forward with the Genetec Security Center platform. Not only could the platform run in a Microsoft Azure cloud environment, but the Security Center Synergis access control system provided an easy migration path to transitioning all their independent systems into one centralized solution. This was enabled by the Synergis Cloud Link, an intelligent appliance that supports door control

hardware and electronic locks from leading vendors and facilitates cloud connectivity.

According to Christopher Slone, Director, Global Security Cyber Operations at SYKES, “In migrating to the Genetec Security Center platform, we have been able to save over \$680,000 USD in hardware costs. That’s because the Security Center Synergis™ system allowed us to reuse all our existing door controllers, readers, wiring, and power supplies from our legacy access control systems.”

Managing it all from a centralized and unified security platform

Today, the Genetec Security Center platform has been installed at 48 SYKES locations across North America, Latin America, Asia Pacific, and the EMEA. Globally, the SYKES team is using the Security Center Synergis system to manage over 2,200 doors. At the end of the project, they’ll have upwards of 2,800 doors within the unified security platform.

The SYKES team has also been able to quickly deploy the Security Center Omnicast™ video system across a few key corporate offices using 14 Genetec Streamvault™ appliances. These pre-loaded, ready-deploy infrastructure solutions facilitated the migration of over 530 cameras into the Security Center platform.

“We’re operating the whole Genetec platform within the Microsoft Azure cloud environment, so there’s no physical hardware to deal with. And when it comes to the Streamvault appliances, what we really appreciate is that they are pre-hardened to meet cybersecurity best practices. Traditional DVRs that are sitting in an office have inherent vulnerabilities. With Streamvault, we know we’re protected against threats and that’s one less thing that our team has to worry about.”

Using the unified security platform, the SYKES team has set up a Global Security Operations Center (GSOC) in APAC which is manned 24/7. If there’s ever an access denied event, a door held open for too long, or another alarm, the GSOC operators are the first line of defense for all SYKES offices. They can click on the event in Security Center to see cardholder information and associated video. If something looks suspicious or requires more investigation, the operator will forward the event to the Agile Team.

“Since standardizing on Security Center, we have really been able to maximize our strengths and resources. The employees on our Agile Team are located in different regions around the world, but everyone can investigate alarms or events, troubleshoot issues with the system, do custom programming with the software development kit (SDK), and handle maintenance all within one intuitive interface,” said Slone.

Streamlining the upgrade with Genetec experts and an import tool

For any global enterprise, migrating to a new access control solution can drum up big concerns. For SYKES, it was no different. According to Slone, “When you’re moving to a new



access control system, your biggest fear is that something’s going to go wrong. Perhaps the doors might lock and people can’t get out of the building. Or maybe people can’t get in the building and they’re unable to support our clients. What made our entire team feel comfortable about this transition was getting the technical certification training from Genetec. Apart from the first two locations, we’re doing all the migrations, support, and maintenance in-house.”

With over 55,000 employees and thousands of contractors and visitors, the SYKES team had a database of over 70,000 cardholders to bring into the new system. These were all coming from different access control solutions which varying cardholder formats and information. With help from Genetec experts and the Security Center import tool, the Agile Team streamlined the whole process.

“The first thing we did was contract the Genetec Professional Services team to do an SQL database migration from one of our existing access control systems into Security Center. They also helped us create some custom card formats so that we could easily transition some cardholder information right into the Genetec platform,” explained Slone.

The SYKES team also had the Genetec professional services group help them bring pre-existing door schedules for certain locations into the platform. This made the transition to the new Security Center system almost seamless.

“The Security Center import tool was extremely effective for our in-house team too,” continued Slone. We started by extracting a CSV file from another old access control system which included the person’s first name, last name, badge number, and access rights. We did a little bit of clean-up in the CSV file, but the import tool handled the rest by bringing that data into the Genetec platform. It matched up our cardholders with the Active Directory accounts, and everything was synched up. The best part about the import tool was that it removed a lot of the manual effort that my team would have had to do and saved us so much time.”

Automating cardholder rights with Active Directory integration

While the upgrade is still underway, the Agile Team at SYKES is already seeing the benefits of Security Center. Now when employees leave the company or are terminated, the platform will immediately de-active their access control credentials. This is all automated through the Active Directory integration feature within Security Center.

“Provisioning, de-provisioning, and transferring cardholder access rights has gone from being a full-time job to just a secondary duty. Now, when someone is hired and their information is added to our HR system, a user profile is automatically created in Microsoft Active Directory. Since it’s all synced, the Genetec platform will automatically receive that information and create a new cardholder account with all pertinent information and access control rights. Now, our badge custodians only have to take the person’s picture, assign, and print the credentials, and hand it to them. The Active Directory integration within Security Center automates everything else,” said Slone.

While the time-savings is one huge advantage for the team, there’s also little room for human error. The Agile Team knows that security policies are being enforced, no matter what happens across its global locations. More than that, as a publicly-traded company with Global 2000 clients, SYKES is in a better position to adhere to compliance standards such as the Sarbanes Oxley Act, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DDS). These standards mandate stringent auditing processes, restricted access to cardholder data, the timely removal of access rights after termination, and other critical cyber and physical security requirements.

“It’s very difficult to know when one single person out in the field has been terminated. That’s why the cardholder automation with Active Directory has been a game-changer. It’s not only made the management of the system easier but the management of the audits. We have scheduled and automated a lot of the audit reports in Security Center. And as the auditors get more familiar and comfortable with this heightened level of automation, there are fewer inquiries about whether a person’s access rights were

removed because they already know it happens immediately,” explained Slone.

From a system maintenance perspective, the built-in health monitoring tools give the team added confidence that no potential vulnerabilities will go undetected. According to Slone, “The Security Center platform can show us things that we couldn’t have been able to see before with our older systems. For instance, we can easily view how many devices need a firmware update or if there’s a hardware failure. This allows our team to stay proactive in keeping our systems up-to-date and secure.”

Staying open to unique customer requirements with a flexible platform

As a business process outsourcing company, SYKES builds out its offices to meet client requirements. At some sites, multi-tenant situations are common since teams working for specific clients will only have access to specific floors or designated office spaces. The flexibility of the Genetec Security Center platform has made adapting to these unique client requirements much easier.

For instance, some of SYKES clients require a manned guard on site to monitor security. To simplify the security guard’s job, the team gave them access to Plan Manager, the map interface within Security Center. That way they can quickly respond to alarms and find doors and cameras to see what’s happening. In other cases, the team has installed biometrics readers, access control turnstiles, or intrusion panels. Recently, the SYKES facilities team has also begun trialing thermal cameras at some locations to monitor employee temperatures and support evolving employee safety protocols.

“What’s nice about Genetec Security Center is that we have a lot of freedom in deciding what features or technologies are best for our own applications or client environments. And while we strive for standardization across our global operations, it’s great to have that added flexibility when we need it,” said Slone.

The Agile Team has also taken advantage of the Genetec Occupancy Management Package to manage risks as more employees begin returning to offices. “With COVID-19, much of our workforce was working at home temporarily. We’re doing a lot more occupancy reports now to determine when and how many people are coming back into our offices. Those occupancy reports help us manage this transition back into our corporate spaces while ensuring that all protocols are being respected and everyone is safe,” said Slone.

Planning for more upgrades with Security Center

Looking ahead, the Agile Team is keen to get all locations upgraded and running on the new Security Center platform. They’re also going to be adding the Genetec ClearID™ identity management system to better manage visitors and handle any special or temporary access requests from employees.

This highly proficient team is also exploring some exciting projects using the Genetec SDK. One unique application in



APAC involves allowing their employees to receive small monetary rewards for a job well-done which they can spend in the cafeteria using their access control credentials. This would all be facilitated through an integration between the Security Center Synergis access control system, the Active Directory accounts, and the SYKES payroll system.

With a lot of plans looming, the SYKES team trusts that they have made the right move. “Since migrating to the Genetec Security Center platform, not only have we improved the security of our global organization, but we’re also showing our brand partners that we’re being pro-active in our approach to data protection and physical security. The Genetec platform has also allowed us to keep enhancing our employee safety protocols. And when our employees feel safe, they can offer the best possible customer experience,” concluded Slone.

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