



Meeting the Security Challenge for Serviced Office Providers

ASSA ABLOY

A discussion paper

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The global leader in
door opening solutions

Synopsis

The serviced office sector has undeniably evolved into one of the fastest growing sectors in the global commercial property market, providing innovative flexible property solutions as an alternative to traditional long lease terms.

Latest predictions reported by the Business Centre Association (BCA) suggest the industry will more than double in the next five years.

For the serviced office operator and owner this is good news overall, but means that the need to keep improving the quality and the competitive ability of their offering remains of paramount importance.

The list for attention seems endless ... exterior maintenance and reception for a great “first impression”; office decor and furnishings; making sure common areas such as cafeterias and facilities are refreshed; marketing and promotion.

When the facilities and management team is stretched, then inevitably some “important but not urgent” items like security can slip down the agenda, on the basis of an operational unit already working and in place and the potential work involved in any upgrade works programme appearing overwhelming in terms of cost and resource.

Yet the financial and legal consequences of a security breach to a serviced office location, whether to an individual rented office or any communal areas can make a detrimental impact on future business, especially with the inevitable vitriolic online review that could make an instant impact on a brand’s reputation.

The increasing evidence of internal criminal activity due to opportunist trends or desperate crime as a direct result of the economic hardship should also be cause for concern across the UK.

In this discussion paper, we look at three questions:

1 why should serviced office providers consider security a priority?

2 why serviced office providers might be struggling to deal with the issue?

3 What can they do to improve the situation?

The answers are complex and challenging but the issue is one of real importance and by producing this discussion paper, ASSA ABLOY Access Control wishes to stimulate debate and encourage views and contributions from many voices.

To contribute your opinion, experience or comment, please visit:

www.facebook.com/commercialsecurity

About ASSA ABLOY Access Control

The ASSA ABLOY Access Control business was set up in 2011 to bring new technologies developed by the ASSA ABLOY group to market. Currently the award winning, and rapidly developing Aperio technology is a main focus.

Why should security be a priority

1

The decision for a business to establish a temporary office, or a new office, for small or a large team, can be a very expensive affair. There are numerous costs to consider including IT infrastructure, office furniture, equipment etc. All are prime concerns that take those responsible away from the primary aim of running a successful business.

Within a serviced office environment, these burdens are taken care of with assurances of furniture, facilities and security, freeing businesses up to continue in their ambitions to make an impact.

There are many ways to choose between the vast number of serviced office providers. Location is key to be close to consumers, clients and reduce travelling expenses. Location can also have a significant impact on your staff morale to influence productivity and making it a more positive environment.

Even when the perfect location is sourced, business managers often have to decipher between the finer details such as cost and resource to reach a final decision. And here, a serviced office provider's reputation can make an impact. "Functional" factors can also include the physical security structure of the premises and all that is contained therein and pertinent to the property.

At a time when the serviced office sector continues to see impressive growth in established markets including the UK, bad reviews from tenants who have not experienced a secure environment can quickly impact on profits and revenues.

Most importantly, in a digital and social age where reviews on any sector play an increasingly significant role in decision-making process for potential tenants, an event against just one serviced office operator of any size could instantly send catastrophic ripple effects through an entire industry.

This is especially true with the growing use of LinkedIn as the professional networking site, with tenants and providers engaging on a much more direct and public level.

A sense of security and peace of mind throughout a stay, for tenants and their business operations, could make the difference between an individual or continuing theme in good and bad reviews.

Efficient Running Serviced Offices

There is a secondary impact on poor security management on site. Whilst security is integral to protect tenants and business possessions from crime, another function is to create an efficient running serviced office operator.

An efficient running serviced office facility ensures keys are always in the right place to welcome and check in new tenant, security or facility managers and cleaners have access to all offices necessary to carry out their duties with no disruption to daily operators.

At the same time, if serviced operators have refurbished and upgraded security to rely on access control cards, an efficient running service would depend on easy to use and proven technology, especially to ensure tenant changeover is as much an operation as possible to save valuable time and resource.

The key to success is ensuring security measures are integrated successfully into the everyday operations of facility managers and fully understood by all business tenants on site.

Why Are Serviced Office Operators Struggling with Security?

2

The decision to upgrade security is inevitably competing with other priorities, and many serviced office owners and operators still believe security specification is akin to a Pandora's box – once it's opened all the problems will be released.

The issue is compounded with rapid advances in security technology, from access control to biometrics and the rapidly growing trend of electro mechanical, which means there is a plethora of potential solutions for each security and access challenge.

But the fact the choice is so wide is, in itself, a problem for time constrained facility and security managers.

For many who have invested in office locations to create an inspirational working environment, the importance of smart design for any security upgrade is equalled to the fear of integrating security systems and associated wiring and cabling affecting the overall aesthetics.

This is especially true in a commercial buildings where there is a mixture of door types with the potential to make any cabling to introduce new access control or security systems.

For serviced office owners, there is the additional challenge of ensuring systems are integrated with many modern providers promoting the notions of intelligent and live buildings as being the future working landscape.

Associations such as the BCA offer advice, and easy access to a wide range of industry suppliers, including ASSA ABLOY as the global leader in door opening solutions to assist in security specifications and the day to day running of a serviced office operation.



What Can Serviced Office Providers Do?

3

Appropriate security measures can only be put in place if a serviced office provider has a good understanding of the security risks.

It is essential for operators to undertake a comprehensive security risk assessment, which identifies potential risks in all interior and exterior areas, together with measures to remove or reduce the risk.

A security risk assessment must also assess both the risks to office tenants and any permanent staff on site and include the risks of internal business crime that is currently at its highest rate since prior to the recessionary period.

Business espionage is highlighted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) with significant impacts on the global and UK economy, at a time when it is only just showing sensitive signs of recovery

A security risk assessment can be undertaken as a stand-alone exercise or as part of a more general risk assessment of operations, and may include, but is not restricted to:

- ensuring that security equipment is checked and maintained;
- ensuring that security procedures are followed by employees and all tenants
- outlining security procedures to new tenants on arrival, through notices or information sheets, or by other appropriate means;
- encouraging tenants to practice 'tidy desk policies' and consider their own security arrangements, especially to protect data and expensive computer, tablet or mobile equipment.
- supervising contractors and other visitors;
- providing security training for employees and tenants, as appropriate;
- identifying new risks and taking appropriate action;
- looking for methods of reducing risk and improving security on a continuing basis;
- investing in additional security measures.

Risk assessments should always be undertaken by a competent person or an external resource such as a local professional access control specialist or installer who would be able to offer advice on the different upgrade opportunities, in accordance with budget and resource.

Risk assessments should also be updated on a regular basis or if there are significant changes at the establishment such as a refurbishment or expansion works. The findings of a security risk assessment should be recorded in writing.

From such findings, as well as having appropriate security equipment, policies and procedures, it is essential for tenants to work to reduce security risks.

By working through these procedures to reach a conclusion on how to progress security arrangements, service office providers can promote their commitment to a duty of care to tenants and an ability to offer the very latest inspirational technology and security services on site at all times.



Summary

4

There are a host of different reasons why corporate occupiers choose serviced offices as part of their overall strategy and providers must continue with the significant opportunity to consider their entire offering to their target audience.

Whilst creating a welcoming environment is a necessity, there is clear evidence to suggest a real requirement for a secure office space, to protect from both external criminal activity and the opportunist (or desperate) internal threats.

There are many solutions available for serviced office providers looking for state of the art technology to raise the security levels of their premises and complement existing access control systems, without the need to modify the door or the aesthetics of the environment.

Choosing the right system requires careful analysis of the purpose and bespoke requirements of individual office buildings.

With many security and facility teams struggling to deal with the sheer volume of solutions available, it is worth coordinating with a security specification team to understand the options available in accordance with budget and resource.

In doing so, and building a picture of the security specification required, any decision to upgrade security on site can result in an instant ability to improve the controllability and access control level throughout the premises for the benefit of the serviced office provider and its tenants.

Action Point:

Is security a top priority for you as a serviced office provider, or are there other reasons why this is not a focus? Are you struggling to deal with the issue or looking to find ways to improve security?

To add your voice to the debate,

Thank you.

To contact the author, please email: accesscontrol@assaabloy.co.uk



Appendix 1

ASSA ABLOY is leading provider of doors solutions used in many access control systems.

Aperio™ is a global ASSA ABLOY Access Control technology designed to upgrade mechanically locked doors and wirelessly connect them online or offline to new or existing access control systems, with minimal modification to doors and premises, offering a cost effective and simple security upgrade.

Recent additions to the Aperio product portfolio include the new Aperio™ L100 that offers the world's first wireless lock range for security doors, with capability to transmit comprehensive information on door status to the access control system.

The Aperio™ PINpad escutcheon presents an extra level of access control for doors requiring multiple authentication, offering users the opportunity to enter a PIN of four to eight characters, or utilise a high security card reader, or a combination of both.

The heart of Aperio™ is a short distance wireless communication protocol designed to link an online electronic access control system with an Aperio™ enabled electronic cylinder or escutcheon.

This means that:

- Additional doors can be integrated into access control systems at a low cost
- Aperio™ can be combined with new and existing access control systems
- Easy to install with no structural alterations to the door
- Standard RFID technologies are supported
- Battery-operated Aperio™ cylinders and escutcheons provide an RFID-Card reader
- Aperio™ can update room access authorisations online and in real time

The open architecture of Aperio™ provides a convenient way of connecting with most access control systems via iClass, RS485, or Wiegand interface. The Aperio™ cylinders or escutcheons communicate via an encrypted wireless link to a communication hub that is wired directly to the system.

Recent enhancements mean the hub can also now facilitate a link from one to eight locking devices at any one time.

The ability to integrate into an existing access control system, provides end users with a high quality and secure solution, with all the benefits of access control where it is required.

By utilising Aperio™ in this way, requests for access control can be achieved, whilst retaining existing card credentials and removing key control issues, providing an overall cost effective solution, with minimal modification to doors and premises.

Aperio™ can be used to develop a truly bespoke cost effective security solution, which is quick and easy to install, that offers the additional convenience and flexibility inherent with an access control solution, whilst also solving key management issues.

For more information please visit www.assaabloy.co.uk/Aperio

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