

Liberty Life secures itself country wide with fool proof access control system

- Financial services giant selects Bytes Systems Integration to provide new access control system

It was over 50 years ago that Liberty Life sold its first insurance policy, and since then it has strived to become one of South Africa's leading insurance and investment groups. Among its stakeholders it has nearly 2 million individual policyholders, more than 9 000 pension funds and almost 6 800 shareholders.

As a leading life insurance provider, security is of great importance within its buildings and countrywide infrastructure. However, the existing security infrastructure consisted of an outdated access control system that was inefficient and had reached a point where security was compromised.

"We needed a new access control system that would link into a more pervasive view on security," says Las van der Merwe, at Liberty Life. "Once we had ascertained what our business needs were we went out to tender for an intelligent access control system that would secure all of our satellite branches as well as the three buildings at our head office campus in Braamfontein."

After all options were considered Bytes Systems Integration (SI) successfully won the tender and proposed to implement a new access control solution that would make use of the existing infrastructure as a base, and then adding a Honeywell Enterprise Business Integration (EBI) access control solution to this.

Although the existing access control system was not working effectively, it was based on an infrastructure of staff access cards and card readers on the doors, much of which could be reused. This meant that Bytes SI was able to build a similar solution using some of the existing infrastructure and saving massive costs for Liberty Life.

The Solution

"The solution used the existing security staff cards and some of the existing readers on the doors that Bytes SI rewired and integrated into the new EBI solution. Bytes SI also installed some new magnetic readers on 260 new doors and entrances that also needed to be secured across the 56 branches countrywide," says van der Merwe. "The door readers are now linked to a central server that monitors and logs all door transactions and has alarm systems that warn of intrusions and alerts security should a door be left open. This gives us very tight control on the movements of people and subsequently thwarts potential security threats illegal movements may cause."

"This was a very interesting and exciting project for us with tight deadlines and budget restrictions to keep us on our toes. We were very pleased with the results and are looking forward to implementing the second phase involving integration into the SAP system," says Mike Ellison, Technical Manager of Kronos at Bytes SI.

The new EBI solution effectively provides a secure and manageable work environment for Liberty Life because it integrates into one database, allowing all transactions to be logged and monitored on one

central server meaning there is one room controlling security countrywide. The central server was linked by Liberty Life's existing WAN network again saving money using its existing infrastructure.

The new upgraded EBI system has a building management component and forms the building block to allow for a SAP software integration at a later stage. Because EBI integrates fully with SAP, in the planned second phase of the project, Liberty Life will be able to integrate its SAP HR system with its access control system so that new staff hires or staff who have left the organisation reflects instantly on the access control system. This will effectively lock certain cards out of the system in real time, securing buildings against staff that no longer work in the various offices but do not return their access cards.

"Integration with SAP will provide huge advantages and improvements on security because the system can read instantly who is allowed or not allowed in the system. Effectively elimination risks involved with staff leaving," says Ellison.

With the second phase SAP integration there will also be a time management system that will allow work times to be monitored through a clock in clock out system so that flexi time hours and overtime benefits can be paid. Added to this, in the future Liberty Life will be able to look into using Biometric identification to make clocking cards redundant in more secure areas like server rooms.

The Benefits

The benefits of the solution are extensive, but the most prominent of these benefits is that the new systems effectively reduces security risks for Liberty Life and will secure their buildings nationally managing security risks linked to intrusions. The new access control system secures also monitors in real time the movement and transactions of 260 doors, effectively controlling who enters and exits.

The access control systems has also saved Liberty Life time and money by making use of older infrastructure and not wasting the existing working technology.

As the latest state of the art compatible EBI system, it holds the potential for future upgrades to be built on top of this security layer because of its integration with systems like SAP and Biometrics solutions.

"We are pleased with the new security solution as it now links all of our branches and effectively provides a single view of the security of the entire company in one database, making the system secure and user friendly. The full implementation took the larger part of a year, but was completed successfully well within our time frame and allocated budget. There was not much more we could ask for from Bytes SI," ends van der Merwe.