

## Walking A Fortunate Path Through the Industry's Evolution

By Peter Giacalone, Giacalone Associates

I was recently back in Florida sitting around the kitchen table with my close friends of thirty-eight years, Laurie and John. We were reflecting on our many years of friendship and our paths in life and the security industry. Our journeys started in the late 1970's, with John's rooted in New Jersey and mine in New York City. When we started, we were lucky to have family and friends that would teach and mentor our path to installing burglar alarms.. We, like many other successful people getting their start in this industry, also had the aptitude and drive to overcome any obstacles along the way. For John and I, our start was similar and we are fortunate to have enjoyed forty plus years of success in the industry, and to this day we never stop learning.

Shortly after graduation I started my first alarm company with my good friend, Andrew. Drew and I started Bergen Security Systems by selling systems to our family & friends. We had a great relationship with our friends at Christy Industries who manufactured customized panels for our custom installations. We slowly became known as the "custom security experts" in Brooklyn. When we evolved from tape dialers to UL central station monitoring, we engaged the services of Nationwide Monitoring in Bay Ridge (located above a shoe store) and then later engaged the services of Affiliated Monitoring with Stanley Oppenheim.

After I sold my business, I took a leap and moved to Florida where I didn't know anyone. At 21, I started at a local alarm company as a salesman and eventually was promoted to general manager. Soon after, John and I each started our own businesses but continued to work in tandem, growing to be the experts for the Tamarac area. Over the next several years, we had each expanded our operations to service all of South Florida.

I went on to start my own company with another childhood friend and throughout that period, John and I continued to collaborate. After I sold my company, I entered the product side of the industry working for alarm panel manufacturers, FBI and NAP-

CO. Pivoting from manufacturing, I was offered an opportunity I could not refuse with King Central as their Chief Operating Officer. Although it mandated a move away from the success I had built in Florida, mandating a move closer to my roots in New Jersey, it was an opportunity I couldn't turn down. Our collective efforts during my time at King Central helped us grow into the the largest third-party central station in the industry, at which time we had become Criticom International. Although I missed John and my friends, it was a great career move.

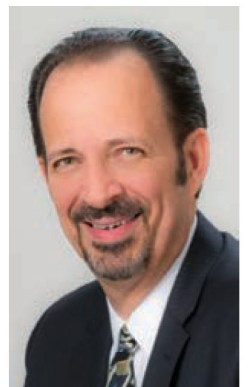
When I reflect back to my time over the past four decades, I attribute the growth of an industry I have found so much personal success to so many leaders who have provided great foresight. have paved the way. Notably, Ron Davis, Founder of Davis Mergers & Acquisitions paved the way during his days travelling the country and relentlessly educating the industry with his educational cassette tapes and programs. I also think of Barry, Ted, Bob and Jay with Feel Safe and companies like First Alert, Rampart and Dynamark which have traditionally taken an organizational approach for the betterment of the industry.

Years later the grand entrance of a household name, AT&T, entered the dealer program world. This Telecom giant taught the industry that alarm systems were really security systems; systems which could be sold instead of bought and you can sell many more systems and get a lot more money for them if you really sell hard. After AT&T's emergence in the security space, the next great revolution was the introduction of the basic, high-value, low-priced system introduced by Brinks. It took a little time for others to catch on and realize how this was done, but over time, many jumped on the bandwagon.

Although the free system still exists in certain markets, with the great adoption of SMARTHome and DIY platforms, free is not enough anymore. Residential systems have become and need to remain more comprehensive with lifestyle features and a no-nonsense approach to easier operation.

After all the significant change the industry has seen over the years, it still in a place where it has much more to come in the pipeline that will likely continue to disrupt the industry. With presence detection and the need to comply with AVS-01 along with false alarm reduction, some technology players are stepping up to meet this challenge. We know that this is real as we are seeing technology providers with big names collaborating at a level we have not in the past.

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