

Axis takes security at Table Mountain Cableway to new heights.

Landmark tourist attraction gets a digital surveillance upgrade.



Organization:

Table Mountain Aerial Cableway

Location:

Cape Town, South Africa

Industry segment:

Hotel/Restaurant/Tourism

Application:

Safety and security

Axis partners:

Diversified Security Engineering, Meycom, Milestone

Mission

Table Mountain is one of the prestigious New 7 Wonders of Nature. With its 3 km plateau and breath-taking slopes, the mountain attracts visitors from all over the world. Table Mountain Aerial Cableway (TMAC) has been transporting people to the summit of Table Mountain since 1929. The safety and security of visitors to this World Heritage site is of utmost importance.

Solution

The original analog system installed to monitor the TMAC site was no longer providing the information necessary to effectively secure and manage this landmark tourist attraction. The RFP for the upgrade was overseen by Diversified Security Engineering's Nigel Versfeld, a veteran of the security industry. After a rigorous bid process, specialist fire and security contractor Meycom was awarded the contract to deploy a more efficient monitoring solution. The extensive product range, superior performance and comprehensive support offered by Axis secured the network cameras for this installation.

Result

The surveillance solution is currently being utilized beyond the initial scope. At the outset, the intention was to review the footage reactively in the event of theft or other incident. Subsequent to deployment, the company decided to employ dedicated staff to proactively monitor the cameras to prevent theft and other unpleasant occurrences. The footage is also scrutinized as a management tool to assist with operational issues such as queue length and traffic control.

“This solution has enhanced the experience of visitors to our landmark site. And, best of all, it was successfully deployed with no disruption to our existing operations.”

Mike Williams, Operations Manager for the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company.

Securing a cherished landmark

In a country blessed with an abundance of natural beauty, Table Mountain remains one of South Africa's most recognizable and popular tourist destinations. Estimated to be approximately 260-million years old, the flat-topped mountain has become an iconic landmark and the central character in many haunting legends and myths that feature apparitions, magical flutes and even gnome-like spirits with poltergeist tendencies.

The mountain also plays a pivotal role in establishing Cape Town as the ultimate Feng Shui city. According to the ancient Chinese philosophy of Feng Shui, Cape Town's configuration in the shape of an armchair – protection from Table Mountain at the rear, two armrests provided by Lion's Head to the west and Devil's Peak to the east – creates the perfect energy.

For more than 85 years, the TMAC has been providing visitors with a world-class experience. During the past 8 ½ decades over 24 million people have made use of the Cableway to reach the top of this spectacular mountain.

“The high volume of visitors to the site means that operational management has to be exceptional. Traffic control, parking control, queue management, grounds management, security, retail management and food and beverage management all form part of the daily activities of the Cableway,” explains Meycom's Andrew Briton (Project Director of the system upgrade). “The surveillance solution has to support all of these processes in an integrated and reliable manner.”

Overcoming disparate weather conditions

“There were significant challenges that we needed to consider regarding the environment in which the cameras were to be installed,” says the project's Technical Director, Roshen Kajie.

“Weather conditions at the Top Station are completely different from the conditions at the Lower Station. The Top Station is exposed to both extremely high altitude and the corrosive effect of the salt air. We selected robust network cameras rated for external use for both the exterior and interior of the Top Station.”

AXIS P3364-VE Network Camera is an outdoor HDTV fixed dome camera. Its weather-proof and vandal-resistant casing makes it perfectly adapted for harsh environments. It is capable of operating in extreme temperatures that range from -40° to 55° C.

“The Top Station is 1 067m above sea level and the weather patterns in Cape Town are notoriously changeable. It is imperative that our solution hinges on high performance products that persistently deliver – even under extreme conditions,” says Briton.

Defeating darkness

Yet another trial faced by the project consultants was to provide TMAC technical staff with adequate visuals of a control board that is located in a closed shaft at the Top Station.

“The AXIS T90C Fixed Dome IR-LED is an infra-red illuminator for AXIS P33 Network Cameras. It enables the cameras to deliver quality images in complete darkness,” explains Kajie. “Cableway staff now have a live view of the control board and are easily able to monitor the various control indicator lights from the Lower Station, even in these low light circumstances.”

Strategically placed PTZ network cameras assist with security and traffic and visitor control matters, while compact HDTV network cameras are integrated with the point-of-sale software to ensure the integrity of the retail data.

