

# Select an access control system in 5 steps



In this white paper we explain how you can select an access control system that will keep pace with your company for the next ten years, in five steps. Before you invest in a system, you obviously first want to list all the options and conditions. In this way you can be certain that you will be choosing a system that can grow along with you over the next ten years.



► Risk analysis ► Long term vision ► Opportunities ► Plan of requirements ► Suitable supplier

# Step 1: Draw up a risk analysis

When preparing a risk analysis, companies often only consider the legal obligations in the field of safety. However, security is just as important! A good security policy will protect your critical business processes and the environment of your company against damage. Therefore when protecting your company it is important to clearly define which risks are most important. In so doing, do not base this solely on the available technology, but also on your own wishes.

**Answer the following questions in your risk analysis:**

- What objectives need to be secured?  
These may be people, but also buildings, equipment or sensitive information.
- Which processes will cause turnover loss or damage if they come to a standstill?  
For example, production or logistics.
- What occurrences would you like to avoid and in which location? For example: fire, burglary, robbery, flood, overheating or improper access.
- What must be done to limit the damage to a minimum if such an occurrence does occur?



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## Step 2: Think about your long term vision

**A lot can change in the decade that an access control system lasts. Consider therefore in advance how the access control system will have to work for you. Because, only with a long term vision can you ensure your security level continues to meet the requirements of your organisation and also give a maximum return on your investment, now and in the future. In your long term vision, take into account:**

### Access cards

Does your company work flexibly or in shifts? If so, your colleagues are probably often working in multiple locations and various work areas in different combinations. The use of access cards can then provide a solution. By using them, your colleagues gain easy access to all those sites with one card, which means no more time-consuming key management for you! Moreover, you can determine and check, thanks to the use of access cards, who has access where and when.

### New and emerging technological opportunities

Who would not want a self-managing and energy efficient building? An increasing number of smart building concepts link access control and building management systems to achieve this. But for these systems to work together efficiently, they need to be based on open industry standards. Bear this in mind when purchasing your access control system!

Examples of open industry standards include:

- Java for user interfaces
- SQL for databases
- BAC-net for building management
- TCP/IP for network communication

At the same time the demand is growing, for example, for the granting of access on the basis of biometric features. Even if you have no need for this at present, it is wise to take it into account when choosing your access control system.

### New regulations within your organisation

Are there internal or other rules that are going to change? For example, will your visitors still only be able to gain entry with an access card in three years' time? And is the age of paper attendance registers over? Take that into account now when purchasing your access control system, to ensure that you can easily and cost-effectively implement your visitor management later on. Make sure, therefore, that your access control system is based on open industry standards. Or that a visitor management functionality already exists. >





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### Changing legislation that affects your organisation

Central and local government legislation changes constantly, which means that you need to make regular changes to your access control system. Prevent this from costing too much time and money by purchasing a highly scalable system.

For scalability, pay attention to:

- How modular is the access control system?
- Can you simply add additional components to the system, such as an additional camera or card reader?
- Can you choose which brands of cameras, card readers, biometric readers and door fittings you can integrate?
- What are the costs of adding the additional components to your system immediately compared to later?

### The collaboration with different stakeholders within your organisation

Besides the directors, other stakeholders within your organisation also have ideas for a security policy.

These may perhaps also affect your budget.

Bear in mind your colleagues in the department:

- **Building management/facility management**  
The department of building management/facility management monitors the budget and often performs the daily control on the future system as well. So include them in your decisions!
- **Security**  
Security is a major source of knowledge in the selection of an access control system. Because they know everything about the risks, laws and regulations that must be met by your company.

- **IT**

The IT department facilitates the network on which your future access control system will be running. So discuss with them their ideas about the encryption of access cards, the security of the equipment in the network (such as IP cameras and controllers) and logical security (e.g. one access card to enter the building and to unlock the PC).

- **HR**

Your colleagues in HR know how employee data is recorded or adjusted. Discuss with them how the systems in which the employee data is stored will possibly be used to create access cards more efficiently. Or to manage access rights.

- **Purchasing/procurement**

Purchasing/procurement often make the final decision about purchasing an access control system, because they check whether the system manufacturer and the supplier will be able to deliver in terms of scale and sustainable service.

- **Communication**

Internally, the creation of awareness and compliance are indispensable for a successful implementation of your new access control system. The department of internal communication can also assist with that.



## Step 3: See what opportunities an access control system provides

**To get the most out of your investment in a new access control system, it is also wise to look at what opportunities a system provides.**

**For instance, a good access control system assists with:**

### **More efficient use of your spaces**

An access control system can provide insight into your use of space. Suppose that, on every Friday, six floors are only half occupied. Then theoretically three open floors will be enough. It is great when an access control system provides this insight and the system itself then refers people to the department where there is still room! Would you also like the light and air-conditioning in the relevant areas to be automatically switched on or off to save on power consumption and cleaning costs? That can be done if an integrated link with your building management system is possible inside your new access control system.

### **Optimising business processes**

Many systems - such as SAP or other ERP systems – will help you in the optimisation of business processes. Allow your new access control system to do that as well! For example, link the system to your HR system, so that you need to enter your employee data at only one location. Is an employee leaving or is his role changing? Then the access rights automatically change at the same time or will be withdrawn. This will save a lot of administrative procedures! Moreover, it will also increase safety. However, to enable such a link, you have to select an access control system that is based on open standards.

### **A welcoming reception of your guests**

An access control system that takes over the creation of visitors' cards from your reception by means of automatic workflows reduces the administrative pressure and the queues at reception. Your visitors receive a warm welcome!

### **Greater convenience for your employees**

Would it not be nice to have a single card that not only provides access to doors, turnstiles, gates and lockers, but also logs in on the PC, prints, pays in the canteen or for the coffee machine? If you choose the right card technology, this is possible. Ask a manufacturer, installer or integrator to assist you if necessary in making the right choice.



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## Step 4: Create a plan of requirements

**Are your wishes and requirements from steps one, two and three clearly set out? If so, integrate them into a plan of requirements for your new access control system.**

**Make your plan of requirements as concrete as possible.**

- Indicate why you want to replace your existing system.
- Describe which advantages and good experiences you want to keep from your old system.
- Clarify what you expect from your new access control system; what problems you want to avoid.
- Determine concretely how you want your new access control system to improve your performance, efficiency, flexibility and scalability. If you make your plan of requirements as measurable as possible, you can assess later whether the system meets your requirements.
- Explain how you want the user groups to use the new system. Which actions should the receptionist perform? And which absolutely not? How will the building manager use the system? Do you want an alarm to be monitored by an alarm centre or control room?
- Determine what physical measures are necessary to protect the objectives against the defined occurrences.

### Examples of physical security measures

- A fence, green areas or water to protect your business premises.
- A barrier with card reader at the car park to avoid misuse.
- Wired card readers at your external doors that are operated with an access card and pin code, against burglary and improper access.
- Turnstiles between reception and the office areas so that people without a valid card cannot enter.
- Lockers where employees – using their existing access card if necessary as a key - can store their valuables. Or where visitors can store their mobile phones or tablets during a guided tour. To ensure that they cannot take any pictures or make any recordings of your critical business processes.
- Wireless locks that are operable with an access card at stock rooms or cabinets.
- Biometric readers or cameras that provide additional security at critical passages.
- Controllers that sound an alarm when there is a temperature change.





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## Step 5: Find a suitable supplier

**Now that your plans are concrete, you can share them with manufacturers, installers and integrators.**

**Each of them can mean something to you.**

- A manufacturer will advise you on the technological trends and options that are relevant to your situation. In addition, he can contribute to ideas on the access control system and security solutions that are suitable for you.
- A supplier (installer or integrator) will ensure the proper implementation, integration and maintenance of your new access control system and related systems.

Think about what you want to get out of the partnership with the manufacturer or supplier. When selecting the right supplier, consider how they will keep the chosen solution up-to-date and improve it over the years to come. Decide together on how you will measure whether the implementation of the system has been successful. For this, the measurable objectives from your plan of requirements are useful!



# Conclusion

**An access control system is a significant investment that you want to be able to rely on ten years from now. It is therefore important to consider carefully the purchase of it in advance.**

First of all, think about undertaking a risk analysis in which you determine the risks from which you want to protect your company. Do not base this solely on the available technology and legal obligations, but also on your own wishes (step 1). Next, prepare a long term vision (step 2). Taking into account:

- the use of access cards;
- new and emerging technological options;
- new regulations within your organisation;
- changing legislation that affects your organisation;
- other departments within your organisation that have to do with or deal with the access control system.

Next, look at what opportunities an access control system offers you (step 3). On the basis of all this, prepare a plan of requirements (step 4) which will help you to approach a suitable supplier (step 5). In this way you will assure your company of an access control system that will meet your wishes and requirements now and in future!

## About the authors

Mark Vickers and Daryn Flynn are Business Development Managers at Nedap. They advise and guide end users with security issues towards a concrete solution that is appropriate for the business processes and will provide them with support. Would you like to exchange ideas with them? Then please feel free to contact:



Mark Vickers  
[mark.vickers@nedap.com](mailto:mark.vickers@nedap.com)  
+44 (0) 773 672 506 7



Daryn Flynn  
[daryn.flynn@nedap.com](mailto:daryn.flynn@nedap.com)  
+44 (0) 773 695 649 8





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