

Why businesses and individuals shouldn't skimp on security

According to George Fitzroy, MD for security at Servest, the violent crime that still plagues many South African businesses and homes, despite the proliferation of security companies, is mainly due to the mismatch between the product offering of the security company and the needs and requirements of their customers.



Source: www.pixabay.com

The recently released quarterly crime statistics for the period October to December 2021 showed a total of 5,138 incidents of robberies at non-residential premises, with 27,155 cases of commercial crime being reported – a disturbingly 15.9% surge. Robberies at residential premises dropped by a marginal 0.4% to 5,760 cases.

The ever-rising crime levels have spurred the exponential growth of the security industry over recent years. Data published in 2021 shows that the private security sector has more than 11,370 registered businesses, far outnumbering the official police service workforce.

However, warns Fitzroy, due to minimum barriers to entry, the industry has been flooded with service providers that are indistinguishable from one another.

No single end-to-end solution

“While South Africa’s security proofing market currently offers some of the best solutions for businesses, there is no single end-to-end solution. The security industry in South Africa is characterised by multiple service providers, providing different solutions, however one of the biggest challenges is that many of them do not provide end-to-end turnkey solutions that enable customers to make an informed assessment of the quality of their service. Furthermore, some of the industry players have not kept up with the latest technologies and trends in security.”

Most security companies still use obsolete equipment that has been overtaken by the latest developments – the hardware is outdated, and systems do not connect to each other, says Fitzroy.



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Non-compliant security companies

To aggravate matters, non-compliant security companies are disrupting the market with poor risk solutions while the regulatory authorities are not too keen to enforce compliance, he adds.

He points out that the security industry globally has digitised at a rapid pace over the last five years to keep up with increasingly savvy criminals who are using the latest gadgets and solutions.

“The latest trends in security include offsite monitoring, the increasing use of drones for surveillance and reconnaissance, a lower number of more highly-skilled guards who are complemented by these smart solutions and a specialised tactical response team.

“The use of guards, while important, needs to be supplemented with the right defences and suitable technology. Not having the proper security layers in place, for example a compromised perimeter fence or malfunctioning alarm system, is going to make the job of a guard more cumbersome than it should be,” Fitzroy says.

He advises businesses and individuals to invest in and prioritise their safety and not skimp on it. “If you think an investment in security is too high, think of the untold costs of not investing in adequate security to your employees and to your families – it’s too high a price to pay,” he adds.



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Installing multiple layers of physical security

Although technology is playing an increasingly important role in security, Fitzroy says this does not negate the importance of creating multiple layers of physical security which would be difficult to breach. This includes a fully-functioning alarm system, CCTV cameras, solid perimeter fencing, remote monitoring and armed response.

“We urge customers, be they homeowners or businesses, to ensure that the level of technology used by their security service provider is up to standard and relative to their needs and requirements.”

He notes that unsuspecting consumers are not aware of the difference in quality of security companies, so they are inclined to opt for more affordable services, which usually compromise their business in the long run. "It is important for business owners to do their due diligence on the security companies they employ as many are not compliant with the industry's regulations.

"Businesses should be looking for good quality, professional services and make quick decisions that benefit themselves and their businesses before it is too late. It is crucial that business owners make use of quality suppliers who actually care about their reputation and their clients, those investing in the right tools and technologies to enable a quicker turnaround in anticipation of potential crimes as well as a fast response to criminal activities," Fitzroy concludes.

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