



Skechers USA Inc.

Skechers Takes First Steps in Securing Flagship Distribution Facility with American Dynamics IP Surveillance Solution.

As one of the leading footwear companies in America, Skechers USA Inc.'s latest distribution facility in Rancho Belago, Calif., moves a mountain of shoes each day. This high-volume center is designated as a U.S. foreign trade zone, which requires specific and measurable security standards as set down by U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials.

CASE SUMMARY

Location:
Rancho Belago, CA

System Installed:
American Dynamics
Intellex DVR
victor unified video client
VideoEdge NVR
Illustra 400 Series mini domes
IP SpeedDome cameras

Introduction

Skechers, an award-winning global lifestyle footwear company, develops and markets more than 3,000 styles for men, women and children through its fitness and lifestyle divisions. The company is known for its popular lines such as Shape-ups, Tone-ups, GOruns and Active, and celebrity spokespeople such as actress and Dancing With the Stars host Brooke Burke, fitness trainer Denise Austin, and former hockey player Wayne Gretzky. The \$2 billion company was founded by Robert Greenberg in 1992.

Today, Skechers sells its products in more than 120 countries, ranging from Austria and Ireland to China, Thailand and Brazil. The company has opened more than 300 retail stores in key metropolitan areas worldwide, and partnered with distributors to open an additional 250 locations.

A significant portion of this worldwide product volume goes through Skechers newest distribution facility in California—a 1.8 million-square-foot, \$250 million complex that serves as a U.S. foreign trade zone, one of 18 foreign trade zones in California. As defined by the government, a foreign trade zone is a designated location in the United States where companies can use special procedures that help encourage U.S. activity—in competition with foreign alternatives—by allowing delayed or reduced duty payments on foreign merchandise, as well as logistical and tax benefits.

Challenges

While being a foreign trade zone reaps benefits for Skechers, it also comes with some specific security requirements. Greg Drivas, Director of Loss Prevention for Skechers USA, says there is a higher expectation for perimeter security, as product is monitored entering and exiting the warehouse, which heightens the overall security needs vs. a traditional warehouse operation.

Surveillance, especially in the form of high-quality video recording and playback, was a required feature for Skechers as it laid out its security plan to Select Systems Technology, Inc. of Torrance, Calif., the systems integrator chosen for the installation.

That meant that the video needed to be quickly accessible, clear and smooth and provide the ability to zoom in as needed, according to Vijay Patel, senior manager at SST.

Skechers also needed the video management system to have an open platform to accommodate cameras from multiple manufacturers and have a degree of scalability to grow along with the changing needs of Skechers operations. This new warehouse was built by Skechers to replace five existing facilities, and there is still room to grow.

SST, which had worked with Skechers on security projects at the other distribution centers under the consolidation plan, was already familiar with the requirements associated with foreign trade zones. The integrator, which has done numerous retail-related projects, found this to be its largest distribution center to date and the one deploying the largest number of cameras.

Patel says the challenges for SST included the length of the project—it took several years from concept to completion—and making changes along the way as the building took shape and needs changed, all while still staying within the structures of the budget.

Solution

As the backbone of its surveillance system, Skechers and SST selected the victor video management system from American Dynamics. With the powerful victor unified client, Skechers' security staff is able to view, manage, and control recorded video from five VideoEdge network video recorders.

Some key features of victor, including its ability to instantly play back high-resolution video, and tie into the access control system to bring up video related to alarms, such as doors left open, made it an easy selection for the project, according to Patel. For operators, victor is fairly intuitive so that officers could use it even before receiving formal training on it.

“Even the least technical officer can get into the system and set up views and do archiving,” said Drivas. “The user-friendly nature of the victor interface allowed our staff to be up and running on the system very quickly.”

The driving factor, though, was ensuring that they had the ability to constantly capture the comings and goings within the foreign trade zone, even to the point of following vehicles from camera to camera as they traveled through the complex. “Because of the amount of live, streaming video and the need to manage large, megapixel cameras at all times, we were confident that the victor client would be powerful enough to meet our needs,” Drivas said.

One of the additional benefits, added Drivas, was the ability to capitalize on the clarity and accessibility of the video for non-security uses, such as the operations group at the distribution center using the video to monitor product movement on the conveyor system.

Patel said they worked closely with Skechers’ IT department on the fiber that was laid for both security and the IT infrastructure in the facility. The fiber was laid out to specifications, said Patel, even accommodating those cameras that needed to be placed above 350 feet. Other pre-planning efforts went into the project, including laying out the network typology with IP addresses for each camera, making the installation go smoothly.

For cameras, SST installed a variety of cameras, including American Dynamics Illustra 400 Series mini domes and IP SpeedDome programmable cameras. In addition, the project used Flir thermal imaging cameras to view the backside of the building, and four 180-degree megapixel cameras which increased the capacity of the 150 or so cameras to that of 300 individual camera views.

Skechers is using an internal network video storage solution from American Dynamics, which was attractive because it was a turnkey solution for the IT department.

To bring the Skechers project to fruition, Skechers and SST staff needed to work closely with the Skechers Compliance Department to meet the specific foreign trade zone security requirements. Because of the size of the facility, the project was accomplished in three sections.

The building’s security Control Room, where video is monitored 24/7, features three 42-inch screens on the wall and four additional 24-inch call-up monitors for each control room officer. There is also a separate monitor for the Identocard access control system used for all points of entry, which is tied into the victor system.

Skechers designed this new distribution center to give the company flexibility in its operations and a centralized distribution point for the next 20 years. By choosing victor and an IP surveillance solution from American Dynamics, Skechers is giving its security staff the same flexibility, allowing the camera network to grow along with the facility.