

Colombia's CAFAM Selects March Networks Solution for 175 Pharmacies



Video Surveillance System Provides Security and Management Oversight

When the **Caja de Compensacion Familiar (CAFAM)** in Colombia struck a deal with the country's Exitó Group in 2009 to assume responsibility for operating the latter's chain of 91 pharmacies, one of the first issues it had to deal with was how to provide security and management oversight for such a geographically dispersed business.

One option was to hire security guards for each location, but that would still have left CAFAM with the problem of providing management supervision.

"We realized that we didn't have the staff to keep track of so many pharmacies around the country, so we decided on a technological solution," said Rafael Ochoa, an engineer with CAFAM's Department of Integrated Security and General Services.

Using video surveillance and live monitoring from CAFAM's Bogotá headquarters, CAFAM security executives came to the conclusion that they could provide security for their staff and administrative oversight of the business at the same time.

"We tested a wide range of video surveillance systems, and selected March Networks® technology after an exhaustive evaluation," noted Javier Zarate, another CAFAM engineer.

The deal in 2009 gave CAFAM a total of 175 pharmacies, including 38 locations within the supermarkets it transferred to the Exitó Group. They range in size from 25 square meters (270 square feet) to 150 square meters (1,600 square feet) and vary in terms of the services and merchandise offered.

The Department of Integrated Security and General Services had several requirements that had to be met for a widely dispersed video surveillance system. First and foremost in importance was the reliability and sturdiness of the hardware.

CAFAM engineering staff who tested the systems were impressed with the internal field replaceable fans and batteries in the March Networks recorders, which facilitate local onsite maintenance and reduce downtime due to lengthy RMA processing.

Caja de Compensacion Familiar (CAFAM)

The Caja de Compensacion Familiar (CAFAM), founded in 1957, is one of Colombia's largest and most successful family compensation funds providing health, recreation and sports, housing, culture, family subsidy, education, financial, hotel services and pharmaceutical dispensing services to close to 700,000 Colombians employed by 29,699 businesses and organizations.



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Photography: John Cruz

Another very important factor was bandwidth. "Bandwidth is a challenge throughout Latin America, but the March Networks recorders provide us with good quality video even with the low bandwidth available," said Dubert Garzon, an engineer with the Department of Integrated Security and General Services.

Featuring multi-level video compression and software controls that allow CAFAM to determine the amount of bandwidth consumed, the pharmacies' current mix of March Networks 3204 and 8704 Hybrid Networked Video Recorders are ideal for bandwidth challenged environments.

The compact form factor of the March Networks recorders was also appealing because of the limited amount of space available in the smaller pharmacies, which are essentially medication dispensing centers.

Each pharmacy is equipped with between two and four analog cameras, providing CAFAM monitoring center staff in Bogota with live video from each of the pharmacies.

The systems also record audio and are integrated with panic alarms and vault door sensors to alert monitoring center staff to burglaries or other events requiring their intervention.

The pharmacies are monitored to ensure that transactions are properly processed and that pharmacy staff are adhering to CAFAM's customer service standards.

CAFAM's Department of Integrated Security and General Services has a video retention standard of 30 days at 15 frames per second, but the combination of March Networks video compression and internal storage provides up to seven or eight months of archived video.

Still to come is the integration of the video surveillance technology with CAFAM's point-of-sale system using March Networks Searchlight for Retail software.

Searchlight for Retail will link video from cameras over the point-of-sale systems with the corresponding transaction details, allowing CAFAM loss prevention staff to confirm that cash is being handled properly and that the proper medications are being dispensed.

"The system is performing excellently," said CAFAM engineer Dubert Garzon. "When we do have an issue, March Networks engineers are just a call away, which isn't always the case with other video surveillance manufacturers. Manufacturer and dealer support is very important to us and figured prominently in our decision to select a March Networks solution." ▼