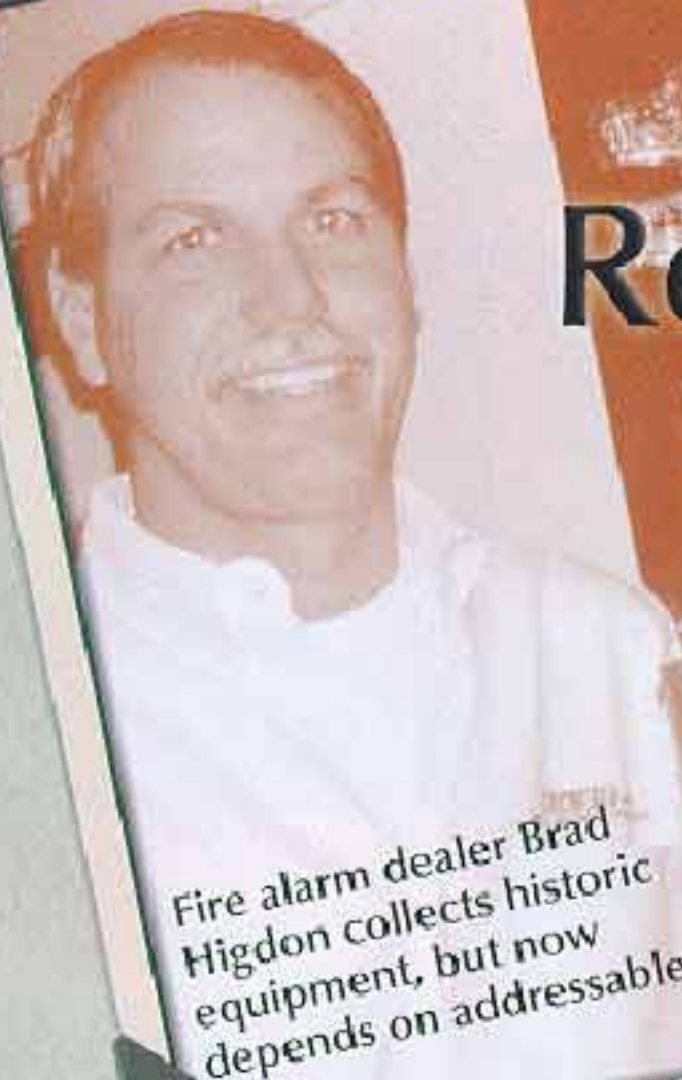


SDM[®]

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR SECURITY SYSTEMS & INTEGRATION



Remember **WHEN?**

Fire alarm dealer Brad Higdon collects historic equipment, but now depends on addressables.

Brad with today's fire alarm control, 1963

SPECIAL INSIDE:
2002 Monitoring
Services Guide, p.62

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SECURING AMERICA:

BUILDING EMERGENCY CALL STATIONS COVERT CAMERAS
COMMUNICATIONS PERIMETER SECURITY SECURING AMERICA
DOMESTIC SECURITY SECURING AMERICA
EMERGENCY EVACUATION SYSTEMS MOTION DETECTORS
ENTERPRISE MONITORING HOSPITALS PROXIMITY CARDS PUBLIC BUILDINGS ADDRESSABLE
INDUSTRIAL UTILITIES HAND RECOGNITION SPORTS STADIUMS MAGNETIC STRIPE
MANUFACTURING MONITORING TOURIST SITES DIGITAL COLOR CAMERAS WIRELESS ALARM
RETAIL PANELS DAY-CARE CENTERS ELECTRONIC DOOR HARDWARE SHOPPING MALLS

LESSONS LEARNED

September 11 dawned as just another day, but ended only after it had permanently changed the American psyche by imprinting on it a profound sense of vulnerability. As we awoke on September 12, however, something new had started to take shape — a collective mood of taking action. Plans and procedures for tighter security began to crystallize. In the midst of a renewed commitment to secure America, the electronic security industry got involved.

Business and industry across America began showing a greater level of interest for security systems and services. Along with this increased demand, there materialized a need for dealers and integrators to learn more about potential risks, and technologies for minimizing them.

SDM's Securing America: Lessons Learned article series is designed to provide solutions to problems that your customers face in the post-September 11 world.

This series will feature exclusive studies and articles, which address technologies and applications that are current and pertinent. It will conclude with a White Paper in September 2002. Look for the Securing America logo each month in *SDM* and online.

Fire alarm technology has come a long way from the panels of yesteryear — wait a minute...*yesteryear*? It was only in the late 1960s when fire alarm control panels such as the one featured on this month's front cover were custom-designed for each job. Bulky yet reliable, the panel in that photo — from the collection of Brad Higdon, president of Bass United Fire & Security Systems Inc., Pompano Beach, Fla. — makes a striking statement about how current technology is rife with system-specific information that can help dealers work more efficiently. In fact, current addressable fire alarm technology provides so many benefits that dealers such as Higdon use addressable panels and devices for virtually every job.

"Addressable technology is 99 percent of our business these days," Higdon says. With addressable fire alarms "we can individually annunciate all devices uniquely. We can pinpoint alarms, supervisories, troubles, or faults to an individual [device]. That wreaks savings as well as customer diagnostics," Higdon notes.

"We get service contracts, so we still have the revenue. But we don't spend three hours troubleshooting something that now will take us 20 minutes. For the end-user paying time and materials, it can be a real cost savings," he says.

A wealth of system information, which translates to installation and service efficiency, is the primary benefit of addressable technology.

"I believe an addressable system has a lower cost over the life of the system than a conventional system," says Jeff Hendrickson, director of marketing at Silent Knight, Maple Grove, Minn.

"You do see savings on installation because the wiring methods are easier. But the bigger savings come over the life of the system when doing maintenance. It's much easier to pinpoint a problem on an addressable system — which will give you detailed information about which smoke detector head is malfunctioning, for example — so you can go right to that device rather than having to service a whole zone of a conventional panel," Hendrickson notes.

In addition to the cost savings that stem from having more specific information available to technicians, Hendrickson identifies two other chief benefits: the availability of addressable technology to dealers through a greater number of channels than in the past; and the integration of digital communicators into addressable panels.

"An addressable alarm system has always had a great deal of info at the site; you could have hundreds of smokes and pinpoint accuracy. But they didn't have that info off-site. I think the integration of the communicator into the addressable panels has opened up a whole new area for service and reporting capabilities," he says.

Here's a good example: An alarm company can "call" his client's system prior to making an on-site maintenance call, to determine if there are any malfunctioning smoke detectors and what type they are.

"I can bring the right things with me so I don't have to make an extra trip. Let's say the smoke in the lobby is dirty



WHY ADDRESSABLE?

WHY NOW?

A closer look at the benefits of current addressable fire alarm technology may make you wonder why you don't use them for every job.

By Laura E. Stepanek, Editor

and the lobby is two floors high, so I know I will need to bring a ladder," Hendrickson says. "I'm already ahead of the game because I can reduce the number of trips. It allows the dealer to look more professional because he's ready to solve the problem at hand."

The availability of fire alarm panels with on-board digital communicators was a much later development than burglar alarm panels with on-board communicators, Hendrickson notes, and that development "opened up a whole side that the fire alarm people weren't involved with before."

"The neat thing about adding a communicator to the addressable system is it has so much more to tell you. There's such a wealth of information there. The two go hand-in-hand. [Even] if you have a really good communicator on a conventional system, you're limited," he says.

TECHNOLOGY FOR TECHNICIANS

Addressable technology makes possible myriad features that ease installation labor, as well as service. Two such features — auto-programming and built-in Notification Appliance Circuit synchronization (NAC Sync) — provide benefits by making installation tasks easy to accomplish, says Pete Arneson, marketing manager at Fire-Lite Alarms, Northford, Conn.

"Dealers want ease of installation. They don't want to have to add additional modules. They want as much as possible built into the

software," Arneson says, referring to the NAC Sync feature. This feature automatically synchronizes all of the strobes on a circuit so that they pulse at the same time, helping dealers with ADA compliance.

"Having NAC Sync built into the panel means it's software programmable as opposed to having to connect several wires to a module. It's completed with a few simple keys on the fire panel," Arneson says.

"We used to have to do a separate module in line with the circuit to synchronize the strobes," dealer Higdon concurs.

The auto-programming feature, which Arneson describes, automatically identifies all initiating devices in the system to the panel.

"Once you've installed the entire system and you're ready to bring it online, with three key-strokes you hit auto-program and the panel goes out and finds all of your detectors and reports them back as photos or ions or ion/thermals, or heat detectors, or duct detectors," he says. "That's very high-tech in terms of the conventional way of doing things."

Higdon points out features that make both technicians' and end-users' jobs easier when dealing with fire alarm systems. For example, "most of the newer addressable technology products are visually indicated," he says.

Many pull stations now have visual indicators, Higdon notes. A blinking light indicates the sta-

SDM Why Addressable?

tus is normal and a solid light indicates the device is activated. "They are a lot more technician and user friendly. When talking to an end-user you can tell them how to find the device by looking for the one with the red light showing through the cover."

From little things that matter a lot to bigger features, such as wireless zones and fire devices, addressable technology has truly advanced recently.

In the wireless arena, ITI, a GE Interlogix company, earned a Product Achievement Award at ISC Expo/West last month for its Advent Fire System. Zones on this system can be hardwired or wireless, which gives dealers versatility when facing building structures that otherwise would be impossible to hardwire.

"We enable savings of 30 to 40 percent of installation time and cost because of Advent Fire's reliable wireless receiver and smoke sensors that install quickly," says Joel Christianson, director of Integrated Systems at GE Interlogix, North Saint Paul, Minn. "The installation cost savings due to Advent Fire's reliable wireless technology enable us to protect people in projects that formerly couldn't be protected because of the cost of running wire and conduit. Those instances include low-income housing and installation where asbestos abatement would cause delays and drive up costs."

Because addressable fire alarm products are generally more expensive than conventional systems, a logical consideration is, *When and where*

Non-Residential Fire Alarms

Triggers to Buy:

- ✓ New construction
- ✓ Modernization
- ✓ Code upgrades
- ✓ Building feature improvements

Strong Verticals:

- Multi-family — 20% of sales
- Mercantile — 13% of sales

Opportunities in Non-Residential Fire Alarms

- Fire command center
- Voice evac systems
- Mustering capability
- Building automation:
 - Protocols — BACnet, LonWorks and NT and multiplexing
- Building Security Modeling — Sandia National Laboratories
- Specialties — colleges, high-rise
- Defibrillators for everyone — numerous vendors

is it appropriate to use addressable technology? Many professionals suggest that because of the advanced feature sets now available, it now can be used for virtually every job.

"About five years ago, if a job was 18 zones or more it would be addressable, and under 18 zones it would be a conventional system," Higdon says of his company's position at the time.

"The Fire Lite MS-9200 really revolutionized that. When that product came out at a reasonable cost, we started using [addressable] in all applications, because of the cost savings in labor. It was so easy just to hang on these addressables in small office buildings and make it cost effective," Higdon adds.

"We've found that most of the installation companies in our marketplace are moving towards addressable," Fire-Lite's Arneson says. "You can do any job, large or small. Anytime you'd have an opportunity for conventional, you might as well consider addressable for these features we talked about. Conventional is a technology that just doesn't have any intelligence.

"For end-users to have the ability to understand immediately where there's a problem in their building, that's essential. Addressability costs a little bit more, but it has a lot more valuable features," Arneson notes.

"The fire alarm industry is moving forward in leaps and bounds," Higdon at Bass United Fire & Security notes. "A lot of the newer technologies will have a lot faster data speed, so we'll end up having information a lot faster."

As the cost of addressable technology has come down and the intelligence, and hence, the benefits, have increased, dealers may be hard-pressed to find a reason not to apply addressable



Fire alarm dealer Brad Higdon uses addressable technology for virtually all of his company's installations, because of the cost savings in labor.

technology in more places.

"I see them used everywhere. I don't see a distinction made between 'this job is a conventional' versus 'this job is an addressable.' Addressable wins for all the same reasons it wins everywhere else. Everyone realizes that this is the [technology] that provides the best overall value. An addressable system helps you in

so many ways: It's easier to install and easier to maintain," Silent Knight's Hendrickson says.

CHANGES IN THE MARKET

The recent terrorism in the United States raised the level of awareness of our vulnerabilities. While this awareness reportedly translated to a rise in sales in electronic security, it didn't necessarily have the same effect in the fire protection market, report some professionals.

What did happen, however, was increased attention to life-safety procedures and systems — attention from end-users, insurers, and authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs).

"Our local authorities are being more attentive to evacuation audibility and the visual evacuation means. They're also looking at wire survivability," Higdon says.

"In commercial fire, we haven't really seen any changes," Arneson says. "People have always seen the value. Since it's code driven, people needed it then and they need it now. But when it comes to voice evacuation, that's where we see the change. Building owners want the ability to get people in and out of buildings."

"Clients seem to be feeling...well, everybody's feeling a little vulnerable. It helps people to be aware of how they can provide a measure of protection against disaster, Hendrickson says." ■