IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS GROUP

17 Considerations When Buying an Electronic Visitor Management

Visitor management is now a necessity. Taking these factors into consideration will help you select the right visitor management solution for your organization.

White Paper Summary

There is more to purchasing an electronic visitor management solution than most realize. This white paper can help you gain a better understanding of all the various aspects you should consider before making a final purchase decision.

If you have any questions after reading this white paper, please contact us.

In today's world, it is more important than ever to be able to keep track of who visited, when they arrived, when they left, and who they were there to see. Visitor management systems have become very popular in recent years as an important part of an overall security plan. The pandemic has added the need for contact tracing.

1. Paper Logs are Archaic

Let's be honest - paper log books really don't work well. Not only is there no electronic record, is the information legible and correct? How many signed as Mickey Mouse? Who forgot to sign out? What do you do with the paper logs? And, how much time would be required to look for something? Sales people love to scan the log looking for visits from their competitors. The list of visitors in the log is a big privacy concern that can cause a lot of bad things to occur.

2. ID Scanning Increases Accuracy

Electronic visitor registration systems usually scan the visitor's driver's license, state ID card or military ID card. The information you need

to capture is automatically saved in the database. This can include information such as name, address and date of birth. Also saved is check-in time, who they are there to see and the reason for the visit. ID Scanners are available to read the 2D bar code on the back of most ID cards, or that use optical character recognition to scan the fields of data printed on the front of the ID.

3. Database & Visitor Badge Photos

The ID card scanner can obtain the visitor's photo from the ID card and save it in the database. Or, you can capture a new photo with an attached web-cam. It is a good security practice to capture and save the photo image. Optionally, you can print the photo on the visitor badge.

4. A "Who to See" Database

It is important to connect to or import a database of people the visitor is there to see. It is much faster to pull Thomas Cunningham from a list than it is to type it. Plus, if the names are typed, there will be no database consistency as you will have Thomas, Tom, Tommy entered. Examples of "who to see" are employees or students.

5. Barred List & Sex Offender Database Checking

Another key consideration is having an internal barred list. This prevents things like people that are banned from the property, or adults who do not have child custody. Good visitor registration systems can check a sex offender database. This is a very important feature for K-12 schools.

6. Speed is a Need

Not only do you not want to slow process, you are also making your first impression on the visitor. You should be able check in a visitor and print a badge in 15 seconds or less. The simple steps are scan ID card, select person to see, and hit print.

7. Visitor Check In & Check Out

In today's security conscious world, you should not have a willy-nilly process. You should require that visitor badges to be returned upon leaving. This way, you have an electronic record of when the person left, and you won't have people trying to come back with the same visitor badge.

8. COVID-19 Considerations

While a variety of Driver's License scanner options are available, some new technology includes contactless driver's license readers, allowing visitors and guests to simply present their ID to the scanner without interfacing with an employee or touching any peripheral devices. This is especially important in today's world, as facilities look to improve visitor tracking but minimize personal contact.

You may want to have the visitor label printer on the counter and facing the guest, so they can remove it themselves. The visitor lanyard and backer can be also placed so the guest can pick it up themselves. There are Temperature Tracking integrations available to validate and track the temperature information. The electronic visitor system can be invaluable for contact tracking. You can generate reports of who visited, who they saw, when they arrived and left.

9. Visitor Badge Issuance

Labels are by far the most used badge in visitor systems. However, I do not like labels. They tend to fall off, be worn under a jacket, and generally are not that visible. A good option is to put the label on a reusable backer that is on a visible lanyard. You will be requiring the return of the badge, so you simply peel the label and re-use the backer again and again. I like the use or a red VISITOR lanyard. It makes visitors easily recognizable.

10. Time-Expiring Visitor Labels

A good option are time-expiring labels that bleed through with VOID after 24 hours. This prevents a visitor from returning the next day. If you do not want to pay the extra money for time-expiring, you can print the valid visit day on the label.

11. Thermal Label Printers

Most visitor systems come with a direct thermal label printer. These are compact and inexpensive. No ribbon or toner are needed. The only downside is they only print in black. There are some small color label printers available for those that want to print color photos or color code the badges.

12. Door Access Control Integration

Some systems can integrate with door access control systems. You may want to issue a card that can electronically open doors. An example is a repair person that needs access to one area. First, you register the visitor using the visitor software. Then, you assign a generic proximity card to the visitor. The proximity card can only access the given room for a given time.

13. Kiosk Visitor Registration Systems

Visitor systems are usually PC-based and are operated by front desk personnel. However, there are also kiosk based visitor systems available. The intent of a kiosk system is to allow for self-check-in to reduce the time required by your personnel. This can be a security concern if you do not validate the person's identity at the front desk. Also, many facilities mention that front desk personnel end up spending a lot of time walking guests and visitors through the check in process anyway, or having to assist them with issues and questions, eventually causing the process to take even more time than an operated system would have. However, there are pros and cons to both kinds of systems.

14. Pre-Registration of Visitors & Smart Phone ID

Some systems allow employees and staff to enter the information of who is coming to visit, what date, purpose and where. This can be more efficient for the reception staff. These systems can also send information and an ID to the visitor. The ID can contain a QR code that can be scanned at the kiosk or front desk. Information can include things like parking location and health screening questions.

Organizations that chose a pre-registration feature will need to have buy-in from the entire organization. All employees and staff will need to know how to use this feature and will need a user ID and password.

15. On-Premise vs. Cloud Systems

Like all data in an organization, visitor data needs to be protected. Certain governmental regulations may apply to the visitor data. Whether you chose on premise or cloud, you will want your IT staff to assess how secure the data will be.

16. Solution Cost

You only have a certain budget to spend, and there is probably no need to go with the most expensive. A system with the features listed in this article should be very affordable.

17. Local Support for the System

Do you want to spend time trying to install and learn the system? What happens if the system malfunctions? The system makes a vital first impression of your organization. It cannot be down for very long. Having a local dealer perform the installation and training is faster, easier and better. And, having local support that can remote in to diagnose and fix, or even come on-site, is an important thing to consider.

About the Author

Tom Stiles is the Executive Director of the Identification Systems Group (ISG), which is an association of 30 identification solutions dealers serving across the US and Canada. He has served in various aspects of the ID and security industries for more than 40 years.

About the ISG

The Identification Systems Group (ISG) is a nationwide network of local experts in identification, security, tracking and card personalization technologies, providing high quality, cost-effective solutions backed by local support and the strength of our Professional Services Certification program. Each member company works together to provide seamless support and collaboration in the identification and issuance industries across the USA and Canada.

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