

# Effective, reliable power management is essential to continued operations

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2 Jul 2015

Clean, stable supply of electricity is essential for businesses in any industry or vertical to be able to continue operating, a challenge for industries in South Africa due to the current energy situation. Irregular supply of energy in South Africa is detrimental to the economy as a whole. However, security companies in particular require 100% power availability to ensure they are able to deliver their services.



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## Power management solutions are mission critical

Without power, cameras and surveillance solutions, electric fencing, access control and other security features cannot function, which gives those with malicious intent a predictable window in which to operate. Every time the power goes down, security is compromised, ultimately defeating its purpose. In addition, security equipment is highly sensitive to power fluctuations, which can cause damage and dramatically decrease operating lifespan. Power management solutions are thus mission critical for security providers, and ensuring these solutions are effective and reliable is of the utmost importance.

Aside from the obvious challenge to security systems when power is unavailable, unstable power can place strain on sensitive equipment. Experience shows that lightning, voltage fluctuations and harmonics on the power supply all have a serious impact on the longevity of products such as Digital Video Recorders (DVRs) and cameras. Unstable power may cause equipment to fail prematurely, without warning and sometimes without organisations being aware of the failure. At the very least, this equipment requires a controlled shutdown, which in turn requires a UPS with SNMP interface. However, security companies require more than just the ability to switch equipment off safely during power outages, they need to be able to continue operating through failures and load shedding.

A true online double conversion UPS with extended battery life will ensure the best possible quality of supply at all times. These UPS solutions along with voltage stabilisers provide a continuous supply of clean power even when utility power is available, preventing voltage fluctuations from reaching the end point devices and damaging them. When utility power is not available, the batteries deliver backup power to keep cameras, DVRs and other essential equipment operational. They can also be used in conjunction with a generator to provide extended backup power.

## Fly-by-night companies taking advantage of current power situation

When it comes to implementing power management solutions, security companies must bear several factors in mind. Firstly, given the crisis levels of the current power situation, many fly-by-night companies have emerged to take advantage

of irrational decision-making. These companies sell cheap solutions that will typically fail in a very short time frame. However, by that stage the company itself may no longer exist to honour warranties, or may not have brought in spares. This results in wasted investment.

In addition, these companies will often sell solutions that are inappropriate for the application for which they are being used - they may not supply enough power for all of the equipment that needs to be connected, the run-time may not be sufficient, or other problems of this nature. Besides the obvious risk of failure, this equipment cannot guarantee a supply of clean reliable power. Given the critical nature of power management solutions, security companies should work with a reliable provider that has built up a solid reputation in the market and delivers proven technologies and solutions.

## **Taking a methodical approach**

Partnering with an experienced service provider can ensure that a more technical solution is implemented, taking a methodical approach toward measuring current load, predicting future load and ensuring a solution is delivered that meets requirements and expectations. Solutions should also be backed by a comprehensive Service Level Agreement (SLA) to ensure equipment is proactively serviced and maintained effectively in order to keep it running optimally.

In addition, security companies should also consider implementing online power monitoring that will enable an improved understanding of the power quality, up times, down times, energy consumptions, load demands and so on. This will allow professional service provider companies to fully gauge this information to ensure the best solution is applied. Assessing trends in a business from a power perspective can be extremely useful for all parties concerned.

When it comes to power management, operating in the dark is simply not an option for security companies. Not only does lack of power erode profitability, it also leads to unreliable service for customers, who may then move their business to a provider that can continue operations through power outages. The current power challenges are set to continue for the foreseeable future, and power management technologies will only escalate in cost, so it is sound strategy for security companies to take a proactive stance now and implement a solution that will benefit them now and in the future.

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