

Guarding Treasures

The Pendulum Gallery deployed the GuardRFID® active RFID solution to protect its art displays. In addition to a fool-proof system, the organization gained some unexpected benefits.

CHALLENGE: Protecting Art in Wide Open Spaces

In downtown Vancouver, the Pendulum Gallery is located in the atrium of HSBC's 23-storey office tower. A non-traditional gallery, it is open to the public, and all visitors to the building pass through it as soon as they enter. Like other galleries, it is at risk of vandalism and theft; because of its open area format, it is especially vulnerable.

The Curator of the Pendulum Gallery faced the difficult task of addressing security concerns without compromising the visitor experience. The building had in place a CCTV security system and security guards but needed a system to proactively protect each art piece without limiting access.

Extensive market research for an appropriate solution proved futile – most were too cumbersome. The organization also considered having the pieces hardwired to a motion sensor system but the idea of having wires coming out of the walls was too obtrusive and not very flexible when it came to changing the artworks.

SOLUTION: 24/7 Security with Small, Easy-to-Use Active RFID Tags

The gallery usually has about 30 art pieces to protect per show and exhibitions range in duration from one to several months. Art pieces also differ in size and shape from free-standing items to works hung on panels using an innovative earth magnet system.

Working with its channel partner (then BMS Integrated Services and now Paladin Security), GuardRFID offered an Asset Tracking and Security solution with minimal infrastructure. The solution consists of active RFID tags, and infrastructure with Tag Readers and server software that monitors the system. The tags are low profile and have vibration and motion sensor features. They are applied directly to the artworks and, when a piece is touched or moved, the tag attached sends



“My search for the least invasive but most effective security system led to GuardRFID. We are happy to employ AllGuard® to protect our art displays.”

Chris Keatley,
Curator,
Pendulum Gallery



a message to Tag Readers that are concealed in the ceiling. GuardRFID's AllGuard Server instantly receives this message from the Tag Readers and creates alerts at Security Workstations as well as authorized mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets using the local Wi-Fi system or via cellular data. In addition to alerts sent to these devices, the server enables a local audible alarm in the atrium to alert security and signals the CCTV system to prioritize the feed from the atrium for immediate visibility of the security event location.



“What was most useful to us was the size of the tags. They are non-invasive and we simply apply them with tape to the backs of the works,” explained Pendulum Gallery Curator Chris Keatley. “It’s an easy-to-use high-tech system that is basically wireless.”

RESULTS: Reliable Art Security System Provides Broad Benefits

The system was deployed in 2015 and continues to protect the artworks displayed at the gallery. It’s a busy space with roughly 1,600-1,800 people wandering through the gallery daily. The gallery hosts 12-14 different exhibitions every year.

“It’s an incredibly public space and we can’t lock it down. The tags slip into the back of the works and do not affect the artwork at all. Any movement triggers an alarm, which has thwarted attempts at theft. We are theft-free, and that gives exhibitors peace of mind,” said Keatley.

Peace of mind for the exhibitors boosts Pendulum Gallery’s reputation in the industry. This has translated to the gallery attracting more expensive works. As a self-funded gallery, the quality of the exhibits directly impacts the gallery’s bottom line.

“The ability to protect an artist’s property is a major concern for every gallery. Art exhibits are unique and irreplaceable. We can demonstrate that we are able to protect their art with a level of security that is comfortable to them,” explained Keatley.

The gallery has seen other financial benefits. Its insurance premiums have dropped since the GuardRFID system was installed.

“The system helps with our insurance. It keeps our premiums low,” said Keatley.

At the end of an exhibition, the tags are removed from the art pieces and reused. Keatley likes how simple it is to assign and unassign tags to artwork in the AllGuard Client software between each show. Now Pendulum Gallery staff are free to focus on the art shows and visitors rather than worrying about the security aspect of hosting an exhibition in the open space.

The GuardRFID Advantage

- **Low Profile Tags:** The Pendulum Gallery needed a solution that was effective but unobtrusive so that it wouldn’t affect the visitor experience. The Curator was delighted with the size of the AT-4 tags, which can be added to artworks without complications.
- **Easy-To-Use System:** Having a reliable and durable security system in place is critical for the gallery but the system’s set up and operation cannot be too time consuming. The gallery values the easy-to-use GuardRFID system and its simple tags that can be affixed to the back of each art piece.

Business Benefits

The GuardRFID Asset Tracking and Security Solution is delivering tangible business value to the Pendulum Gallery, including:

- **A Fool-Proof Security System that Boosts Exhibitor Confidence:** Providing a level of security beyond its exhibitors expectations underscores the Pendulum Gallery’s expertise and improves the value of the business relationship.
- **Decrease in Insurance Premiums:** The gallery’s ability to demonstrate a comprehensive security system is in place has resulted in lower insurance premiums.
- **Better Exhibitions:** A reliable and dependable security system translates to attracting better exhibitions, which directly impact the gallery’s bottomline.



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