

“AMAG Transitions From Product-led Business To Solutions-led Business” Says Howard Johnson, Chief Operating Officer

Howard Johnson, Chief Operating Officer, AMAG Technology - A G4S Company Joins Us “In The Boardroom” On SecuritySolutionsWatch.com

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SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: Thank you for joining us today, Howard. After 34 years at AMAG, Howard Johnson has seen a lot change: change at the company, change in the industry and change in technologies. In this interview, Howard takes a deep dive into these topics and shares his views. Before discussing AMAG in more detail, please tell us about your background.

Howard Johnson: Beginning in 1984, I started as a technician working at customer installations in what we'd now call the Professional Services Department. I moved on and became a QA Test Engineer for the product line, which then consisted of primarily manual testing of Intruder Alarms before moving back to the technical side where I ran the technical support department. Next, I managed Product QA, then ran hardware development before moving to manufacturing and distribution. Eventually, I took over product development where I oversee all development and management of the Symmetry Security platform and a team of engineers.



Howard Johnson, Chief Operating Officer, AMAG Technology

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We are honored to have Howard Johnson, COO, AMAG Technology - A G4S Company, join us “In The Boardroom” to discuss AMAG's transition to a solutions-led business.”
Martin Eli, Publisher

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: AMAG is a well-established security management solution provider. What direction do you see AMAG heading?

Howard Johnson: We are close to completing the transition from being a product-led business to a solutions-led business. The breadth and sophistication of the product set we have is becoming difficult for the traditional integrator to communicate to their user base. Increasingly, the product manufacturer needs to be involved in selling the solution to ensure the requirements are met and the value proposition is fully explained.

Technology makes things simpler over time, but in the security industry, innovation branches off in different directions making it difficult for technology to make things simpler. Remember all those printer driver problems you used to have? No one ever thinks about that now; they just plug in and go.

We are finding complementary markets for our products where integration opportunities are helping companies with different aspects of their businesses. For example, intrusion integration, fire integration, BMS, space management and heat and light are all part of security. Our Symmetry products can integrate with these solutions and help users meet compliance, mitigate risk and save money. Our long-term strategy remains the same: to be a long-term valued partner and provide continuous value to our customers.

We are reinventing ourselves to provide a consultative approach so our customers know how to best use our Symmetry Security Management System. There are new challenges, technologies and propositions. It's our job to help our customers learn how to use Symmetry to be more efficient.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: How do you see Symmetry evolving to meet the demanding needs of your customers?

Howard Johnson: One of the natural things for a product provider to do is to provide the complete solution. When you provide the complete solution, tech support is easier and the connectivity is more sophisticated because you understand the whole solution. We'll continue to manufacture the whole solution. As we develop our products, we'll have more flexible interfaces so integration becomes easier and easier. Our customers can start anywhere with Symmetry, whether it's visitor management, video, access control and ultimately branch out from there. The difficulty is wanting to be all things to all people, but in essence that is what we have to achieve, from a solutions sense.

Our product line is evolving to meet new market needs. We recently launched RISK360, an incident and case management platform. RISK360 lets users automate, investigate, analyze and document incidents so businesses can make informed decisions to operate efficiently, save money, mitigate risk and enforce compliance. This is a new market for us, yet it compliments the Symmetry System and provides another layer of security.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: In your opinion, is there anything you can do as a company that

A graphic for an AMAG Technology webinar series. It features the AMAG Technology logo (a red hammer icon) and the text 'AMAG TECHNOLOGY A G4S COMPANY' in the top left. The main title 'WEBINAR SERIES' is in large, bold, white letters. The central image shows a laptop with a red play button icon, surrounded by various tech-related icons like a Wi-Fi signal, a document, a bar chart, a speech bubble, and a mail icon, all connected by dashed white lines. The date and time 'TUESDAY JULY 17 10 AM PDT / 1 PM EDT' are displayed in white and red text at the bottom right.

AMAG WEBINAR SERIES

The AMAG Technology logo, featuring a red hammer icon to the left of the text 'AMAG TECHNOLOGY' in large, bold, black letters. Below this, the text 'A G4S COMPANY' is written in a smaller, spaced-out font. At the bottom, the website 'SecuritySolutionsWatch.com' is displayed in red and black, with the tagline 'SOLUTIONS • NEWS • EVENTS' underneath.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: In your opinion, is there anything you can do as a company that

can help your integrators succeed?

Howard Johnson: I think the big conversation we don't have with our dealers is, how do we work together to bring out our best skill sets? Quite often we see a dealer who just wants to see a serial process, which is product to provider to end user. We need to stand shoulder-to-shoulder when we go to the customer. It's better for the dealer to do this, better for us AND better for the customer. We need to work more closely with our dealers to make them feel more comfortable that we have joint aims and objectives. We want a true partnership with all of our dealers.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: What can AMAG learn from their integrators and end users?

Howard Johnson: I think there is a difference between listening and hearing. We hold user group meetings often, but typically what happens is each person states what they want and we write down their ideas. While that is great, what would be more beneficial is if the room full of customers would cross-collaborate between themselves to work out what the real value is with the things they want us to do and not do. I think we can do more to help end users and dealers to work together. Our Security Engineering Symposiums and end user group sessions are good, but the process needs to deepen and mature. We will keep holding customer sessions, but will work to build relationships so our customers feel empowered to change our business if they are prepared to put the effort in to really think about what they want out of us and Symmetry.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: Do you think AMAG is leading the way with any trends or technology?

Howard Johnson: I think there is a big interest in Bluetooth right now, and we were one of the first to market with our Symmetry Blue Bluetooth reader. We are growing our Bluetooth product offering to provide several options.

I think in our core product offering we are leading the industry. If you buy a product from us, the support is from us. We offer an all-in service approach. No more bills across the system, whether it's our system or a system we integrate with. If you pay your Site Support Agreement, our responsibility is to understand the system enough to support it.

There is nothing worse than getting hit with a bill you weren't expecting. (We see that enough in our daily lives.) From a product manufacturer's point of view, most product manufacturers sell third-party products because people like to buy it that way, but the real trick is to be able to provide support for the things that you sell.

Our products allow for backward compatibility with previous technologies so customers can upgrade technology with minimal investment.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: Have the additions of the Symmetry GUEST Visitor Management and Symmetry CONNECT Identity and Access Management solutions changed your customer's perception of AMAG?

Howard Johnson: I think we've disrupted people's views of AMAG. We have an old identity and a new identity, and while they are both valuable, we've disrupted by adding cloud-based visitor and identity and access management solutions to our product line-up and our customers are starting to understand we offer solutions beyond access control. We explain the new identity-- that we offer a unified solution-- and the new strategy. We are growing as a business. In one or two years, people will be more comfortable. We are keeping our core values, processes and commitments to support our products and product development. It's all there. It just comes in a new, shinier, expanded package.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: What impact could Symmetry GUEST and Symmetry CONNECT have on your customers?

Howard Johnson: For our dealers, GUEST is a tremendous opportunity for them to take to any customer. It gives them a new and exciting business model where they don't have to sell installation hours to put a card reader on a wall. They can sell a customer a proposition, and receive revenue for the long-term for that proposition that they've sold them.

For end users, GUEST is a simple, powerful, easy-to-use subscription service for managing visitors. It helps them start to understand AMAG as a business and see what else we have to offer.

Symmetry CONNECT is an enterprise space product and needs a different approach. CONNECT manages the different identities that enter a building and streamlines processes to help companies become more efficient. CONNECT helps regulated industries such as financial services, electrical power, healthcare and oil and gas maintain compliance. Its robust reporting delivers standard options needed to meet compliance and custom reports satisfy PCI, SOX, HIPAA, NERC CIP and other audit and compliance demands. It works well with GUEST, because customers won't buy CONNECT unless they were already working with AMAG in the first place. You become so entwined in the business processes that you have a huge amount of trust with the supplier.

For our dealer base, all of our solutions allow them to stay with us. They don't have to take ownership of the integration because it's from one company - us. We have much greater breadth and depth for those integrators and end users who want to have one valued partner they work with. We are happy to provide commercial terms for long term support and with one fixed fee so there are no more bills for the customer.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: Thank you, Howard. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Howard Johnson: One of our missions as a company is to make the end user's life easier. We develop solutions to help our customers operate efficiently, reduce costs and meet compliance, which essentially are the three reasons companies are compelled to make changes in their security systems. To do that, we want to become a trusted advisor. Technology makes life easier, but with new technology comes more complex infrastructure and therefore a close partnership with IT is required. We want to work together with our integrator and end user to help them figure out their data and how to use it to streamline business, automate processes and reduce costs. If we can do that, everyone will be successful.

ABOUT AMAG TECHNOLOGY

AMAG Technology's Symmetry™ Security Management Solutions are deployed across a wide variety of market segments from commercial to government, education, healthcare, banking, transportation, utilities, plus many more. Headquartered in Torrance, California with sales and support located throughout the Americas, EMEA, APAC and LATAM, AMAG provides customers with industry leading unified security solutions. AMAG Technology is part of G4S plc, the world's leading global integrated security company which has operations on six continents and 585,000 employees. As the industry leader, AMAG focuses on delivering the latest technology to meet market needs.

www.AMAG.com; www.G4S.com; www.G4S.us

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For "In The Boardroom" With Howard Johnson, Chief Operating Officer, AMAG Technology - A G4S Company:

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