



Connaught

CONVERGED SOLUTIONS



Buyer's Guide to Doors



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Introduction

Managing security services within a business can feel overwhelming in a world with increasing options and changing technology. The shift in work models and the increase in business utility bills means that managers like you are now expected to deliver more, with less resource. With a wide spectrum of access control technology on the market, you need the information to make the right decision, based on the needs of your company and its stakeholders.

Here's the question. In today's complicated climate, is your access control setup properly protecting you or is it unsafe and leaving you vulnerable? This guide will help you decide how to get the best solution for your business.

You'll discover:

- ✓ How to choose a product
- ✓ How to choose a supplier
- ✓ The access control traps to avoid



How to choose a product

With so many different options available, there are two key steps to choosing the right product for you:

Work out what you already have

Map out your site

The most important resource for getting the best from your access control setup is to have a clear and comprehensive sitemap. This should include every part of your premises, including the perimeters and gates.

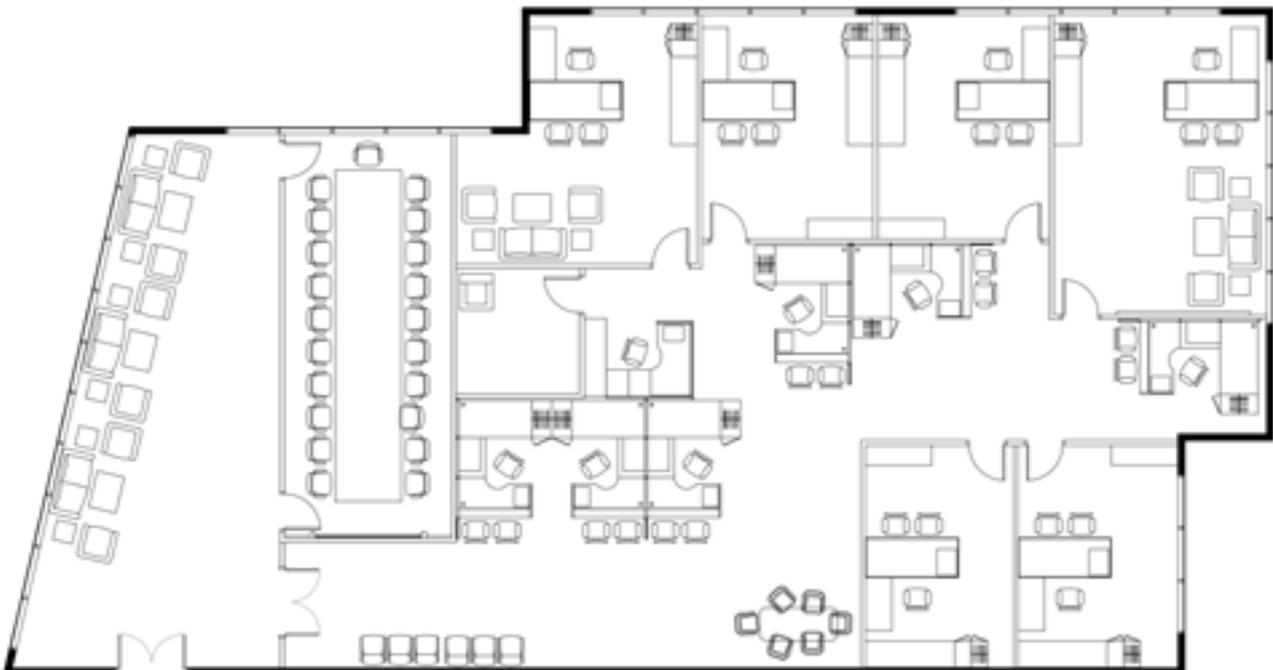
It makes sense to have one plan for internal areas and one for external, as these will have different requirements.

Once you have this marked out, you can use it to identify which doors have access control already (whether this is in the guise of magnetic locking systems, traditional keys or padlocks).

Alongside this, break up areas of your site on a list (for example, Reception Entrance, Rear Entrance, Server Room). Next to these areas, you can create a better understanding of your site by asking yourself the following questions:

- How much traffic does this area have, and does this include vehicles?
- How easy is this area to access?
- Is this area used by visitors or members of the public, or exclusively by your organisation staff?
- What is the condition of the doors in each area?

Knowing the answer to these questions will form your Site Access profile and allow you to identify any potential issues, which you can then prioritise in your access control requirements.



What is the condition of your doors?

Once you have your sitemap planned out, it's time to take audit of the conditions of the doors standing between your premises and potential entrants.

Make a list of each door, and work out how secure it is, based on its condition. A locking system, whether a magnetic lock or lock and key system, will be rendered ineffective if the door itself isn't sturdy and able to withstand opening by force, although these systems will certainly help. Likewise, standard white UPVC doors will not always support the weight of a magnetic lock placed on the top of the door, compared to a sturdier wooden door.

Work out whether each door closes properly, whether there are any weak spots or breaks, and how sturdy the door is. This will give you the appropriate insight into whether you would like to replace any doors ahead of implementing a brand new access system.

Where are your staff based?

Do you have multiple sites which need to be secured? If you have colleagues working from different sites, consider a solution with smart credentials, where you can send access links to smart devices to grant access without several sets of fobs or tokens.

If you have staff based in an office where they can't directly see visitors, you may benefit from a video entry system to allow them to remotely grant entry via a video intercom.

The benefit of proximity tokens over key systems is that, rather than getting a new key cut for staff, tokens can be programmed to your entry system easily and quickly, and de-registered if lost or stolen.

Access vs Entry

Although they are closely related, door access and door entry systems differ very slightly, and it is helpful to determine what you already have in place and what you are hoping to achieve with your new system.

Door Access allows you and your staff to grant access and validate visitors at your discretion. These systems usually work with intercom technology, where the visitor or staff member does not need a token or key to enter the building.

Door Entry refers to permitting staff to self-access parts of a building, using proximity tokens, fobs, keypads or smart credentials. This does not require a staff member to grant access remotely or intercom setup.

These two systems are often used in tandem to provide flexible access control for companies who would like to be able to both monitor visitors and allow secure, simple access for staff.

Networked or standalone?

Due to the flexible nature of access control, you can choose between having all of your secured doors centrally managed, via specialist software, or having each door programmed locally.

Programming a door locally means that the locking solution on that door works completely independently of any other doors on your site. This can be a good option for smaller sites where you may not need a larger networked solution. Tokens are added and barred at the door.

For larger sites, or where management would prefer centralised control, networked solutions allow for all doors to be viewed and reported on from a PC or mobile app. Tokens would be added and barred via the networked software and all door information is available in one place.



Work out what you need

Once you have built an Access Control profile for your business, you will have some understanding of what you are looking for in a new solution. It can be helpful to separate these into the following categories:

Administrative

Looking at your door profile from the last step, you should now be able to answer the following questions:

How many secured doors do you need? Your audit may have identified that you have areas which aren't currently fully secured and your sitemap will allow you to count the total number of doors which require a new access solution.

What type of access control do you need for these doors? Consider whether each door will be self-granted entry or whether you would like to be able to grant access remotely too.

Do you need to be able to restrict exit as well as entry? In some areas, you may want to use locking technology to restrict access in both directions. With access control software this can also give you user traceability, to see when your fob-holders have left an area of your site. In other areas, exit control may not be required.

How many users will you have for each door? With door entry systems, this will determine how many proximity tokens you will need.

Cost and budget

With the cost of living rapidly rising, budget is more of a concern than ever for purchasing managers looking for top value security.

Using your sitemap, you can identify the priority areas for access control, and then build your door security system over time, adding secured doors alongside budgetary restrictions. Generally speaking, starting at the perimeter of your site and covering all key entrance and exit points is a good starting place for an access control system.



Software features

With ever-advancing security technology, Access Control software can provide you with valuable tools to help securely manage your staff and site.

Magnetic locks can be monitored via software to trigger reports to managers as emails or notifications. This can be the result of a door being left or propped open, for example, so that you can have remote access to any security issues on site, wherever you are.

Networked solutions can also offer roll call technology, which will provide you with a printout of all staff currently on site, in the event of a security breach or emergency. You can produce custom reports, based on individuals, departments and doors, and implement temporary access rights.

Individual doors can be locked or unlocked remotely, which gives you and your teams extra control over your site's security.

Another software feature is the ability to upload images to better manage your staff and site, such as User ID images to corroborate token user identity or site maps to make door management easier.

Different levels of management operator can be implemented meaning that you can remain GDPR compliant by only permitting access to data to those who need it, whilst still allowing management teams appropriate information.

Integration

The best security systems work seamlessly with one another, to allow for a converged solution which leaves your premises properly protected. There are ways to integrate your access control with your CCTV and alarm systems, meaning that you get the safest setup for your staff.

In the event of a fire, all secured doors will have either an automatic door release button or emergency break glass function, which means that staff can safely and quickly exit the building. This can be further integrated into the system, to allow for doors to automatically unlock upon activation of the fire alarm, or for a roll call report to be automatically triggered.

Alongside fire systems, access control can also be connected to CCTV surveillance systems. Cameras can be triggered to start recording upon the opening of a secured door. This means that in the event of forced entry, cameras can capture the intruder and alert the system administrators. Camera technology can also be used in video intercoms to allow granted access for staff remotely.

Smart security systems can also allow the use of a proximity token to act in place of code entry for intruder alarms. This is especially useful in buildings where it can be unsafe for staff to spend time standing at an intruder alarm keypad to disable an alarm after unlocking an entrance door.



How to choose a supplier

Demonstrations and explanations

Door Access and Entry systems can be a minefield of jargon and technical terms, which can be overwhelming when all you want to do is protect your people and premises.

The best suppliers will take the time to meet with you to explain the process of implementing a new security system. You should be able to access demonstrations and view lock and reader options, as well as software to really be sure that you are getting the right solution for you.

If at any point you feel like you need further information, your supplier should be available to explain in a straightforward and accessible way.

Service delivery experience

The growth of access control has led to a rise in suppliers claiming to offer the best solution for your needs. Be wary of companies who cannot demonstrate that they have the experience of successfully implementing these solutions in organisations similar to yours. Security suppliers should have access to case studies to show this, and there's no substitute for experience in an ever-changing access control market.

Look for suppliers who have Gold Accreditation as installers for market-leading systems such as Paxton. This demonstrates the highest possible criteria for skill and training straight from the source of the technology.

Sub-contractors

Another question to ask a potential security supplier is whether they use subcontractors to install their door entry solutions. Whilst there can be benefits to outsourcing certain functions (such as HR or IT), having a security supplier who directly employs, trains and manages their technical staff shows that they take full ownership of prioritising expertise and knowledge of these subjects in-house. It also means that the administrative staff for your supplier will have access to diaries and be able to contact engineers in the event of any issues without any third parties being involved.

Maintenance and support

Unless you have the time, interest and skill set to fully self-manage your door access system, it is essential that you choose a supplier who can offer you ongoing support, training and maintenance following install.

Lots of security solutions offer impressive benefits and full functionality, but without any additional support. These systems often incur large charges for changes, assistance and callouts once installed, so this is an important element to clarify before signing any contracts.

Suppliers who offer drop-in access to engineers, annual service visits and access to how-to guides will offer you far more value long term than those who don't.

Clarity

Having all of the information upfront from your supplier is key to remaining in control of your security solution. You should choose a supplier who will give you all the details of what your contract contains, upfront, from the first day to the end date. Ask your supplier how renewals are handled, what is included in your monthly charge and what falls outside of the contract, so you don't end up with any unpleasant surprises.



Access control traps to avoid

- ✘ Avoid cheap-looking door deals which come without programming assistance or compatible power devices.
- ✘ If you have an older door or a PVC door, fitting an expensive locking system to it can be pointless if the door can still be broken for entry or the lock is too heavy to be supported. In this instance it's better to fit a new door first before securing technology.
- ✘ Make sure you know what's included in the package and whether maintenance, servicing and support are available over the term of the contract.



How can we help you?

If you'd still like help unlocking the world of access control, Connaught can help. Get in touch and we will give you clarity and control over your security solutions.



Connaught Converged Solutions

Protecting and connecting our customers for over 35 years

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