



## These Canine Care-Givers are Dogmatic about Security

### Vicon's Valerus Delivers Performance and Value to Chattanooga's Play Dog eXcellent

#### Background

Play Dog eXcellent (PDX) has been providing services for the best dogs in the Chattanooga, Tennessee area since 2004. The dogs come for boarding, doggie daycare and training, and sometimes their owners come too, for seminars, workshops, and performance events. There's plenty of room to run and play at the 20,000 square-foot building and four-acre property, known locally as "the old skating rink."

While PDX Managing Partners, Nancy Miller and Bev Eitner, seek to provide their charges with a fun, social and caring environment, they never forget that their foremost responsibility is to keep the dogs as safe as possible. Their flourishing business serves an average of 120 dogs each day, occasionally spiking to over 160. The business has always had a surveillance system in place, but with new services and additional clients, the owners needed enhanced tools to support their operations and staff. Enter Pendell Meyers, with Meyers Security. His years in the Electronic Security business were put to the test discovering the unique requirements of the facility and implementing a technology upgrade that balances performance needs with cost-sensitive strategies.

#### The Plan

Pendell worked with Vicon's Regional Sales Manager, Mike Rose, to develop several proposals that could deliver good, better and best results, all based upon Vicon's new Valerus video management platform. After a demonstration of the software's ease-of-use and flexibility, the managing partners and key supervisors agreed to move forward with a plan that incorporated eight of the facility's existing analog cameras and six new high-definition IP cameras into a Valerus Video Management System. A Vicon video encoder would convert analog streams from the older cameras into digital video, allowing Valerus to manage and communicate with the older cameras in the same way as the new cameras.

#### Organization

Play Dog eXcellent



Play Dog eXcellent

#### Challenges

- Provide a small business on a budget with a cost-effective approach to migrate from an analog camera system to a high-performance IP platform
- Eliminate blind spots around perimeter of property and provide sufficient video detail to visually identify close to 150 individual dogs on camera
- Enable easy search and call up of video for security, management and training purposes
- Identify best camera options to maximize coverage while minimizing hardware, licensing and installation costs

#### Solution

PDX invested in a system that incorporates existing analog cameras and new IP high-definition cameras into a Valerus Video Management System. A video encoder allows the analog cameras to behave as IP models within the Valerus interface. Ultimately, the older cameras will be swapped for Vicon's analog HD models, using the existing cabling and encoder, making the conversion simple and cost-effective.

#### Results

The Valerus system is being used to successfully enhance security of the dogs and property, monitor the performance of staff members interacting with the dogs and provide video of dog behavior for use in staff training. Management values the system as an important tool to help them do their jobs better.



MEYERS SECURITY

“With the new HD cameras, I can see the white on his toes and on his chest. I know exactly which dog I’m looking at.”

~ Nancy Miller, PDX Managing Partner

## Installation

Several new Vicon 4 MP HD cameras were installed in locations where visibility was lacking. Nancy says, “We have almost an acre out back, and the cameras we had didn’t let me see what was going on at the top end of the property. Now I can see every corner of the playground and easily identify what things are correct and what things need attention.” The HD cameras also help with identifying specific dogs. With so many on site, the ability to see detail really matters. “Sometimes, I’d see a dog run by and it was just a blob. Now I can see the white on his toes and on his chest; I know exactly which dog I’m looking at.”

The training arena, created from the old skating rink, was another space that required some special attention. This is a large open area where there is often lots of activity. Pendell recommended using two of Vicon’s 360 degree 12MP cameras, which could provide coverage of the entire arena instead of using 8 to 10 traditional fixed cameras. This was a highly cost-effective solution, reducing camera hardware, licensing fees and installation labor. The cameras also provide an unexpected benefit. Because of their wide, unobstructed field-of-view, Nancy can play back and study video of agility exercises she does with the dogs, helping to make her training more effective. She says, “When I get to the point where I’m comfortable enough with it, we may use it as a teaching tool in some of our classes.”



While preserving use of existing analog cameras helped reduce system price for the initial installation, PDX plans to swap out those cameras for Vicon’s HD analog cameras as soon as there’s an opportunity. Offering the same video quality as the facility’s new IP cameras, Vicon’s HD analog models can transmit over the existing cabling and connect to the encoder already in place. This will make the conversion simple and affordable. “There’s no comparison in quality between the older cameras and the new ones with high definition,” says Nancy.





“The new Valerus system is an important tool that helps me and my staff do our jobs better.”  
~ Nancy Miller, PDX Managing Partner

**Using Valerus**

All cameras are recorded to a Valerus server, which offers PDX the convenience and economy of operating over its existing network. Management was thrilled that no client software is required; they use a standard internet browser to view the cameras. An added bonus is the mobile application, allowing them to view cameras from anywhere on their mobile devices.

Nancy describes the interface as “very easy to use. Without a lot of technical experience, I can do what I need to do, including searching for specific incidents from recorded video.” In just the six months since the system was installed, Valerus has helped to address security, management and training issues. Nancy has used it to identify the make and model of a car responsible for drive-by vandalism in the parking lot, monitor the performance of staff members interacting with the dogs, and provide video of “teachable moments” of dog behavior to use in staff training. “I can show them recorded examples of where something could have been done better, so that they learn from it.”



## Future Paws-ibilities

Nancy says that the new Valerus system has not just been helpful in enhancing physical security, but has given her “mental security,” knowing that she has eyes on all parts of the facility if necessary. “It’s made me feel a lot better. Particularly the fact that we have badging around the premises that says we have security cameras in place.” But then she laughs, “Actually, it’s hard to know for sure if it’s the cameras or the dogs that are doing the trick!”

She says that Meyers Security and Vicon have been excellent to work with. “This whole experience has been wonderful. Pendell and Mike have been great; they’ve answered any concern just as quickly as they can get to it.”

“People’s dogs are like their children, and when my customers leave their kids with me, they want to know that we have a number of people watching them at all times – not just looking at them through video cameras. But it’s my job to keep those dogs safe, and the new Valerus system is an important tool that helps me and my staff do our jobs better. It’s an investment that I’m confident will serve us well into the future.”



135 Fell Court, Hauppauge, New York 11788 USA | 1 631.952.2288 | [www.vicon-security.com](http://www.vicon-security.com)

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