



Family Business Solves Million Dollar Theft Problem with Timeless Values and High Tech

If you were to stroll down Madison Street in the center of [Forest Park, Illinois](#) and ask about the Calderone family, most know the name.

Two generations ago, the Calderones immigrated from Sicily to this western suburb of Chicago (its tagline's *Big City Access, Small Town Charm*), nine miles west of the Loop. Anthony Calderone Sr. grew up here and started his own company, [Illinois Alarm Service, Inc.](#) along with his wife Lois (née Fosco). While earning his GED and taking college courses, he built an influential family business selling, installing, servicing and monitoring fire alarms, security, surveillance and card access systems, for commercial, industrial, municipal and residential properties.

A generation later, as his hometown grew and diversified, his sons Augustino, Illinois Alarm Service's New Business Development Manager, and Anthony Jr., Installation Manager, began thinking about how to build upon the company's reputation for stellar customer service, by focusing on higher-end access systems. They were interested in smart tech, in moving beyond alarms to more versatile security.

Industry:
Enterprise

Location:
Forest Park, Illinois

Application:
Real-time video surveillance

Solution:
OnSight Portable Surveillance Unit with Analytics

“We do more than just protect people’s assets. We make sure that we sell quality products and are dedicated to customer service.” Anthony Jr. states. “Most other alarm companies sell the cheapest products on the market to get business, and will worry about the service of the equipment on the back end. That is the opposite of our core values here at Illinois Alarm.”

Millions in Theft

The Company* (name masked for privacy), a client of Illinois Alarm Service, was struggling with million-dollar losses from property theft. The Company, which performs various services, housed expensive inventory at what was essentially a remote construction yard. People were blithely stealing the products, in addition to damaging onsite equipment.

“The company was looking for a way to prevent these massive property and financial losses, so they hired a Director of Security who happened to be a friend of mine. So he contacted me to see what solutions Illinois Alarm could provide,” Augustino stated.

“The fact that the V5 Systems unit was self-powered was key. And it took just a couple hours to go out there and install the device. We were in and out, and the client immediately had the video feed on his phone.”

- Anthony Jr., Installation Manager

“The problem was the client rents this land. There’s no power source to run most security systems,” Anthony Jr. explains. Since the Company is a renter with a tight budget, it could not trench the property, a permanent and costly solution, to run fixed power and communications for surveillance, even if the landlord were to allow it.

The client felt like it was out of reasonable options, until Augustino came across V5 Systems’ solar-powered security technology as a potential solution for the firm’s problems. Augustino reached out to V5 Systems to learn more.

“ Also, it’s a turnkey system. It’s plug and play. Whether you’re using an app on your phone, or a desktop machine, you don’t have to be a computer expert to understand it. With the video analytics, you can see who’s outside now before they even ring the buzzer,” Anthony Jr. says. “Or say there’s a construction vehicle in the fire lane, the units will let you know, and you can solve the problem. I think the analytics sell people.”

“I was impressed by the V5 Systems analytics,” Anthony Jr. says. The video analytics, enabled through the company’s Artificial Intelligence-driven software running on the edge (on the device itself), allow for real-time alerts/response. Unlike a motion-based system, video analytics can determine whether an object is an animal, human or vehicle. Because the information processing happens on the device, as opposed to at a central server, alerts can be sent to users in under three seconds. This is key for clients like the Company, which needed rapid visibility regarding who was on the premises.

V5 Systems’ OnSight™ Portable Surveillance Unit just made sense for the Company and Illinois Alarm.

V5 Systems Garnering Local Interest With Cutting Edge Tech

Anthony Jr. has witnessed a bubbling of local interest in the V5 Systems solutions; the turnkey reliability and functionality of the technology has intrigued neighboring enterprises, and the video analytics and power platform consistently garner special mention.

“The solar panel makes it possible to place surveillance in remote areas, especially since the Company lacked a reliable power supply. We’ve had many clients who aren’t sure how to handle those sorts of situations,” stated Anthony Jr.

Solar technology is just beginning to take off in Illinois, and Illinois Alarm wants to be on top of that trend by offering V5 Systems solar-powered units to its clients. Traditionally, Midwesterners haven’t viewed solar as a viable power option for the region because of the harsh weather conditions and lack of sunlight during the winter months. V5 Systems’ solar technology is hail- and bullet-resistant and rated, so customers have peace of mind during storms. With industry-leading, low-light yield, the panels absorb energy on less sunny days, unlike traditional off-the-shelf solar that requires direct sunlight. Additionally, Illinois Alarm is finding that people really like the eco-friendly aspect of the product, in addition to its ruggedness and reliability.

“The power is an easy sell. We let customers know that power isn’t an issue because of the proprietary solar panels. If they’re worried, we offer the auxiliary power option for places that are really shady,” Calderone explains. The V5 Solar Panels charge the onboard batteries, keeping the unit operational for up to 3 days on a full charge. Auxiliary power can be added to the unit to extend the operational time up to 7 days, all with no additional sunlight. Even in the bitter, dark winter, the OnSight unit only needs two to four hours of daylight to perpetually power itself.

In recent years, Illinois Alarm has met with many clients and prospects who don’t quite grasp the speed with which technology is transforming the security industry.

“Customer education continues to be key. We want to move toward smarter, more turnkey solutions, and we are looking for clients who need and are willing to invest in outdoor loss prevention. You can pay for a good security network now, or you can put off that investment and pay later when your merchandise gets stolen,” Anthony Jr. says.



Going high-tech doesn’t mean that Illinois Alarm is abandoning “high-touch” priorities like customer service and standing behind the products they sell. With the V5 Systems solution, the company can continue to provide exceptional customer service because they can now act on video analytics alerts in real-time to proactively help clients.

“We are embracing new security solutions,” Anthony Jr. explains. “But in terms of responsiveness, service and personal relationships, we’re still the old-fashioned, local company that my father founded and still heads as our President and Chief Executive Officer.”

The Company, meanwhile, is thrilled with its solution, which is currently addressing the theft issues plaguing it. And a happy customer? That means Illinois Alarm Service can continue to be a beloved hometown company, with a reputation for getting the job done right.

Summary

Organization: A business was dealing with a million dollars in property theft and turned to its trusted, local, family-owned security firm, Illinois Alarm Service, to protect its assets.

Challenge: Since the business was warehousing expensive property on a remote construction yard, Illinois Alarm Service needed to provide a solution that did not require fixed power and communications. The solution needed to address the remoteness of the location and the need for real-time information.

Solution: The OnSight Portable Surveillance Unit with Video Analytics was deployed in under 30 minutes. With onboard power, communications and computing, this turnkey platform proactively helped the business monitor and prevent property theft and damage. Real-time alerts to internet-enabled devices meant that the company would have immediate insight into who or what was on its property.

Results: The business gained real-time visibility and the solution is providing ongoing security for the warehousing site. The deployment has created a buzz in the community as more enterprises in the neighborhood are starting to embrace solar-powered security as an affordable, intelligent way of forestalling crime. Meanwhile, Illinois Alarm is able to expand where it can solve problems and generate business.