

Building Automation & Security

R2 Communications Group: Moving to the Next Level

BY SHELLY B. ORTIZ

According to President & CEO Rubén Rodríguez, R2 Communications Group, founded in 1992, positioned itself as the leading provider of cabling services in the industry, but now wants to complement its services by moving into software and hardware, and the implementation and maintenance of security systems. Therefore, in 2004, Rodríguez and his wife, Ileana Rivera, vice president & CFO of R2, decided to take the company to the next level by adding Cable Management

System Software to manage Move Add & Changes (MACs) for their clients. "This is combined with the Systimax iPatch to improve our services," he said, adding, "With these tools we will add speed to our response time and the ability to maintain a daily report of the MACs."

MACs are the moving, adding, or changing of any system cabling within a facility; and the Systimax iPatch is a computerized, integrated recorder that takes inventory of MACs while also providing security by sending electronic warnings of any unauthorized

*Ileana Rivera,
vice president &
CFO of R2
Communications,
and Rubén
Rodríguez,
president & CEO*



The Evolution of Building Systems

1960s – Proprietary applications for communications and building management systems were provided by single vendors and implemented on proprietary cabling systems. Neither structured communications nor integration existed.

1970s – Movement seen in establishment of common protocols in controls systems industry, but without a sufficient market need the industry remained proprietary.

1980s – Responsibility for building cabling infrastructure shifted from service providers to building owners. Local area networks (LANs) replaced mainframe systems. Interoperability standards emerged. Digital signaling began to replace analog signaling in building management systems allowing personal computers to be used to program and manipulate data. Cabling requirements appeared to be the same for voice and data.

1990s – Communications applications go from 10 to 1,000 Mbps (million bits per second). Network topologies go from shared to switched. Local servers go to farms. Optical fiber becomes prevalent as the network backbone. The trend in building management systems is to "push the intelligence out" from a central controller to each control system point. Each control system will have an address much like a LAN environment. Building control systems can operate in the same manner with each point connected to the LAN via structured cabling.

2000 and beyond – A single-source approach to integrating various systems leads to true convergence of building technologies. Any device that can be networked will be controlled and monitored over a single network and linked via one network.

Source: *American Consulting Engineer*, Sept./Oct. 2000

moves, adds, or changes. Rodríguez noted that R2 Communications is the only company in Puerto Rico that is a certified partner with Systimax and fully trained and certified on the iPatch system.

R2 is also the only company in Puerto Rico fully certified to install NetBotz. NetBotz is a camera and monitoring system that can be installed in any computer or telecommunications room and can be configured to take snapshots of anyone entering the room as well as to sense changes in humidity, movement, temperature, liquid, particles, or voltage. When a change occurs, an alarm is automatically issued. With this system, companies with offices all over the world can access their computer or telecommunications room via the Internet. "You don't have to be physically there to monitor your system, and we understand this is where all security systems are going," Rodríguez said.

He also discussed how this monitoring system works with all areas of a business not just security. For example, human resources can monitor employee movement in the room and see how long a network technician takes to complete a job. R2 Communications offers demonstrations

on its website, www.r2communications.com. At the end of April, representatives from both NetBotz and Systimax will hold a seminar with R2 Communications on the island.

Rodríguez revealed they will also soon be certified with Enterasys, a system that gives companies control over guest-user access to corporate resources, enforces corporate security policy, protects mission-critical applications, and automatically responds to attacks. "We are getting certified in this because we understand that downtime [caused by hackers] is costing companies millions of dollars a year, and Enterasys is a security product for hackers within the networks," he said.

The core of R2 Communications business is cabling, but is growing in areas that complement this core. "Everything is turning to technology, but if it is not secure it can cost you more to have it," Rodríguez explained, adding, "We want to put all the pieces together and support our clients in all security-related issues they might have with networks today. We are already doing the infrastructure, now we want to take the next step and help companies maintain their security systems." n