

Case Study

Securing the Shopping Center Environment with the Segway® PT

SHOPPING CENTER SECURITY

IPC International Corporation, Bannockburn, Illinois

Shopping center public safety service has evolved beyond simply patrolling common areas and giving directions. Today security must focus on a multitude of areas, including protecting guests, deterring criminal activity, enforcing center policies and above all – customer service.



IPC International Corporation is the industry leader in shopping center public safety services. With almost 30 years of experience and more than 400 centers in the U.S., Puerto Rico and Great Britain, IPC is an industry barometer. So when IPC announced their Security Patrol program for the Segway Personal Transporter (PT) in the fall of 2004 it was regarded as a major innovation for the industry.

According to Jade Hirt, National Manager of Staff Development at IPC, the company was looking for a way to enhance the visibility of its officers while aiding patrol techniques and mobility. Prior to the introduction of the Segway PT, Hirt's options were limited to bicycles, golf carts and a motorized bicycle/cart type vehicle.

"For sometime we had been looking for a mode of transportation that was more maneuverable and center-friendly than a golf cart for patrol duties inside and outside shopping malls," recalls Hirt. With the availability of the Segway PT, IPC proceeded to develop a three-month security patrol beta test of this newly introduced technology.

"One of our clients had also been looking at Segway PTs and requested the beta test take place at one of their centers," stated Hirt. To initiate the trial, Segway Inc. representatives trained key IPC management and security personnel in a full-day seminar. The timing of IPC's beta test was established to coincide with the busy 2004 Christmas shopping season at one of the largest malls in Houston, Texas. During the beta test IPC evaluated every facet of Segway PT operation as well as its acceptance by the center's security officers, tenants and customers. This test allowed IPC to thoroughly study the Segway PT in real world conditions, examining how officers would be able to maneuver through the crowds, stop safely, and see over large areas like a food court. The results of the test confirmed that Segway PTs were a viable and safe security option for the shopping center environment.

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- Jade Hirt, National Manager of Staff Development, IPC International Corporation

Increased Visibility and Improved Response Time are Major Assets

From a security standpoint IPC found that the increased visibility of the Segway PT security officers was a major asset. In addition, because officers on Segway PTs stand 8" taller they can see and be seen above the crowds especially during very busy periods.

The beta test also validated that in certain situations the Segway PT could greatly improve response times. "In the off hours when the mall was closed, officers were able to respond to an alarm much faster," stated

Executive Summary

THE CHALLENGE

- Improve patrol officer efficiency in the shopping center environment
- Improve community relations with center tenants and customers
- Ensure the safety of patrol officers and the public

THE SOLUTION

- Put patrol officers on board Segway PTs throughout 40+ major shopping center properties in the United States
- Develop and deploy a standardized Segway PT training and operations program to IPC-certified supervisors and patrol officers

BENEFITS TO THE CUSTOMER

- Patrol officer emergency response times improved
- Awareness of patrol officers' presence increased among center tenants and shoppers.
- Patrol officers were able to build trust and interaction with tenants and shoppers

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Hirt. "And being able to respond to a situation quickly can make a big difference in the outcome, whether it's a life saving event, damage to property or theft."

"All of our Segway PT officers understand that this is an important tool to help them with their daily security duties to the center and that these machines are not toys."

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Going beyond the improvement in response time, IPC looked at what officers actually did, and how they were able to perform their duties. The company's findings concluded that virtually every officer saw an increase in their capabilities while on patrol.

IPC's Standardized Training Program Ensures Safe Operation

The trial then moved into a new phase: developing a standardized training program that would allow the Segway PT to be safely operated in any shopping center. "We developed a training curriculum that instructs our officers on the safe and efficient way to use the Segway PT on patrol," said Hirt. "All of our Segway PT officers understand that this is an important tool to help them with their daily security duties to the center and that these machines are not toys."

Hirt and IPC's Training and Professional Development Team, spent many hours riding the units so they would know first-hand what problems and environments their security personnel might encounter. To drill home the Segway PT Security Training program, IPC produced a 24-minute video and a 40-page companion manual. The completed program was used to train the first group of initial instructors in 2004 so that they could in turn go on to certify new officers on units at their individual centers.

"One of the first things that our officers had to realize was that the Segway PT was going to get them noticed," says Hirt. "We teach

new program instructors that their patrol officers will be approached and asked about the Segway PTs. They can expect to attract a crowd of people whenever they stop. Once the initial 'what is it' and 'wow' factors diminish, the pace of security patrol at the property will return to normal. Clients are pleased with the attention our officers receive while on patrol. It's a great ice breaker that promotes positive interaction with customers."

Patrol Officers' Presence Felt and Welcomed

In further discussions with clients and center guests, it was discovered that Segway PTs provide the visual effect of turning one officer into two. This perception is a big selling point when IPC discusses the benefits of having a Segway PT patrol unit at a center. Segway PT patrol units are not designed to replace officers. What they are is an important tool that helps upgrade the visibility of IPC officers, aiding patrol techniques and mobility while providing additional customer relations and service benefits.

According to Jeff Taylor, IPC's Manager of Marketing and Corporate Communications, "the program will continue to grow and expand to more centers as development and management companies begin to utilize this new technology. We pride ourselves on delivering innovative security solutions for shopping centers. Our Segway PT Security Training program is one very visible part of our overall capabilities, and we're seeing more demand for it," says Taylor.

Echoing that statement, Hirt indicated that after May 2006, IPC will have six national Segway PT instructor trainers, and 50 static property trainers operating more than 75 client-owned Segway PTs. At that time, the Segway PT program will be spread out to 40 properties in the U.S.

Prominent property and management companies, including Bayer Properties, Taubman Company LLC and Vestar Property Management, all utilize IPC's Segway PT Security program.

Hirt concludes, "In our specialized industry you have to be constantly looking forward for ways to work smarter and faster. Our program is just one example of this smarter, faster approach and demonstrates our leadership in the security industry." ■

