

Building business with electronics

The benefits of wireless devices and other emerging technologies associated with access control are understood by most in the industry. Many articles have been written detailing how these products are secure and convenient for the end uses. As these devices grow in popularity, it's important to recognize these products are also advantageous for the locksmith's business.

Keeping up with market demands

"The locksmiths that we're seeing prosper in the market and stay relevant are those that are adopting electronics as a whole," says Mark Casey, channel sales manager at Allegion™. "Those that haven't taken an initiative to train on electronics risk becoming stagnant."

Today's market demand for electronics is on the rise. There are many wireless offerings available today, and the industry has seen the technical aptitude requirements associated with these products decrease.

"The amount of electronic and network knowhow becomes lower as products become more advanced," says Casey. "Someone who starts dabbling can progress much faster than in years past. Consider the speed and ease of installation of the Schlage® NDE wireless lock compared to its predecessors."



As the complexity decreases, customer interest is increasing because these products have also become faster, smarter and more cost effective. Locksmiths need to be able to offer these devices to their customers in order to stay relevant.

Casey explains, "Instead of working with separate providers for mechanical and electronic needs, customers will find someone who can do both. They want one person."

Improving business efficiencies

Beyond staying current in an increasingly tech-savvy market, wireless devices improve business efficiencies for locksmiths. Wireless locks simplify installation by combining the lock, credential reader, door position sensor, request-to-exit switch and power all in one unit. And they take only an average of one to two hours to install and significantly reduce labor costs compared to hardwired options. Customers can now install multiple wireless locks within the same cost parameters as one hardwired lock.

Casey explains how Allegion's ENGAGE™ portfolio has significantly simplified the process. "With ENGAGE, there's no certification needed—just an iPhone or iPad. We've taken out a lot of the mystery."

The ENGAGE web and mobile applications make lock management easy for the end users as well, allowing them to manage access rights and view audit trails from anywhere. These are especially helpful for users who are new to access control systems or manage smaller facilities.

Building relationships

The beauty of wireless access control is it's flexible so that customers can adopt in phases and tailor to fit their security needs. As a locksmith, it's important to understand the benefits to the end users in order to effectively communicate those to customers. Become a resource for the customer. This will not only expand opportunities with new clients but also further business with current customers.

“One of the biggest hurdles is getting locksmiths comfortable with technology so they can advocate it to their customers,” says Casey. “But once they do, it opens them up to a new area of business. If they’re not comfortable with it, they don’t want to expose themselves. But once they are proficient, they see it as way to broaden opportunities—selling to new customers or expanding share with current ones.”

He adds that if a locksmith cannot offer his or her service to a new or existing customer who needs support with electronics, the customer will find someone else who can. And if that person is also trained in mechanical solutions, the risk would be that customers will hire him or her to do it all.

That’s not to say that every locksmith must become trained in every new technology on the market. While there are hybrid locksmith-integrators, most still operate within their areas of expertise, broadening their knowledge just enough to understand the basics.

“Locksmiths are typically adept in mechanics, while integrators are skilled primarily in electronics,” explains Casey. “If you look at it as a Venn diagram, locksmiths are to the left and integrators to the right. The middle ground represents the ones seeing potential. These locksmiths are willing to understand basic electronics and integrators are doing the same with mechanical. When you can start blending what you look like, you can start serving more areas, which expands business.”

Looking forward

Wireless electronics are on the rise. Customers want these, and they will go elsewhere if their locksmiths aren’t able to install the devices. It’s important to train on electronics and stay current on other trends in the market. Technology isn’t slowing down, and as it advances, locksmiths need to stay relevant. A deep knowledge of the Internet of Things (IoT) or automation isn’t necessary, but be ready to evolve with the next big thing to impact the industry. Those that already have an understanding of the current landscape, including wireless, are likely best prepared. [Contact an Allegion representative](#) to learn more about the resources available.

About Allegion

Allegion (NYSE: ALLE) is a global pioneer in safety and security, with leading brands like CISA®, Interflex®, LCN®, Schlage®, SimonsVoss® and Von Duprin®. Focusing on security around the door and adjacent areas, Allegion produces a range of solutions for homes, businesses, schools and other institutions. Allegion is a \$2 billion company, with products sold in almost 130 countries. For more, visit www.allegion.com.

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012326, Rev. 08/18
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