

# Meet the installer

Security life with John Ketteridge of Dragon Security Systems in Wroxham

## Do you use a distributor or buy direct?

We use both however the bulk of what we buy is through selected distributors, in order to keep accounts to a minimum rather than shopping around. We do buy from selected manufacturers, who supply us with proven product ranges all of which helps minimise the complexity of the processes. Although we are happy to consider new technology and products.

## Is third party accreditation beneficial to your company?

I would say it has been but not now as much as it used to because you see less influence on the market from insurers, Police and other specifiers. To some extent I would say it's not as powerful as it ought to be, especially given the number of alternative 'approval' services there are these days. You only have to look into these trade offerings to see that there are plenty of people listed who don't have any kind of expertise at all. I think the NSI and BAFE have a lot of ground to cover to reach out to the potential customer base and inform and educate them on the benefits of choosing a genuinely approved installation company, even to get back to the profile the industry had ten years ago.

## What would be a typical project for you?

We range from the small domestic installation through to medium/large jobs. We have just completed two reasonable sized jobs securing car parks which are typical of the kinds of things we do. However, we specialise in providing multiple systems for clients, from the advisory and Design stages, right through to installation and then to a



**Name:** John Ketteridge

**Job title:** Sales Director

**Time in security/fire:** 40 years

**Company:** Dragon Security Systems

**Location:** Wroxham, Norfolk

**Areas of expertise:** All forms of electronic security – CCTV, access control, intruder alarms, fire alarms and Refuge systems, barriers and gates

**Accreditations:** NSI Gold for Intruder and Fire Alarms, CCTV and Access Control and BAFE

long term Partnership with them. I would say that CCTV, access control and fire alarms are the main areas we work in - intruder alarms are a smaller part of what we do these days.

## What would make your job easier?

More hours in the day or an all-singing, all-dancing robot technician that doesn't need any time off go sick or on holiday!

## Is there a security skills shortage?

The industry has changed quite significantly over the last few years to the point where you need a more technically savvy technician rather than an engineer, so there is definitely a skills shortage. There is almost a need on two levels, one for commissioning and one for installation. Getting training in those areas is not an easy thing and the big issue is that we all require these multi-skilled engineers that can do all aspects of the job. The days of having the luxury of a CCTV installer and a fire installer on the team in a company like ours is just not viable these days. It doesn't make sense having to use three or four ➔

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John and the team, from left to right, Simon Cole - Technical Director, Wendy Porter - Administration, Richard Lawrie - Managing Director, John and Suzan Morter - Sales Coordinator at the office in Wroxham, July 2018

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different people to do a job when you can have one person that can do all of it. Engineers are the public face of the company and what they do, how they look and how they talk to customers has a genuine impact on the business, they are in effect selling the company although little if any training in this respect is provided by trainers.

**What will be the impact of smart/home automation on the security sector?**

We have seen the technology coming along for some time, but the industry can be quite slow to changes and taking up new systems. To some extent it will take money out of the industry since other suppliers will major on it, but then isn't it down to the industry to re-shape itself to make sure it addresses the need so that it doesn't miss out on any new revenue. I foresee in the next few years that the uptake will be even higher on the domestic side so we should take notice of what is happening. It's wishful thinking that everyone will upgrade from a DIY system to a professional system with its improved technology. However I would like to think that the systems we provide now and in the future, will do a better job and last much longer and be of interest to clients who wants to control their lives via a mobile app.

**How will AI affect the future of technology in the market?**

When I first saw an AI system many years ago I was working in prisons and there was a technology there that was learning methods of attack on fencing. In the time since then there have been plenty of companies that have gone from thinking about developing AI to the point where they have the system ready to go. For me, I



think they are still struggling to find genuine uses for AI and how to make it a commercial product. That's the difference between looking at the market and seeing what is needed compared to developing a product and then finding a home for it. Modern CCTV systems are much more effectively using such features for the good, for example, left packages and bags, facial recognition, follow me systems and so on.

**What is your ultimate/fantasy electronic security product?**

A CCTV camera that allowed access via voice and facial recognition, spot fires, would be good, but if such a product did ever get developed we wouldn't need fire alarms, general CCTV, access control and intruder alarms so we would have a contracting business. Such a system could be a shot in the arm or a shot in the foot!

**Will England ever win the football World Cup again?**

Indeed they will and I would suggest that this young squad and manager will be the ones to do it. The academies and the current youth programme that has been developed, has to be the way forward - when you look at what happened in the competition this year, it gives you a good indicator of how that is working. The fact that our younger teams (U17s etc) are all champions of their own age groups make you think it has to happen and the future is good.

**What would you do if you won £25,000?**

I would probably give the people at the company a treat with a party or a day out, but what I would do with the rest of it is hard to say. Maybe four tickets to the World Cup Final in Qatar!

