

# The room where it happens

Promoting physical security visibility before and during acquisitions



Acquisitions are often billed as moments of bold opportunity. For senior executives and boards, these deals are about accelerating growth, unlocking synergies, and strengthening competitive advantage. But for the teams responsible for making operations run safely and smoothly—including physical security—acquisitions can feel like controlled chaos. Decisions happen without warning, details are opaque, and the ripple effects of choices made in the boardroom cascade down through every layer of the organization.

Too often, physical security isn't even in the room where those decisions happen. (We touched on this fact, among other precarious realities, in our recent white paper, [Aligning Roadmaps for Acquisitional Growth](#).)

When security is treated as an afterthought—a cost center to be rationalized, rather than a strategic enabler—companies expose themselves to risks that go well beyond access control or surveillance coverage. Overlooked integration challenges can compromise the safety of people and property, slow down facility transitions, inflate budgets, and undermine everyone's confidence in the acquisition deal itself.

For seasoned physical security leaders, the imperative is clear: make your program visible, credible, and indispensable before and during acquisition conversations. That means ensuring your voice is represented

## Why security visibility matters

At first glance, it's not obvious to some why physical security should rank alongside finance, IT, and legal in the M&A playbook. But consider what's really at stake:

- + **Budget accuracy.** If no one accounts for system migrations, access credential re-issuance, or security subject matter expert (SME) travel during due diligence, financial forecasts will be miscalculated. Underestimating these costs by even a small percentage can throw off larger integration budgets.
- + **Technology fit.** Acquirers frequently inherit access control, video, and monitoring platforms that don't align with their standards. Without early planning, companies risk unsupported infrastructure, avoidable downtime, and duplicating expensive features.
- + **People and roles.** Security staff redundancies and mismatched responsibilities are often decided hastily, surfacing operational gaps and challenges with morale.
- + **Cultural harmony.** Employees at acquired companies can perceive new security measures as heavy-handed or intrusive, jeopardizing adoption and compliance.

Each of these factors is manageable—but only if you consider them early on in the acquisition and communicate clearly at the decision-making level.





## Securing a seat at the table

Physical security leaders don't need to wait passively for a seat at the M&A table—they can and should advocate for it. Take practical steps:

1. **Identify the M&A committee.** This group may go by different names—corporate development team, integration steering group, or even a subcommittee of the board. Pinpoint who leads it and which executives have influence.
2. **Make the case for inclusion.** Position security not as a compliance hurdle but as a value multiplier. Remind leadership that visibility into risks, costs, and integration timelines reduces surprises, accelerates business continuity, and protects reputation.
3. **Bring data, not anecdotes.** Prepare a concise playbook: current-state inventories of systems and personnel, cost models for typical integration activities, and sample timelines for cutovers. When executives see that security has done its homework, they're more likely to view the function as essential.
4. **Leverage allies.** Partner with your security consultant, along with your facilities, IT, HR and risk management teams who share overlapping interests in safe, seamless operations. Unified advocacy is harder to dismiss than a single voice.

By getting on the M&A committee, you ensure your concerns aren't filtered secondhand or raised too late to influence outcomes.

## Leading with credibility during acquisitions

Visibility is only the first step. Once in the room, security leaders must contribute with authority and clarity. Three practices stand out:

- + **Translate security into business impact.** Executives don't respond to jargon about card readers or VMS licenses—they respond to risk, cost, and continuity. Frame every input in terms of:
  - Financial implications, such as “Consolidating platforms will save \$X annually, but requires \$Y in upfront integration.”
  - Operational implications, such as “Delays in credentialing will stall employee onboarding at three newly merged sites.”
  - Cultural implications, such as “Without a clear change management plan, acquired employees may resist compliance, leading to increased insider risk.”
- + **Provide scenarios, not surprises.** Acquisitions move fast, but that doesn't mean you can't plan. Present modeled scenarios—small target vs. large target, regional vs. global integration—and their associated timelines and costs. This proactive approach demonstrates foresight and earns trust.
- + **Advocate for people, not just systems.** In the scramble to integrate technology, companies often forget the human element. Use your platform to ensure that acquired security personnel are evaluated fairly, retrained where possible, and integrated into the new culture. Advocating for people strengthens morale and preserves institutional knowledge.



## Visibility beyond a single deal

For some companies, acquisitions are rare, high-stakes events. For others, they're a routine growth engine. In either case, physical security leaders should treat M&A as a recurring test of their strategic value. To do this, work with your security consultant to:

- + Document lessons learned from each acquisition, then institutionalize these lessons in playbooks and checklists.
- + Develop clear security messaging that explains your team's mission and impact, so executives understand why your presence is non-negotiable.
- + Commit to realistic timelines for integration work, ensuring leadership sees the discipline and predictability of your function.

The goal isn't just to be consulted during one deal—it's to become permanently visible in the company's growth strategy.



## Don't be an afterthought

In the popular imagination, the “room where it happens” is a place where power dynamics shift and futures are decided. For physical security leaders, being absent from that room during an acquisition means watching others dictate the future of your program, your people, and your company’s security posture.

But by proactively seeking visibility—by insisting on a voice in acquisition planning, by bringing data and credibility to the table, and by consistently framing security as a business enabler—you can transform physical security from an afterthought into a recognized pillar of successful acquisitions.



When a company evolves through acquisitional growth, its physical security team needs a thoughtful approach to managing the changes. Read our white paper, [Aligning Roadmaps for Acquisitional Growth](#), to find insights and guidance to help your team when growth happens.



### Our office:

700 Larkspur Landing Circle, Suite 150  
Larkspur, CA 94939

### Email and web:

info@zbeta.com  
www.zbeta.com

### Phone:

(855) 559 2382

