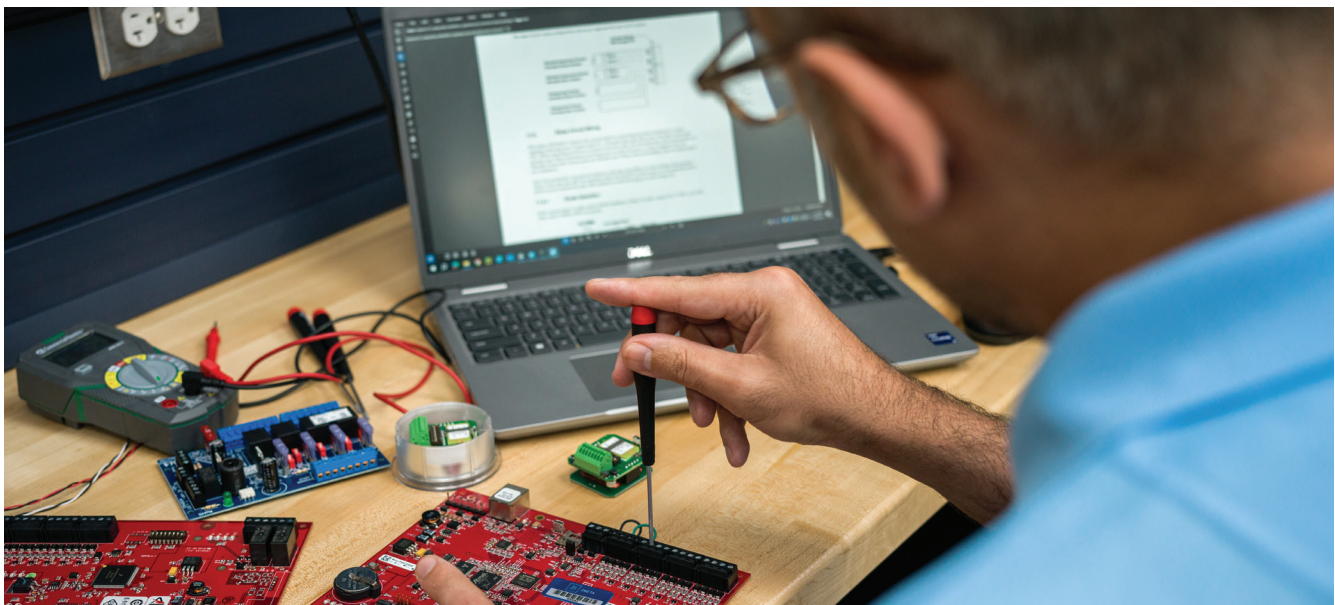


The limitations of spec sheets

Why vendor-provided guidance doesn't directly inform solution-level design



Product documentation is designed to reassure. It lists capabilities, certifications, integrations, and performance metrics in neat, authoritative language. For many organizations, spec sheets become the primary basis for comparison and decision-making.

That reliance is understandable. It is also risky. Why? Because spec sheets describe products in isolation. Security systems put products together to meet the highly specific needs of a user's real-life environment.

Marketing a product often forces manufacturers to use vague language so they can reach the widest funnel of potential buyers. As such, terms like "integrates with," "supports AI analytics," or "enterprise-ready" often mask a wide range of real-world behaviors. Some claims are tightly defined and measurable. Others are deliberately broad, leaving interpretation to the reader. The difference is not always obvious until systems are deployed and expected to work together. Branded terminology across spec sheets calling similar features by dissimilar names obfuscates the process even further.

Testing introduces healthy friction into this otherwise frictionless narrative. Our [recent white paper](#) expands on the latest thinking in this area.

When you combine, configure, and exercise security products under realistic conditions, ambiguities surface quickly. Integrations that exist on paper may be brittle in practice. Performance may degrade under certain lighting or traffic patterns. Configuration options that look straightforward may require trade-offs that are never mentioned in documentation.

None of this implies bad faith on the part of manufacturers. It reflects the reality that complex systems behave differently once you take them off the bench.

Reading spec sheets intelligently means understanding their limits. Focused, intentional testing of your solution at various stages provides the missing context. It turns abstract claims into observable behavior and allows organizations to distinguish between marketing language, administrator guidance, and operational reality.

When you test, you go beyond what's written into what's left to discover. Work with a consultant who understands the power of this and has experience and insights to share. They'll help you aim your testing investment at the areas of your solution where it matters most.



For more details on testing philosophy and best practices for physical security systems, read our white paper, [Making test plans worth your investment: How innovations in security solution testing pave the way to on-budget results.](#)



ZBeta provides lab space for testing just about any solution under conditions that will closely resemble your built environment. For more information, visit zbeta.com/labz.

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