



THE  
**HYBRID**  
**APPROACH**

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR CENTRAL STATION MONITORING

**MORE FREEDOM • INCREASED ROI • UNRIVALED TECHNOLOGY**



compiled by avantguard  
monitoring centers researchers

**In Hybrid monitoring partnerships, dealers free up enough time and money to focus their efforts on growth.**

*Five possible solutions for central station monitoring are included in this guide. With each scenario listed, you will find pros and cons in an easy-to-scan format.*

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# OPTION 1: KEEP YOUR CENTRAL STATION

## maintain full control

Many security alarm providers want to have full control over the customer experience. Trusting a third-party central station to take care of hard-earned, well-nurtured accounts may seem unthinkable.

The first hybrid model keeps security alarm providers directly connected to their subscribers and free from contracts with outside partners. The security alarm provider's success is determined by their own efforts.

Limitations to this scenario include the necessity of continually investing in and maintaining a sturdy technological foundation, the resources to maintain and upgrade the technology, as well as the continued investment in skilled operators.

Since the customer experience can only exist as far as the technology can withstand system failures, it is critical that every monitoring center be fully redundant and resistant to system failures of all kinds.

Security alarm providers must be vigilant about meeting stringent certification regulations, including TMA 5-Diamond Certification and UL requirements for alarm monitoring facilities.

Economies of scale come with monitoring more accounts. Very few alarm companies grow enough to afford the best operators and technology.

## **PROS:**

- control over management of operators, including hiring and training
- control of the operator-customer experience
- continual access to the business-customer relationship
- ownership, access, and control of the monitoring technology

## **CONS:**

- cost of replacing and training operators
- threat of hourly wage increases
- ongoing investment to maintain and upgrade receivers, and other equipment
- growth is not the primary focus
- ever-demanding certification regulations for alarm monitoring facilities
- expense of a redundant location with fail-over capabilities

# KNOW YOUR OPTIONS...

*The time has come when monitoring centers should offer more to their customers, break age-old traditions, and set new standards.*

*With these partnership models, alarm providers with in-house central stations can pick and choose between a variety of options. Each allows companies to retain differentiators they feel are essential to their core identity while outsourcing the rest.*

1

>>

PROVIDING AN INTIMATE  
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

OR?

SAVING SIGNIFICANT CAPITAL  
BY OUTSOURCING MONITORING

<<

2

# USING THE HYBRID APPROACH FOR GROWTH

Great businesses are built on what they do best. They strategically rely on industry-leading channel partners to manage key portions of their supply chain.

As the security alarm industry evolves to meet the changing needs of customers, so do the abilities of wholesale monitoring centers to adapt to the unique needs of the security equipment providers.

Now, instead of a go or no-go approach, wholesale monitoring centers can provide hybrid partnership options that allow dealers to tap into immense technological capabilities while choosing to keep their in-house operators or refocusing their efforts entirely.

**The following pages include several hybrid scenarios.**

## **ADDITIONAL NOTE:**

*All hybrid partnership arrangements are customizable, depending on the needs of the alarm provider and the abilities of the wholesale monitoring provider.*

## OPTION 2: THE BACKUP PLAN (AND THEN SOME)

For security alarm providers, having a local central station can differentiate you from the competition. Therefore, you shouldn't have to sacrifice what makes your company unique.

To meet this concern, this first hybrid approach allows businesses to use their own receivers through an on-site server while simultaneously leveraging the advanced monitoring automation software and redundancy of the third-party monitoring partner.

In this scenario, the greatest benefit is gaining hot-redundancy and saving money at the same time. After starting this relationship, alarm providers no longer have to worry about investing in additional central stations.

### redundancy and automation

While this method may not provide the most savings, the automation software alone can provide a significant boost in operator efficiency and customer satisfaction.

#### FOR EXAMPLE:

*The alarm provider in this scenario becomes hot-redundant through their new monitoring partner. This redundancy, coupled with industry-leading automation technology, can mean a world of difference to a company looking to expand its service offering while saving money at the same time.*

## PROS:

- ability to manage relationships with customers
- use your own receivers
- simultaneously leverage third-party automation platform and redundancy
- smaller investment in technology
- access to the leading alarm-monitoring platform, **Stages**

## CONS:

- continued replacement and training costs of in-house operators
- threat of hourly wage increases
- investment, maintenance and upgrade of your own receivers, and other equipment upgrades
- knowledge of and adherence to demanding certification regulations, including TMA 5-Diamond Certification and UL stringent requirements for alarm monitoring facilities
- need to transfer to company's **Stages** platform

# OPTION 3: THE LEAN MACHINE (IN THE CLOUD)

let your partners invest in technology

When a security alarm provider enlists a third-party monitoring center to be their cloud platform, they no longer have to buy or maintain in-house technology.

Alarm providers in this scenario only have to provide operators and workstations while using their monitoring partner's receiver and automation technology through the cloud. On top of that, they add redundancy to their service offering.

When a monitoring center goes down because of a system failure, its customer needs don't go away. To battle this issue, the monitoring partner instantly takes over during disaster scenarios.

## FOR EXAMPLE:

*This lean monitoring option removes all of the alarm-specific technology equipment (mostly receivers and alarm phone circuits) from the security provider's site. Therefore, the cloud platform allows the security alarm provider to focus their efforts on growing their business instead of maintaining their technology.*

## PROS:

- control over management of the operator-customer experience and the business-customer relationship
- usage of your own on-site technology
- security of cloud redundancy and assistance
- monitoring center expertise in demand forecasting and systems for disaster scenarios
- decreased investment in technology
- ability to take advantage of the leading alarm monitoring platform, stages

## CONS:

- continued replacement and training costs of in-house operators
- the threat of hourly wage increases
- knowledge of and adherence to demanding certification regulations, including TMA 5-Diamond Certification and UL stringent requirements for alarm monitoring facilities
- need to transfer to company's stages platform

# OPTION 4: AFTER-HOURS, WEEKENDS, AND HOLIDAYS

cut costs, reduce stress

In order to decrease operating costs, security alarm providers can add on to the previous option by having their monitoring partner take over after-hours, during weekends and on holidays.

The after-hours model reduces the worry of having potential disaster scenarios at inconvenient times.

Businesses that take advantage of this option decrease operating costs and manage their central station, but at more convenient times. They retain access to the cloud-hosted software and the partnerships that their third-party station offers.

## FOR EXAMPLE:

*Businesses often see an increase in job satisfaction when operators enjoy holidays and weekends off, but problems arise when a small central station unexpectedly loses one or two alarm-monitoring operators. This can cripple an operation, leaving too few people to handle emergency alarms. Using a professional monitoring partner in this hybrid model provides instant access to operators, filling the immediate need while the security alarm provider replaces and trains new agents.*

## PROS:

- decreased investment in technology
- ability to take advantage of the leading alarm monitoring platform, Stages
- control over operations during regular business hours
- manage the customer experience
- use your own on-site technology
- stop paying for new/broken tech
- happy employees

## CONS:

- continued replacement and training costs of in-house operators
- threat of hourly wage increases
- ever-demanding certification regulations, including TMA 5-Diamond Certification and UL requirements for alarm monitoring facilities
- need to transfer to partner's monitoring automation platform

# OPTION 5: 100% OUTSOURCED CENTRAL STATION

trust an industry-leading partner

As technologies advance (in price and capability) and as the cost of human operators continues to increase, owning a central station may not be feasible or desirable for many security alarm providers.

Fully redundant, geographically dispersed facilities may also be financially prohibitive to security alarm providers running their own central stations.

**Cost savings for a totally outsourced central station are estimated at 30-50%.**

In addition to substantial savings in operating costs, this option allows the security alarm provider to focus efforts on growing their business and not something that can be done by a trusted partner—just like Amazon uses UPS, FedEx and USPS to deliver packages.

No matter what catastrophe befalls the central station, a redundant, capable system and on-site experts will overcome natural disasters, technological failures and unforeseen catastrophes.

A reliable wholesale monitoring company will have extensive knowledge of and adherence to certification regulations, including TMA 5-Diamond Certification and UL requirements.

While technology is an extremely important aspect of the industry, all of the high-tech features in the world can't make up for value holes in the customer experience.

Success in the customer experience begins with hiring and continually training intelligent, capable and kind operators who genuinely care about the customers they serve.

Expertise in finding, keeping and continually improving the skills of central station operators through rigorous training ensures that they will effectively resolve problems and keep your customers safe.

#### FOR EXAMPLE:

*The southeastern United States was hit hard by Hurricane Harvey in August, 2017, resulting in massive flooding, countless water rescues and local residents trapped in homes, on top of vehicles, etc.*

*Security alarm providers with an experienced, outsourced central station were apprised of preparations for the storm well before Harvey reached their customers. Preparations included having more operators on the floor, implementing established Storm Queue procedures, and having prepared IT experts standing by to address additional needs. The combination of skilled operators, fully redundant facilities, and access to state-of-the-art technology & IT experts kept customers safe.*

# OPTION 5: 100% OUTSOURCED CENTRAL STATION

trust an industry-leading partner

## PROS:

- freedom from management of operators, including hiring and training
- freedom from the threat of hourly wage increases
- delegation of the operator-customer experience
- no investment in the maintenance or continuous upgrades of technology systems
- access to fully redundant, geographically independent facilities
- delegation of certification regulations, including TMA 5-Diamond Certification and UL stringent requirements for alarm monitoring facilities alarm monitoring facilities
- ability to take advantage of the leading alarm monitoring platform, **Stages**

## CONS:

- limited access to the business-customer relationship
- less control of the operator-customer relationship

# SUMMARY

## Considering the options

**Which of the five monitoring solutions discussed in this guide would be the wisest investment without risking the quality of your service?**

How will you balance your desire for control with your capacity for growth?

*As you continue your journey of success, please refer to the graph below while you consider your current central station needs and plan for the future.*

### CENTRAL STATION MONITORING OPTIONS

	OWN	HYBRID AUTOMATION	HYBRID CLOUD	HYBRID AFTER HOURS	FULL OUTSOURCE
INVESTMENT REQUIRED					
WORK/LIFE BALANCE					
LEVEL OF CONTROL					
CAPACITY FOR GROWTH					
REDUNDANCY	MAYBE	YES	YES	YES	YES
UL/CSAA LISTED	DIFFICULT	POSSIBLE	POSSIBLE	POSSIBLE	YES
ACCESS TO PARTNER'S RECEIVER TECHNOLOGY	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
ACCESS TO STATE-OF-THE-ART AUTOMATION SYSTEM	MAYBE	YES	YES	YES	YES

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