

Historic Boat Club Discovers Benefits of Transitioning from Outdated Access System to VIZpin

The Customer

The Vesper Boat Club, located on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia, PA, is one of the most celebrated rowing clubs in the nation. Founded in 1865, Vesper is a small, not-for-profit run solely by volunteers whose mission is to perpetuate its legacy of developing highly skilled and competitive rowers at all levels by providing its diverse community of members with premier rowing programs and first-class facilities and equipment.

The Challenge

On any given day, there are many people coming in and out of the historic boat house, and Vesper must protect them and the club's boats and other equipment. In early 2016, Tom Simon, a member of Vesper Boat Club's House Committee, inherited access control responsibility for the club and a traditional and often troublesome card/fob access control solution.

Tom quickly discovered that both the access control system's manufacturer and installer had gone out of business, so there were no resources for service calls or troubleshooting. What's more, when any access changes needed to be made, Tom had to use an outdated, unsupported version of Windows, and the club had only a single, aging laptop that fit the criteria. He comments, "It was an unacceptable situation. If something were to happen to that old laptop, I would have had no way at all of controlling access".

Vesper clearly needed to update their access control solution, but did not want to invest in hardware or technology that would quickly be out-of-date or cumbersome to manage.

The Solution

A club member introduced Tom to VIZpin's smartphone access control system. He says, "As soon as I saw it, it was a no-brainer. I immediately knew we could benefit from it."

VIZpin's VP1 bluetooth access control reader was installed on Vesper Boat Club's main entrance door to support smartphone access control, and the organization immediately began realizing the benefits of transitioning to VIZpin's cloud-based system.

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Even though VIZpin's keyless access control is simple to use, Vesper realized a transition period was necessary, so VIZpin arranged for the new bluetooth enabled door lock system to run in parallel with the old system until a total transition can be completed. Tom notes that not having to purchase fobs and keep physical inventory of them makes cost savings an additional benefit of the new keyless access control system.

Currently Vesper Boat Club has 142 users with the VIZpin smartphone app and has 140 physical fobs that still need to be converted. Tom concludes, "VIZpin did us a huge favor, allowing us to offer members the smartphone option. The system has already solved so many challenges for us".

Highlights

More secure access – Because people don't tend to share phones, the club is now more confident that only those who are granted access get into the building. Tom notes, for example, that in the past, parents tended to share fobs with their children, resulting in the club having unsupervised minors in the boat house.

More access control – While Vesper has members who need regular, on-going access to the boat house, the club also has tenants (for example, schools that use the club's facilities and services) and event participants, where access is needed for limited hours during a particular time frame. With VIZpin, Vesper no longer must issue fobs and then get them back when a program or event ends. Tom explains, "It's really no muss, no fuss. We can manage phone-based fobs so they basically self-destruct when no longer needed".

Better data and more transparency – Previously data was often inaccurate and incomplete. Tom explains, "Often, you couldn't actually tell who fobs belonged to, but now ownership is well-defined. With VIZpin, users set up their own profiles, so it is much less likely that a name will be spelled incorrectly, and there is a phone number to identify the user with, as well". He continues, "The database is really self-maintaining and it will be very easy to turn it over to the next person who will manage it".

In addition, with Vesper's legacy system, the club was not able to tell who entered and when, but the access data provided by VIZpin is detailed and transparent.

Ease of use – While the benefits of the VIZpin technology were immediately apparent, Tom knew that to realize them, it would need to be simple to teach members how to use it. He explains that more than half of Vesper's constituents are "of a certain age," and using a smartphone app is not intuitive to them, however, "With VIZpin, it's very easy to show users how to use the system - even members who are not used to working with their phones or tech". In addition, Tom notes that it is easy to learn and teach the system admin.

About VIZpin Inc.

VIZpin designs, manufactures and markets a complete access control solution that includes cloud-based management tools (ACaaS), low-cost Bluetooth controllers and smartphone apps. The VIZpin solution provides a secure, convenient and affordable way to unlock any device by using your phone as your key and your network.

