



# Your Guide to Visitor Management

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# Introduction

Are you still using the old-fashioned paper log to track your visitors and issuing adhesive "Hello, my name is..." badges to guests? First impressions are everything. Make your company's first impression professional with an innovative, electronic visitor management system. When your guests step through your front door, they won't focus on your antiquated systems; instead, you will impress them with an engaging and enjoyable visitor experience.

## What a visitor management system does

You need to track people in your building or facility for a variety of reasons. For example, your employees, students, staff, contractors, and others deserve a secure place to work. You cannot guarantee security when anyone can enter your facility. And in case of fire or another emergency, first responders need to know how many people are on-site.

Sometimes you need to know who visited your facility in the past. A visitor management system lets you look back in your records and identify all visitors on a certain date and time.

More importantly, if your front entrance is unattended, how do you make sure you process visitors properly and connect them with the person they're seeing? A visitor management solution can manage that process for you.

## Benefits of an electronic visitor management system

Today's electronic visitor management solutions offer an array of benefits, mainly because of heightened security. Here are a few benefits to consider when deciding to switch to an electronic system.

- **Reduced waiting times.** No longer must your guests stand in line waiting to sign your paper visitor's log. Instead, they spend between 30 seconds and 2 minutes, depending on how much information you need, to sign in and electronically notify the host their visitor is on-site.
- **Increased front desk efficiency.** Visitors can pre-register before they ever step foot in your facility. You can cut the check-in process further by offering self-service check-in when guests arrive. This leaves your front desk personnel free to help make guests comfortable while they wait.
- **Offer transparent reporting.** An electronic system collects all the information you need to see on your visitors. It tracks who visits your site, how often they come, how long they stay, and who they visit. Especially for secure zones, this information can help you keep assets and employees safe.
- **Deterring threats.** Most individuals posing a threat will avoid an electronic visitor management system. In addition, you can integrate Watch Lists with your visitor management solution to weed out those who do not belong.
- **Managing contractors.** If your business uses contractors on a daily basis, it's not always easy to monitor everyone on-site, how long they stay, and where they're working. To better manage where your contractors are and if their bills are accurate, an electronic solution tracks all that information for you.
- **Increased compliance.** If your business requires signed Non-Disclosure Agreements, Terms and Conditions, or a Legal Waiver, an electronic visitor management solution can collect signatures as visitors or contractors check in.
- **Increased visibility.** For some organizations, it's important to know where everyone is in your facility, who they're meeting with, how long they stayed, and when they left. Use this information to substantiate or refute an incident or accident they claimed happened on your property for which your company is financially liable.

Electronic visitor management solutions enhance your building's or facility's security, provide data you can use for insight, offer a professional first impression, and streamline the check-in process. Knowing and being able to account for who enters your buildings or facilities is more important today than ever before.

# Choosing a Visitor Management Solution

You have decided your company needs a visitor management software tool in your lobby to process guests. If you read the previous section, you know all the benefits and you are convinced this is the right step. Here are a few questions to answer before you choose which system to buy.

## **What do you want your visitor management solution to do?**

Today's visitor management systems can do much more than manage your visitors. Knowing in advance what you need your system to do will help you narrow down your choices. For example, do you know everyone in your building? If not, can you identify who is staff and who is a visitor? Your new solution should issue guest badges and even employee badges so security personnel can tell at a glance if someone doesn't belong.

You can also use your new visitor management solution to track employees, students, patients, contractors, temporary help, volunteers, and more. Know who is in your building and where they are at all times. Other capabilities include running background checks and keeping valuable data from which to run reports.

## **What image does your organization want to project?**

Consider the professional image and branding needs of your company. You can choose from an automated check-in and registration process customized to your unique brand or have a receptionist or other office staff help with visitor management. The system you choose should represent who you are as a company.

## **What degree of security do you need?**

Your new visitor management system is only part of your comprehensive security solution. If you are concerned about the physical security of your employees, guests, and company assets, some systems do more than others. Consider a solution that uses identification of everyone in your facility or building as a deterrent and an easy method of detection for your security personnel. For example, requiring a name badge deters a nefarious individual from attempting to roam your facilities. It also makes it easy for security to see at a glance who belongs.

## **Do you need an easy-to-use solution?**

How easy your solution is to use depends on your level of security needed. The more detailed your security, such as scanning driver's licenses and checking Watch Lists, the more complicated the software and setup and the bigger the learning curve. Make sure you develop a thorough training plan before moving forward with your purchase.

## How quickly do you want to process visitors?

If you process visitors frequently, speed is important. This is another element dependent on your level of security needs. On the other hand, choose a system that pre-registers your visitors to streamline check-in at the front desk and avoid long lines.

## Visitor management best practices

Today's visitor management experts have identified a few best practices it makes sense to following:

- **Use a single entry point.** A single door for guests and visitors to use makes your building or facilities more secure and allows you to better control who enters. Lock all unattended doors to funnel entry through your single point.
- **Verify visitors' identity.** Make sure your visitors are who they say they are by scanning drivers' licenses and saving signatures in your database. This also makes authorization for future visits easier and quicker.
- **Require visitor checkout.** Checking your visitors out at the end of their visit offers threefold benefits:
  - Know who is still in your facilities.
  - Prevent unauthorized asset removal.
  - Prevent visitor badges from being reused.
- **Keep accurate records.** Accurate records of visitors, their identification, and information of their visit can come in handy in the future. If you ever have an accident or incident at your facility, you can easily confirm its veracity.

## Get everyone on board

Visitor management solutions are not rocket science, but as with any new software system, there is a learning curve. Make sure all employees, especially those at the front desk, are on board with the new system. Ask for input on what is most problematic about your current visitor management solution and what tasks they'd like to see automated. You will get a wealth of information from the front-line employees who manage visitors on a daily basis.

Let front desk personnel know that this will free up their time to handle their other responsibilities more efficiently without worrying about guests coming and going.

You also must educate the rest of your staff about your new system and their potential responsibilities. Make sure everyone understands pre-registering their guests and choosing how they want to be notified when guests arrive on-site.





# Selecting Components of a Visitor Management Solution

In this section, we assume You have chosen a top-of-the-line visitor management system with all the bells and whistles. You may choose an actual system that's different, which makes some of the following components of a full-scale system optional rather than essential. A reputable visitor management solution provider can help guide you to the exact components you need to meet your business needs, security details, and your budget.

## Visitor management software

This is a powerful software program that tracks who uses your facilities and how they're being used. It helps you gather data on your visitors and others for record keeping and documentation of guests' whereabouts.

Your visitor management software can also automate the check-in process, leaving your front desk staff available for other, more important tasks. The software then monitors, tracks, and records information about both visitors and employees in your facility at any given time. Part of your software might be a pre-registration module that allows visitors to register before the day of their visit, streamlining check-in when they get to your facility.

## **Visitor management check-in kiosk**

If you are automating the check-in process to relieve your front desk staff, you will need a self-serve kiosk where visitors can sign in. There, they can enter their pertinent information and even print out a badge. A check-in kiosk can handle notifying visitors about company rules and regulations, including your safety compliance policies.

## **Badge printer**

If you want your employee badges and visitor badges to consistently represent your brand, an external ID card printer can print a customized badge that distinguishes between staff and visitors. Purchasing a standalone ID card printer lets you customize each badge with your company's specific branding needs and a color photo for identification.

## **Camera**

If you are printing out customized badges with full-color photos, you will need an ID camera that connects directly to your system's software. An ID camera takes a high-quality picture, and allows you to print a clear photo on your badges. If you use a separate digital camera, you must transfer the picture from the camera to a computer where you can size and crop it. Then it needs imported into your visitor management system so you can print out badges. Purchasing an ID camera takes out these middle steps, streamlining your process and making it faster.

## **ID cards**

There is an array of ID cards to meet any business or security need. You can print out plastic ID badges that visitors can wear around their necks or pin to their clothing for easy identification. In addition, you can choose self-expiring badges that, over the course of a visit, turn colors or show bars or the word "VOID" after they have expired. Self-expiring badges are quick and easy to issue and require no human contact or intervention to work.

## **Scanning device**

If your new visitor management system requires a driver's license to verify identity, you will need a scanner that can import the information from the card into your software. Another possible scanner is one that reads bar codes. Some visitor management solutions pre-register visitors and send them an email with a bar code. When they check-in on the day of their visit, they scan their bar code to get entered into the system and to notify their host they have arrived.

## **Signature pad**

Another security device is a signature pad. You can require guests to sign in on a signature pad at every visit. This allows your front desk to compare the signature to the one in your database for verification. It's one step in a security solution that's easy to implement and manage, especially with an electronic visitor management system.



# Creating Your Implementation Plan

Hopefully, you got input from your front desk personnel and staff on what's needed in a new visitor management solution. Using their suggestions and priorities, your solution addresses safety, security, record keeping, and more. Now it's time to implement your new program.

The following steps will help you stay focused on what needs done and who needs to do it, so nothing falls through the cracks during implementation.

## **Choose a lead**

Every project needs someone to take the lead. You need a point person others can go to with questions or problems. This should involve someone experienced with your visitor management program and your company's policies and procedures.

Your lead might choose a team to support him or her during implementation. Part of their responsibilities should include compiling a visitor management policy.

## **Create your policies and procedures**

Since a visitor management system changes the way you process visitors, you must create new policies and procedures. Your lead and team should examine each step for visitors, from pre-registering to entering your building and how to conclude their visit.

Consider how your visitor procedures might be different for someone coming in for a job interview, for example, or for a VIP visiting your facility.

## **Verify hardware and other system requirements**

Make sure you either have or are getting the hardware and system components you need to support your new visitor management solution.

Assess what equipment is on hand and what you need to purchase. This could include a combination of tables and stands or larger video screens, depending on your solution. You will also need a computer for managing the back-end of your visitor system and server space for a database.

## **Schedule an implementation date**

This includes physically setting up all hardware, connecting all components, and installing the software. Depending on your business model, you may need someone from your legal team to review your system for privacy and safety compliance.

Part of implantation is testing, testing, and more testing. Make sure each aspect of your system functions according to your policies and procedures. For example, make sure you set up notifications properly and have backup notifications just in case.

## **Train all employees**

Schedule training for everyone to become familiar and comfortable with your new visitor management solution. You need to make sure everyone understands how notifications work and that the number notifications come from is in their phone's contact list.

Then, test the system and revise your setup based on feedback and suggestions. If you keep monitoring your solution continuously, you can expect a better experience for your visitors, contractors, and others.

## **Final thoughts**

Your new visitor management solution will boost productivity for your front desk staff, giving them time to take on more projects that support your business goals. And when customized with your company branding and messaging, will provide an amazing visitor experience for guests and their hosts.

## Conclusion

The steps in this guide are not all inclusive but should help you get started with a new visitor management solution.

One key takeaway is to choose a system that can grow and evolve with your business as your needs change. Get a solution that is scalable and easy to update.

Finally, understand that visitor management solutions provided by reputable vendors are fully customizable and supported by their technical support team. When you partner with a reputable vendor, they can help you create a visitor management system that looks like it was developed specifically for your company.

For more information, call us at **800-336-1383** or email us at **[sales@idesco.com](mailto:sales@idesco.com)**.

## About Idesco

For over three-quarters of a century, Idesco has provided customized ID card solutions to organizations just like yours. When you partner with Idesco, you know you are getting the world's top manufacturers like HID Fargo, Magicard, Zebra, Datacard, Evolis, IDP, Nisca, Matica, and ScreenCheck. Beyond having the ID card printers you need, Idesco also has a full inventory of cards, software, and supplies.

Your ID card solution is our number one priority. That's why Idesco offers an expert team of technicians who are highly trained and experienced with each manufacturer. Our service technicians can be on your site within 48 hours anywhere in New York.

Idesco leads the nation in providing solutions for ID cards, event badges, or any ID project, even the most complex. In addition, you get the best price on everything you need for your event—guaranteed.

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