



MARCH 23, 2020

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INTELLIGENT
BUILDING
EDITION

THE HUNTON GROUP

The Elixir of
Infrastructural
Intelligence

Richard Hunton Jr,
President & CEO

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By Michael Rosario

An intelligent building can be thought of as the epicenter of safety, security, energy efficiency, and comfort. The closest real-world manifestation of this idea is Pennzoil Place of Houston, which was invigorated by the Hunton Group to create one of the world's first smart building.

Built in 1975, The Pennzoil Place of Houston was an architectural marvel, boasting state-of-the-art technological innovations of that time.

The building had grown obsolete with legacy infrastructure left behind by the previous tenants. From environmental to security, lighting, and safety systems, the technological architecture of the Pennzoil Place of Houston could have been described as a web of antiquated wiring networks that cluttered the entire building in the recent past; that is until the Hunton Group stepped in. Upon understanding its client's requirements, the Hunton Group brought in one of its sister organizations, Convergentz—the technological brainchild of the

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Hunton Group—to replace the outdated infrastructure within the building. Convergentz built an integrated fiber optics backbone that could interconnect every control system within the building; all the while provisioning access controls through the internet.

One of the noteworthy accomplishments of this collaboration was creating a plug and play ecosystem for unified communication within the establishment, which effectively translated into maximum security and safety with improved comfort controls. This architecture eliminated the need for coring and retrofitting operations that would otherwise extend the project time frame by several months. Convergentz also created a managed space to facilitate tenant services through fiber optics with climate-controlled network security housing for companies that connect directly with the Pennzoil Place. Tenants were given the flexibility to directly plug in various peripherals, switch on, and carry out their daily activities within a minimal transition period, consequently reducing the time and expenses associated with the technological implementation. At the end of the collaboration, the Hunton Group and Convergentz transformed the building and restored its glorious stature as one of the premier offices in Houston, Texas. Today, it stands as the pinnacle of intelligent infrastructures, bolstered by the amalgamation of safety, security, energy efficiency, and comfort.



Nurturing Plug and Play Intelligence

The Hunton Group has commemorated numerous engagements such as this, exemplifying its capabilities in planting the seed of intelligence in the construction field. “As master system integrators, we specialize in creating intelligent buildings, energized by smart solutions, HVAC systems, and high-performance IoT configurations,” adds Richard Hunton Jr., President & CEO of the Hunton Group. The company strikes the

right balance between infrastructural intelligence metrics that constitute energy efficiency, comfort, productivity, and security, delivering customer-focused solutions.

“Every intelligent building project is dependent on how efficiently one can extract actionable insights from smart systems. That is precisely where our plug and play proficiency comes into the limelight. The core objective of our smart solutions is to understand what clients aspire to do through intelligent systems in a simplistic manner,” explains Kurt McCulloch, general manager of Convergentz. “Our efforts are directed toward figuring out our clients’ objectives versus arriving at a simplistic solution through our plug and play offerings.” Upon comprehending a client’s objectives, the Hunton Group—in association with its sister organizations—overhauls traditional and outdated infrastructure or initiates

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technological implementations for newer buildings. Richard says that there is no silver bullet to address the myriad of requirements in the smart construction space, and every infrastructure requires a tailored approach. Therefore, the Hunton Group adopts a one-to-one strategy while engaging with clients; wherein, it helps them “identify how to understand data sets” to fulfill their business objectives or create newer goals that provide a higher degree of comfort and security to the tenants.

The Hunton Group crafts data-driven dashboards to quantify the flow of information and derive actionable insights; these dashboards can visualize elements as simple as on/off controls and complicated, data-rich functionalities that are important to conserve both money and energy. Moreover, such panels, along with intelligent analytics, play a vital role in combating cyber threats, casting a shroud of cybersecurity around the technological infrastructure. To that end, the Hunton Group provides clients the flexibility to decide on the type of storage configurations needed for the established infrastructure, be it on premise or the cloud.

The Customer-first Mindset

The Hunton Group upholds customer relationships above all. Richard goes on to state that the company supports its clients

through and through, “from the cradle to the grave.” One of its recent projects—with American National Insurance—highlights the Hunton Group’s commitment to customer engagements. The Hunton Group carried out the entire control system integration for the client while retaining their data centers in fully functional states. The system integrations expert had to completely retrofit three chillers, eight air handlers, and a multitude of similar control functions; they simultaneously carried out the implementation of generator data system, fire pump systems, and domestic water metering and storage tank, along with a water treatment system. Through these integrations, the Hunton Group ensured that the infrastructure was resilient to hurricanes and

Houston, cementing its place at the top of the pecking order in the intelligent building sector.

Revitalizing Building Automation

“There are a lot of proprietary smart systems out there in the construction technology landscape, and customers seldom prefer investing a substantial amount of capital in independent Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs),” begins McCulloch. Customers have been mostly dependent on such proprietary technologies in the past, consequently, paving the way for open controlled systems to emerge in the marketplace. Being a distributor of HVAC systems the Hunton




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remained self-sufficient, without the need for external water or electricity supply in the face of emergencies.

“If and when there is a hurricane, the operators can sit inside the building and continue to operate without any hindrances,” adds McCulloch. The company built the entire infrastructure on a web-based architecture for smooth and instant access to the building’s control systems, anytime and from any location. Such an approach empowers clients to maintain a building from the start of remodeling or retrofitting all the way up to the point where the building might require remodeling or upgradation or reconditioning in the distant future. Collectively, the Hunton group addresses the entire spectrum of intelligent infrastructure requirements of construction firms and engineering clients across the nation. The company has worked on numerous projects such as this, from the Federal Archives building in the College Park, Maryland to the EL Reno prison, Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land in Texas, and the Coast Guard Training Center in Petaluma, California. Owing to these noteworthy engagements, the Hunton Group stands as one of the top workplaces in

Group understands the business prerequisites that are vital for its clients’ transformational initiatives. Building upon the merits of Internet of Things (IoT), the company customizes the appropriate solutions sets for a client based on their necessities. It takes an agnostic approach while implementing smart systems. “There is not a single, smart solution that addresses all the needs, and disregarding the interoperability of smart equipment is the equivalent of fitting a square peg in a round hole,” Richard adds.

The Hunton Group brings all of the different control systems in a building onto a single pane of glass, thus visualizing a multitude of functionalities at the fingertips of the users. The customizable dashboard then presents actionable insights that create a new avenue for enhancing the comfort of tenants, improving resident security, and conserving energy within the infrastructure. The company, throughout its engagements and collaborations, redefines intelligent building management by harmonizing the technological infrastructure while its customer-focused approach adds a personal touch to client relationships. 

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