The Path to Greater Profits

SD&I

Security Dealer & Integrator

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SPECIAL ISSUE:
7th Annual

SD&I FAST 50
America's Fastest Growing
*Security Dealers and
Systems Integrators*

1978 **40** 2018
YEARS
OF EXCELLENCE

TIC President
Derek Radoski;
founder and CEO
Roger Echeandia;
and Director
of Operations
Thomas
Lorence.

From Broom to Boom

The executives at TIC started in the security industry by
pushing a broom; now they are pushing the growth of
the fastest-growing security integrator in North America

SouthComm
Business Media

Fast50 Overall Ranking

Rank	Company	Headquarters	Website	Yr. Est.
1	TIC	Bethesda, MD	www.ticsecure.com	2009
2	Surveillance Systems Inc.	Rocklin, CA	www.ssicctv.com	2002
3	Security 101 - Charlotte	Charlotte, NC	www.security101.com/charlotte	2007
4	DynaFire Inc.	Casselberry, FL	www.dynafire.com	2004
5	Convergint Technologies	Schaumburg, IL	www.convergint.com	2001
6	Safe Home Control Inc.	Orem, UT	www.safehomecontrol.com	2014
7	CM3 Building Solutions Inc.	Fort Washington, PA	www.cm3inc.com	2002
8	Prevent Security & Technology	New Castle, DE	www.prevent-security.com	1999
9	Security 101 - San Diego & Los Angeles	Apline, CA	www.security101.com/sandiego	2013
10	Imperial Surveillance	Arlington Heights, IL	www.ImperialCCTV.com	2007
11	Security 101 - Hampton Roads	Norfolk, VA	www.security101.com/hamptonroads	2013
12	LVC Companies	Minneapolis, MN	www.LVCinc.com	1982
13	Netronix Integration Inc.	San Jose, CA	www.netronixint.com	2007
14	Star Asset Security LLC	Orlando, FL	www.securethinking.com	1993
15	Dowley Security Systems Inc.	Houston, TX	www.dowley.com	2006
16	Vision Technologies Inc.	Glen Burnie, MD	www.visiontechnologies.com	2000
17	ATTYWON	Great Neck, NY	www.attywon.com	2012
18	Unlimited Technology Inc	Chester Springs, PA	www.utiglobal.com	1999
19	Vermillion Systems Inc.	Walkerton, IN	www.vermillion-systems.com	1999
20	American Defense Systems	Bedford, TX	www.americandefensesystems.com	2010
21	Stone Security	Salt Lake City, UT	www.stonesecurity.net	2006
22	ADT	Boca Raton, FL	www.adt.com	1874
23	ADS Security	Nashville, TN	www.adssecurity.com	1990
24	Red Hawk Fire and Security Co.	Boca Raton, FL	www.redhawkus.com	2012
25	Security 101 - Ohio	Columbus, OH	www.security101.com/columbus	2013
26	Select Security	Lancaster, PA	http://selectsecurity.com	2003
27	Micro Security	Miramar, FL	www.microsecurity.com	1990
28	Brady Integrated Security	Greensboro, NC	www.bradyintegratedsecurity.com	2014
29	Integrated Protection Services (IPS)	Cincinnati, OH	www.integratedprotection.com	1999
30	Electric Guard Dog LLC	Columbia, SC	www.electricguarddog.com	1991
31	Prime Communications Inc.	Elkhorn, NE	www.primecominc.com	2001
32	Kastle Systems	Falls Church, VA	www.kastle.com	1972
33	TWG Security	Emmaus, PA	www.twgsecurity.com	2007
34	A3 Communications Inc.	Irmo, SC	www.a3communications.com	1990
35	Skynet Integrations	Tampa, FL	www.skynetintegrations.com	2013
36	Am-Tec Total Security Inc.	Chino, CA	www.amtecsecurity.com	1983
37	Silco Fire & Security	Cincinnati, OH	www.silcofs.com	1959
38	Urban Digital Solutions Ltd.	Bellmore, NY	www.udsnyc.net	2005
39	Source 1 Solutions	Clearwater, FL	www.source1security.com	2011
40	Epix Technologies Inc.	Grayson, GA	www.epixtechnologies.com	2012
41	Central 1 Security	New Berlin, WI	www.Central1security.com	2014
42	Alarm Grid Inc.	Lighthouse Point, FL	www.alarmgrid.com	2012
43	Strategic Security Solutions	Raleigh, NC	www.s3nc.com	2011
44	GC&E Systems Group Inc.	Norcross, GA	www.gcesg.com	1999
45	NorthStar Home	Orem, UT	www.northstarhome.com	2000
46	Armada Global Inc.	Pittsburgh, PA	www.armadaglobalinc.com	2010
47	Beacon Protection	Totowa, NJ	www.beaconprotection.com	2013
48	My Alarm Center LLC	Newtown Square, PA	www.myalarmcenter.com	2001
49	Southeastern Security Professionals LLC	Norcross, GA	www.sspro.biz	2003
50	Amplex Associates Inc.	Frankfort, IL	www.amplexassociates.com	1976

Derek Radoski, CPP, Roger Echeandia and Thomas Lorence have guided TIC to massive growth in a very short period.

From Broom to Boom

Roger Echeandia and Derek Radoski started in the security industry pushing a broom; now they are pushing the growth of TIC, 2018's Fast50 fastest-growing security integrator in North America

By Paul Rothman

There was a time, way back in 1990-something, when Roger Echeandia and Derek Radoski stood side by side and literally swept the warehouse floors at ADI. While coming from diverse backgrounds, the two men quickly grew to be close friends. Eventually, they ascended up the ladder at ADI, and in due time, their career paths in the security industry diverged, with Echeandia focusing on integration and sales in the federal sector; and Radoski settling into key sales positions on the integration side.

Still, both of them hoped that one day in the future, they could be reunited as business partners.

That dream became a reality two years ago this March, when Echeandia was able to bring Radoski on as president of the integration firm he founded in 2009 – The Integration Company, or TIC for short.

From there, the past 23 months has been what the two would call a whirlwind of good fortune. TIC leveraged its foothold in the government market, and favorable market conditions and partnerships enabled the company to nearly quadruple its sales in a single 12-month period.

This accelerated growth – and it is clear there is much more where that came from – is the reason the Bethesda, Md.-based integrator has been named by *SD&I* as the Fast50 fastest-growing security integrator in North America.

Humble Beginnings

To say that Echeandia and Radoski started at the bottom in this industry is entirely accurate; in fact, their stories of self-education, hard work, learning on the job and eventual rise to business owners in the security integration industry is one that should probably be shared among the millennials looking for a clear career path in this industry.

Even aside from his successful business career, Echeandia's story is inspiring. "Roger is the true American dream," Radoski says.

Echeandia is a first-generation American. He moved to the Maryland area from Peru with his family when he was just five. After his schooling, he immediately joined the Army. "Through my experiences in the military and being part of something bigger, I knew that I wanted to help protect people (upon joining the private sector)," Echeandia says. "I was thinking I would be a police officer or something in the criminal justice field."

By chance, two of Echeandia's closest friends from his unit in the military, Alex Ruiz and Casey Israel, had both found post-Army work as branch managers for ADI. They convinced Echeandia that security would be as rewarding as anything in the law enforcement field. "I started in the warehouse – putting away equipment,

cleaning stuff, learning where the sensors go, what the wires do and how the systems work," Echeandia says. "I learned from the bottom up and I eventually moved up to product sales."

From there, Echeandia became an estimator for a company called ISR Solutions, and he learned how to design systems, estimate man-hours and "create measurables for an industry that didn't really have much structure at the time," he explains.

He was then recruited by Johnson Controls, where Echeandia served as a federal account executive for nearly six years before taking on a similar role as director of sales for GE Homeland Protection. Leveraging his expertise in serving the government market for the

"a degree in inside-linebacking." By luck of the draw at a temp agency, he found his way to the ADI warehouse floor, pushing a broom alongside Echeandia. After several months, the company offered Radoski a permanent position. "I was pretty up front with them and admitted that I didn't know anything about all these parts and pieces," Radoski says. "But they had a great training program, and they put me on a phone and in front of a couple hundred customers every day."

Crediting several mentors along his path at ADI – including Michael Masten, who remains at ADI to this day – Radoski says it didn't take long to get the hang of what all the different equipment could do and how to sell it.

In a two-year period, TIC landed security contracts for 20 different federal agencies.

better part of a decade, Echeandia took the leap and launched his own business – TIC Fire & Security – in 2010. "I realized there was a need for a very specialized integrator that could come in and take what was currently being done for security and broaden it to fit critical infrastructure with dynamic IT solutions as well," he says.

Radoski graduated from James Madison University with what he calls

"It was rapid-fire from our customers – we were doing video, access control, alarms, intercoms, cat-5 cable – and little by little, every part and component started to make a whole lot of sense," Radoski says.

Nearly six years went by, and Radoski took his newfound knowledge of products and government sales and moved from distribution to security integration – first in a sales position

with a firm called Security Solutions, and then as director of sales with Security Services & Technologies (SST), the company founded by last year's top Fast50 business owner Frank Brewer (now of NextGen Security). After earning his CPP from ASIS, Radoski's quick rise continued – he became director of federal sales for ADT and later became vice president of two-time Fast50-ranked integrator X7 (acquired by SDI in 2015).

As a result of the SDI acquisition, Radoski was forced to exit the company. He stayed close to the industry by working as chair of the ASIS Mentorship Committee. Thankfully, he and Echeandia remained close friends, and soon enough their professional paths crossed once again.

"At the time, (TIC) was a small company – they only had eight employees

and were doing a lot of subcontracting work for big integrators," Radoski says. "Looking at what Roger had reminded me of what we had at X7. I turned down a lot of high-paying jobs with manufacturers and integrators to come work with Roger and really focus on developing prime business."

A Change in Direction

Shortly after Radoski joined forces with Echeandia, they decided that subcontracting work was the wrong direction for the company. TIC, after all, was uniquely qualified to be a prime contractor in the government market, thanks to its GSA-approved status,

as well as its 8A and Veteran-Owned Small Business statuses.

"We decided to make a change within TIC, and we would no longer be beholden to someone else winning a prime contract simply so we could do the labor portion," Radoski says.

"It was a gut-check moment," Echeandia adds. "You are not as independent of a business as you are when you have your own prime contracts – instead, you are dependent on the infrastructure of a bigger integrator to be able to be successful. We were going to change our business style from just an installation shop to a full integrator. We felt like we got it right, and we just increased our focus and our energy and it kind of went from there."

Just deciding to make a change, however, does not make it so. Yes, TIC had some great factors working

to its advantage – its business status and government clearance, and the 50 years of combined industry experience from its principals; however, the change in philosophy meant some significant belt-tightening was in order.

"We would go to meetings and look around, and Roger and I would say to each other, 'why not us,'" Radoski says. "But once you decide to go after prime work, all those integrators stop giving you business. So it was a scenario where we pushed all our chips in and lived off an American Express card, didn't take any salary, invested all of our money in quality people and paid all of them before we ever got a dollar."

The Stars Align

Radoski says TIC's opportunity to make the biggest initial splash and land the most business was in the federal space. And while the circumstances leading to the company's partnership with access control vendor Identiv were coincidental, it turned out to be TIC's most fortuitous.

"In our first meeting with Identiv, I got the feeling they were in the same boat as we were," Radoski says. "They were a small, yet fast-moving group that was really targeting their efforts on the federal market."

Fortunately, Identiv's Hirsch product line was specifically focused on the government market. The company's Hirsch Federal Identity, Credential and Access Management (FICAM) solution is a low-cost, simple-to-deploy, secure solution for FICAM compliance and high-security building access – consisting of Hirsch Velocity FICAM software, with certificate checking service, along with Hirsch access control hardware.

"In 2004, Presidential Directive HSPD-12 started a chain of actions by the U.S. federal government to tighten identity-based physical and logical security for all government employees and contractors under the FIPS 201 and FICAM programs," says Mark Allen, Identiv General Manager for physical access systems. "Our second-generation solution fulfills the FICAM vision in a way that is cost-effective and (easily) deployable."

In addition to HSPD-12 – which mandates that all federal agencies use the same credential for physical and logical security – Radoski cites OMB A-130 from the federal Office of Management and Budget, which officially made physical access control systems (PACS) a part of the federal IT infrastructure. "This was a godsend to us," Radoski says. "The big difference between security and IT in the federal

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>
> — **Derek Radoski, CPP**

government is that IT has billions of dollars to spend, where security was always fighting for funds."

TIC also began leveraging a small business GSA contract schedule exclusive to small businesses with 8A status that the company achieved thanks to its past subcontracting performance; in fact, TIC won every functional area of the contract.

Due to OMB A-130, federal agencies are mandated to replace any PACS that does not meet FICAM and HSPD-12 standards. This has created a cascade effect – one of the few GSA-approved PACS systems comes from Identiv, TIC has the contract schedule, and all of a sudden, the integrator has a deluge of new government business.

"We landed 20 federal agencies and have booked over $40 million in contracts," Radoski says. "In this 23-month period, the stars have aligned for Roger and I – we couldn't have designed this any better."

The Snowball Rolls Downhill

Indeed, it seems everything came together at just the right time in just the right place for TIC, and the future looks very bright. The company has seen the profits from just a quarter of the $40 million in federal contracted work Radoski says the company has already booked – and that 25 percent was enough to propel the company to the top of the Fast50.

The fast growth has prompted Echeandia and Radoski to act quickly. They have gone from eight full-time employees to more than 40 in just the last year. In addition to its federal work, TIC has added more than 100 commercial customers and has expanded its offerings to include video, intercoms, turnstiles, alarms and more, including cybersecurity services.

"We realized that with our rapid growth, we had to go hire the best people we can find in the industry," Radoski says. That included Director of Operations Thomas Lorence, who followed Echeandia from Johnson Controls at the beginning; John Park, an IT and cybersecurity specialist to lead TIC's IT department; and Doug Knight, former VP of Johnson Controls' security division, who joined TIC's board of directors.

"Now we have to invest – we have to ramp up," Radoski says. "But we also have to always remember that we started off pushing a broom in this industry, and every customer we have is the most important thing, no matter how small." ∎

» **Paul Rothman** is Editor in Chief of Security Dealer & Integrator (SD&I) magazine. To learn more about SD&I's seventh annual Fast50 and read about this year's and previous rankings and market research, please visit www.securityinfowatch.com/sdifast50.

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>
> — Roger Echeandia