HIGHER INFORMATION GROUP

Client SUCCESS STORY

Bench Mark Program



Helping Create a Safer, More Secure Environment Where Young People can Focus on What Comes Next.

Security That Supports the Mission

When Bench Mark Program was founded in 2014, the goal was simple: create a space where young people could connect with mentors and find support for whatever challenges they were facing.

What began as a gym has grown into an organization offering 12 programs and serving approximately 1,000 young people. Bench Mark works with young people facing significant barriers, including youth involved with the juvenile justice system or probation, providing mentorship, education, workforce development, job training and other resources designed to help interrupt hardship and create a more positive path forward.



At the center of that work is something fundamental:
a place where young people can feel safe.

"There's a sense of relief knowing that when our students are here, they're safe. For some of them, this may be the only time in their day when they know that."

Witt Welch
Executive Director, Bench Mark Program.

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Growth Created a New Security Challenge



As Bench Mark grew, so did its facility and its security needs.

The organization moved from a smaller space with a single primary door to a two-story, approximately 6,000-square-foot building in downtown Lancaster. Throughout the day, the building welcomes staff, volunteers, community members and young people participating in a variety of programs.

Its previous security setup, which consisted primarily of a single video doorbell, was no longer sufficient.

With significantly more space to monitor, Bench Mark needed greater visibility into what was happening both inside and outside the building. The organization also needed better control over access while maintaining the welcoming atmosphere that is central to its work.

For Welch, that balance was important. Security needed to protect the young people Bench Mark serves, not make them feel as though they were entering a restrictive or institutional environment.



A Layered Approach to Safety and Security

Higher Information Group worked with Bench Mark to develop a security approach designed around the way the organization actually uses its facility.

Expanded Video Surveillance

Camera coverage throughout the building and surrounding property gives staff greater visibility into interior spaces, entrances, parking areas and the perimeter of the facility.

Authorized staff can monitor camera feeds from within the building and remotely, helping the team stay aware of activity without needing to physically be everywhere at once.

The system also provides after-hours motion alerts and

advanced search capabilities, allowing staff to more quickly locate relevant recorded footage based on characteristics such as clothing or vehicle details.

Controlled Building Access

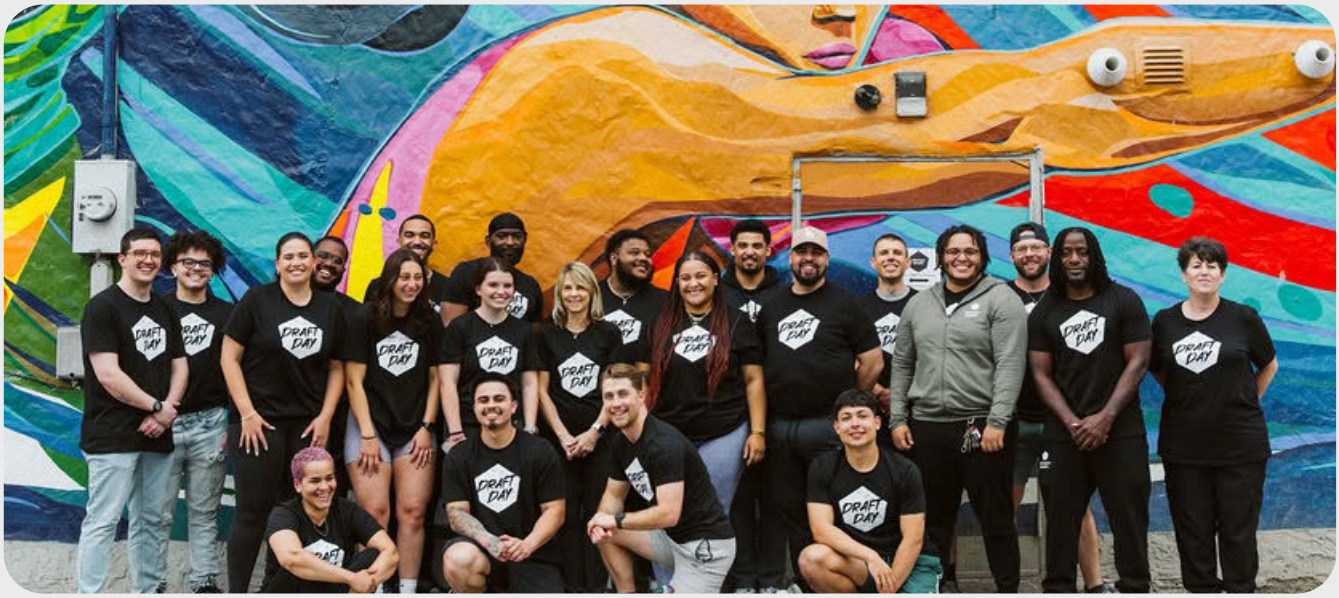
Card access on three doors allows authorized employees to enter using credentials while providing greater visibility into building access.

Door contacts add another layer of protection by notifying staff if a door has been left open or propped. These improvements have helped Bench Mark better control how people enter and move through the facility while supporting its goal of maintaining a primary controlled point of entry.

Video Entry Management

At the front entrance, an IP video intercom allows staff to see and speak with visitors before granting access.

From an interior tablet, staff can communicate with the person at the door and remotely unlock the entrance once the visitor has been authorized. The result is a more controlled entry process without requiring staff to continually leave their workspace to manage the door.



> "Our students have seen how we use the system. It isn't about being nitpicky or watching everything they do. It's purely about protection."
>
> **Witt Welch**

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Visibility That Makes a Difference

For Bench Mark, improved visibility isn't simply about monitoring a building. It helps staff make better decisions about the safety of the young people in their care.

There are times when activity outside the facility can create concerns for a student preparing to leave. With expanded exterior camera coverage, staff can monitor what is happening around the building and, when appropriate, encourage a young person to remain inside until it is safer to leave.

Students understand why the technology is there. Bench Mark communicates openly about the purpose of the cameras and security measures: they are not intended to scrutinize everyday behavior. They are there to help protect the people inside.

Protecting People and Property

The expanded surveillance system has also helped Bench Mark protect the resources that support its mission.

The organization keeps four company vehicles at the property. In one instance, camera footage showed individuals placing rocks into the tailpipe of one of the vans. Because staff were able to identify what had happened, they knew not to start the vehicle and could address the issue first.

It's one practical example of how greater visibility can help Bench Mark respond to an incident before it becomes a larger problem.



Security Without Sacrificing Connection

Security needs have continued to evolve as Bench Mark has grown, and HIG has worked with the organization to adapt its approach along the way.

That flexibility is particularly important for an organization built around human connection. Bench Mark wants young people to know that when they enter the building, there are safeguards in place, while still feeling that they have entered a space created for mentorship, opportunity and support.

The technology works largely in the background, giving staff greater control and awareness while allowing the organization's programs and relationships to remain front and center.

A Partnership Built on Understanding

Before this project, Bench Mark's experience with security technology was limited, and Welch was concerned that a more sophisticated system might be complicated to manage. HIG's team helped alleviate those concerns by explaining the technology, showing staff how to use it and making sure the team felt comfortable and confident with the system.

As Bench Mark's security needs have evolved, HIG has continued to help the organization adjust its approach and find practical solutions for the facility.

> "This was all new for us, and we were concerned it might be complicated to manage. The HIG team explained the process, showed us how to use everything and made sure we were comfortable and confident. Whenever something has come up, they've been quick to find a solution or resolve an issue."
>
> **Witt Welch**

A Safe Place to Move Forward

For Bench Mark, better security isn't ultimately about cameras, credentials or controlled doors.

It's about protecting a space where young people can connect with mentors, build skills, access resources and find a sense of purpose. A place they know they can return to when they need support.

With greater control over building access and a clearer view of what's happening throughout and around its facility, Bench Mark's team can spend less time worrying about what's happening at the door and more time focused on what happens after a young person walks through it.

Security at a Glance

Video Surveillance
Interior, Exterior, Parking and Perimeter Coverage

Controlled Access
Credential-Based Employee Access at Three Doors

Door Monitoring
Alerts when Monitoried Doors are Left Open or Propped

Video Intercom
See, Speak with and Grant Access to Visitors Remotely

Smart Monitoring
After-Hours Motion Alerts and Advanced Video Search

Remote Visibility
Authorized Staff Access to Camera Feeds when Needed