News

Navigating the Waters Personally and Professionally

John Anselmo, VP of Engineering, Vanderbilt

What does a typical day look like in your role as VP of Engineering at Vanderbilt?

My role includes oversight of three technical areas: IT Infrastructure, the Technical Support Department and Product Engineering. My typical day starts with reviewing the health of Parsippany IT and Office365 services which serve the entire Vanderbilt enterprise. I review overnight software product builds and assign issues to QA staff for testing. I direct the software development and QA teams to ensure development efforts stay focused. I coordinate with the Sales and Product Management teams to review product change requests and participate in sales meetings with customers to discuss technical issues. I monitor incoming technical support issues and assign members of the engineering team to assist issues escalated beyond the Technical Support department. Finally, I coordinate with

the Vanderbilt CIO and European IT support organization (ATOS) regarding Office365 administration.

In your opinion, what are some of the trends we're seeing in access control in the industry today? How is Vanderbilt addressing these trends?

Engineering is seeing increased focus on the security of the access control hardware including customer-performed penetration testing. We have introduced an initiative to upgrade the security components in our Linux-based controller firmware with each software release to insure any currently published vulnerabilities are patched. Previously, several years might elapse between core security component updates. We also see an increasing trend from larger customers to integrate the access control system to other customer enterprise systems and offer several methodologies for customers to accomplish this with the SMS product.

How do you think Vanderbilt differs from its competitors?

Vanderbilt is extremely customer focused. Every feature added to our products is driven by customer feedback and requests. We continue to offer the ability for a customer to implement additional features via custom developed firmware and submit enhancement requests, which are often incorporated within one or two release cycles.

What are your favorite things about your job? About the security industry?

Working with the team at Vanderbilt. Everyone is extremely dedicated to our customers. Each and every employee will go over and above their normal responsibilities to solve a customer problem or figure out a way to meet a customer's needs. I am relatively new to the security industry (six years) compared to most of the Vanderbilt staff but am excited by the fact that the industry appears to be poised for significant change over the next few years as customers become more focused on end-to-end integrated security solutions as opposed to disparate systems and the possibility of offering security as a service.

How do you like to spend your time on your days off?

We try to spend as much time as possible on the water. We own an express cruiser, which we use to travel the Hudson River from Albany to the Atlantic Ocean, the Long Island Sound along the New York and Connecticut coasts, and down the Atlantic coast to Ocean

City, Maryland, for weekend or long-weekend trips. We also move the boat to Lake George, New York, for two weeks each summer where my family has been vacationing for 40 years.