



Codelocks sees a changing definition of security along with continued demand



Matt Welty, Vice President of Codelocks Americas, speaks with the Locksmith Ledger on navigating and adapting to the 2021 industry climate in light of COVID-19.

Even as we move further away from 2020, we continue to see its effects, particularly in terms of access control in a post-pandemic world. Although there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel, COVID-19 should remain with us for some time.

Locksmith Ledger is publishing a series of articles that attempt to assess the 2021 Business Climate through the eyes of security industry manufacturers. We want to know how the companies are faring during these troubled times, how they assess the security industry at large and what locksmiths and security pros can do to take advantage of the situation.

Our latest interview in the series was conducted with Matt Welty, vice president, Americas of Codelocks.

What are the prospects for the security industry in 2021?

Certainly, the need for security and access control isn't going to decrease in 2021. The question really is how will security providers adapt to the market conditions that will be present in 2021 and what will be the main drivers in security acquisition decisions?

What do you foresee as the market conditions and main drivers in 2021?

The need for security is there, but it isn't just keeping the bad guys out. It's providing security and access for your personnel as well as your property. Companies are going to be challenged with providing security, which could be access control or could be health and cleanliness standards, and it goes beyond just the typical description of security.

In 2020, we experienced less need for access control of individuals on a daily basis, because many were

sent to work from home or limited their time in an office. However, this increased the necessity to monitor and secure those facilities while still providing access when necessary for those who still go to them. Being able to remotely monitor and grant access is more important.

There will be more of that trend in 2021. Companies will continue to spend money on access control and security solutions that offer flexibility to suit a range of changing customer needs.

How much of a role do you expect COVID to play in that?

No matter what occurs on the COVID-19 side of the equation, a lot of companies already adapted to smaller groups of people, more frequent remote meetings and the introduction of more technology.

One of the things I think will be interesting to see is with big corporate offices or office towers – how many companies will go back to those types of environments versus stay away? Long term, if things get back to normal, people’s memories tend to be short, so in a couple of years, they’ll probably forget everything and go back to where it was. But certainly through 2021, we’re going to see the lingering effects of COVID-19.

What are the prospects for your company in 2021?

We anticipate continued steady growth, as we experienced in 2020.

What specifically are you doing that would provide that outlook?

We are constantly growing our business through product development and innovation. Last year we saw global growth to our business and enhanced our product portfolio with several new access control solutions.

We stand by our core values and what we can offer as a business, staying focussed on standalone access control. Some of the things that I said earlier will help us continue to grow, because we fit into the market offering innovative technology applications without heavy infrastructure. If somebody wants to add cost-effective almost-contactless access control to virtually any door in their facility or the perimeter, we can do that through our current products.

Codelocks product expansion has been at a high level over the last few months, some of them are permutations of existing products, and some solutions are brand-new platforms. Those all have legitimate places in the market, so that will help to increase our sales.

As far as products, what do you see as taking center stage in the next year as we move forward from the COVID crisis?

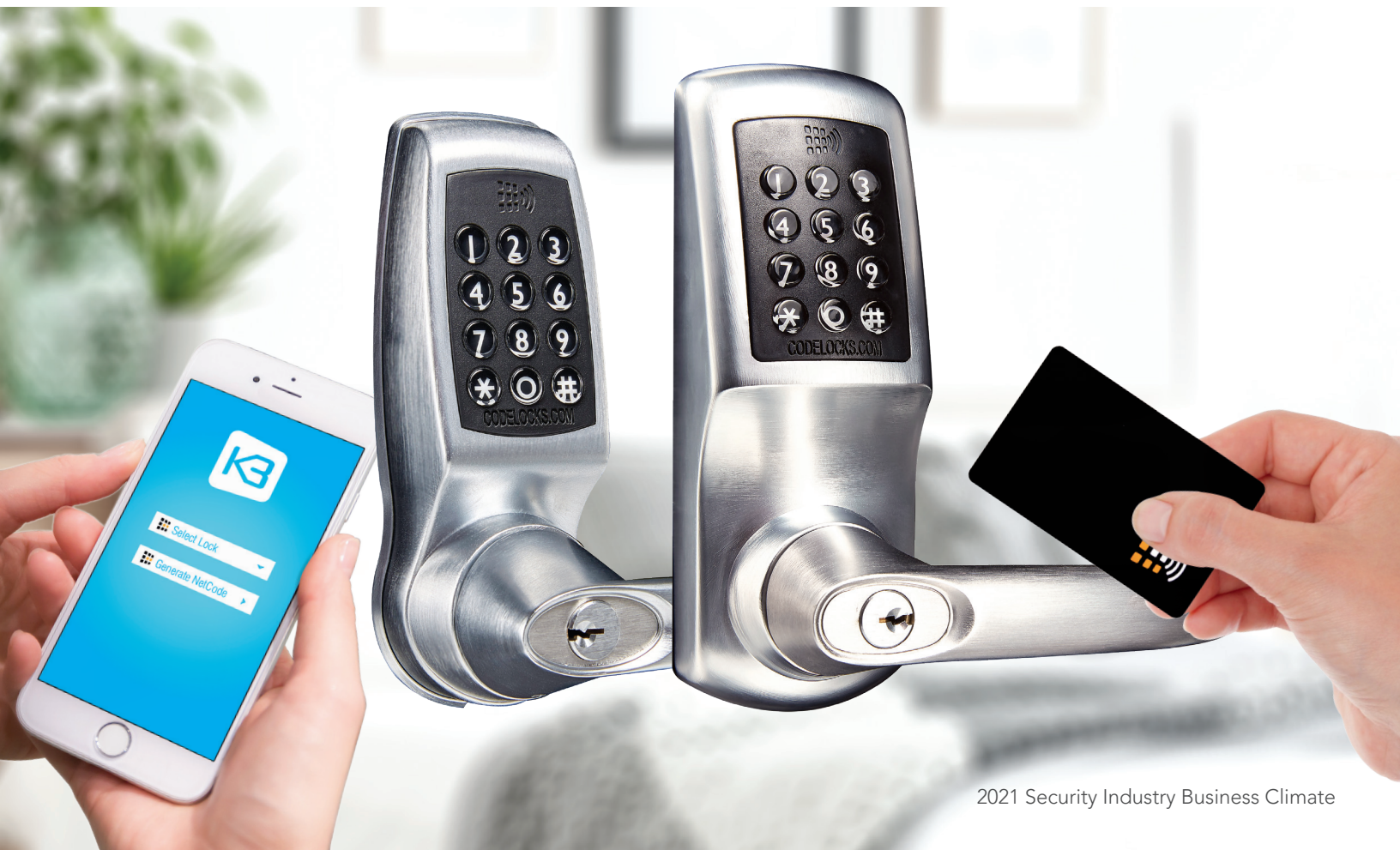
Products that provide contactless security and remote management will

become more important. There also will be an increase in emphasis on the products that are touched having effective antimicrobial coatings, along with ease of cleaning.

How do Codelocks products fit into both demands?

Our smart products can be managed remotely without any connectivity via cellular or Wi-Fi. You can assign access rights. You can get audit trail information from the lock. We have an option to add Wi-Fi connectivity, which allows you to perform a few more features that you can’t without it. And then the lock itself, you can program in a user to use an app on their phone to unlock the lock or a prox. credential to unlock the lock.

So, the only contact that would be required would be to grab the handle and open the door. Now there’s the new Clean by Codelocks coating, so if that handle was coated with Clean, you would have killed off all the microorganisms on it. It isn’t fully contactless.





Clean

by CodeLocks



We could take our smart technology, and it could be put in play with an auto door operator and things of that nature, which would make it contactless, but now you're getting into a more expensive situation.

Speaking of Clean, how does it differ from other antimicrobial coatings out there?

Our coating is a titanium dioxide-based coating, and the other antimicrobial coatings on the market are mostly silver-ion-based. There are some copper items out there, too.

Titanium dioxide is activated by light; it's a photocatalytic, so no moisture is needed. Some products inhibit the growth of microorganisms, not

viruses, so those microorganisms on there are still going to be on there. It just inhibits them from reproducing and continuing to grow. With titanium dioxide, it breaks down microorganisms into their basic compounds, and then they just get swept away.

It's activated by light and a low ambient light. There might be an application — a dark room or something — where there's not enough light, but all the applications we're talking about have adequate light to activate the titanium dioxide. It's not a new item that hasn't been out there. It's been there a long time. We're having some weathering testing done, but right now, we estimate it should last for at least 2

years, even with regular cleaning, even if somebody uses soap or chemicals.

It'll be interesting to see how the market accepts it. There's nothing proprietary with us [Clean by CodeLocks uses LumaClean by USA Nanocoats], so if this is accepted, I'm sure the bigger companies will be offering it as well.

Let's get back to 2020 for a bit. What did the industry learn about COVID that will propel it forward? What did your company learn from it?

Conditions in the market can change in an instant, and the industry must remain nimble to respond to a market

effect that was not anticipated by anyone. We have strong values with a loyal, hardworking flexible team, and we will continue to work together with the possibility of more employees working remotely, which will give us more flexibility in where we have operations located.

What's the benefit of "flexible locations"?

We have been able to stay operating despite shutdowns, and we can keep servicing our customers. I had a conversation with a large channel distributor that sells our product, and he appreciates the fact that all through COVID-19, our shipping times didn't go out. We didn't shut down. We just kept right on moving.

On the first day, back in March [2020] when California announced lockdowns, we were able to stay open and continue shipping out orders. We are committed to maintaining the best level of service to our customers whilst adhering to safety measure and best practice. Our main concern was safety to our staff and the business, and we took all the necessary steps, following advice and guidance to safeguard our staff and customers alike.

Codelocks' corporate headquarters is in the United Kingdom. What unique challenges does your company face that other companies that might have operations based only in the United States don't have?

There are always challenges within a business. We are fortunate at Codelocks as we have a great global team and a commitment to grow the business in all territories; Americas, EMEA, Asia Pacific.

There are different standards and requirements. The smart features on our products are the same, but in Europe, they use a different mechanical platform for a lock than we use here in an ANSI type of setting. A smart lock in the UK and a

smart lock in our warehouse are not necessarily the exact same things, so we must manage things accordingly.

Codelocks is privately held. That plays to our strength and ability to react quickly. We can focus on applications that customers require, and we work with our customers to find a workable solution. Having the agility and flexibility within that strategy enables us to respond.

Our goal is to be the 'go to' standalone access control provider. We strive for brand recognition with distributors, installers and locksmiths and focus efforts on getting them to remember, "Oh yeah. Codelocks has something I could use here."

How do locksmiths take advantage of the changing business landscape we're in?

Locksmiths have to be sure that they understand their customers' current needs. It also will require locksmiths to increase their knowledge of things, such as cleaning and technology, even more.

What in particular should they know?

Understanding all the products that are out there. There are a lot of smart products on the market, and locksmiths have to not be afraid of that. I know there are some who don't want to mess around with technology, but, frankly, like it or not, that's where most folks are going.

What they need to do is learn the different types of technologies. You need to know that not only are there smart locks, but there are also some that require a certain type of connection, and some that don't.

Then, they really need to ask the customer enough questions to fully understand what the customer wants to accomplish. Locksmiths have to be adaptable, particularly now. Even your same customer that you dealt with for years, the needs that they

would have had a year ago and the needs now might be completely different just based on how their business had to adapt, so the solution that you gave them last year very well might not be appropriate. Don't just assume that because you've serviced them for 20 years, you know everything about them.

What's Codelocks doing to help advance that knowledge?

We have a lot of training opportunities that we make available to distributors not only for their personnel, but also for their customers — locksmiths — to keep them up to speed and let them know about some of the alternatives. Our products aren't going to fit every application they have, but it's always amazing to me after they hear about the Smart Lock and some of that technology, they say, "Oh, wow. I've been looking for that."

By highlighting a wide range of access control case studies on our website, it helps locksmiths to see that there are new products and solutions available to them, that they may not have been aware of, or considered.

