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The Creation Of LaserShield

ANTHONY DOHRMANN
CHAIRMAN, CEO AND FOUNDER

LaserShield Security Systems, Inc. was founded in 1999 by Anthony Dohrmann who has been actively involved in the home security business for more than 20 years. "Tony" Dohrmann has done every aspect of the alarm business--from crawling under houses to install and de-bug old-fashioned systems, to running and selling a number of high profile alarm companies.

As a result, he has an in-depth understanding of what people want and don't want from a security system. LaserShield is the result of that experience and knowledge. He has created a system that is simple to use, requires no installation and assembly, doesn't force a buyer to wait for salespeople and installers, and is affordable for almost every renter and homeowner.

Ambitious and sharp, the Southern California-raised Dohrmann joined his first security company at the age of 17. After learning the service side of the trade at a small company named Alarmson, he soon moved into a management position at 21 years of age with a more established company. There he helped grow California Home Security, based in Van Nuys, CA, 70 percent in under five years, even though the company had already been in operation for many years at the time of his coming on board. Starting in service and installation, he moved in to sales and then became general manager. In 1990, the company was sold to American Home Security for a hefty profit for the owner and Dohrmann moved on to several other subsequent firms, where he specialized in acquiring alarm accounts and re-selling them. Those firms, some in which he held ownership, dealt in very large subscriber bases and began Dohrmann thinking about serving a greater marketplace, unlike independent dealers who can only service as many as they can install.

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Increasingly he became aware that one of the great resistance factors in alarm sales was people's distaste, discomfort and distrust of having a salesman in their home. As an alternative, he turned to advertising on cable television, on radio and direct mail—encouraging homeowners and businesses to put in an order for a 30-minute, \$89 installation, using a package of products he had assembled—without an advance sales call. The mass-market approach worked; cutting out the sales call was a tremendous hit. That company, Gold Coast Security, which Dohrmann founded in 1995, was a major success.

It was in the process of developing Gold Coast Security that Dohrmann inadvertently began his second career. Raising \$330,000 in private capital for Gold Coast Security attracted other business people who asked him if he would be willing to teach some of his techniques for marketing and raising capital from private sources. That led to a six-year public speaking career at numerous seminars alongside some of the nation's leading speakers and seminar presenters, on the national speaking circuit. He also hosted his own Los Angeles radio show: *The Income Building Power Hour*. By 1998 his seminar businesses were generating more than \$4 million in annual sales. In 1997, he sold the Gold Coast subscriber base for 30 times its monthly recurring revenue value.

Traveling the speaking circuit along with many of the nation's top direct response marketers opened Dohrmann's eyes. What if he could revolutionize the business he knew best—home security—by bringing a mass market product sales approach to the industry?

“The problem with the home security business has always been that it is dominated by approximately 14,000 companies, mostly smaller independent operators,” he says. “All of their alarm systems are different and there is no consistency or standardization. Further, many of the monitoring stations just aren't up to the task. Lastly, there is an under-served market for people who live and work in smaller spaces that are overlooked by these operators because the business is not profitable. They would rather do an installation on a \$500,000 house than a small condo or apartment because the alternative economics just don't work for them.”

Out of that gem of an idea grew LaserShield. Dohrmann began building stand-alone, “plug and go” wireless alarm systems on his kitchen countertop. Initially, he worked alone, but as the concept grew and developed, he began raising capital and calling in specialists to help with product development. He soon began to phase himself out of the ongoing seminar business in 2001 to concentrate 100% on LaserShield. Dohrmann then assembled a world-class team of engineers, software specialists, designers and marketers, including professionals with leading credentials from Netscape, Proctor and Gamble, and Cisco.

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An important part of the equation was Dohrmann's conviction that LaserShield needed a monitoring and response partner that could handle service nationwide. After interviewing nearly a dozen candidates, he settled on Rapid Response Monitoring Service, one of America's largest and most respected monitoring services, owned by Russell MacDonnell. MacDonnell was previously founder and CEO of Security Link, a leading alarm company brand that ultimately sold to Tyco Industries, after an acquisition by Ameritech. He then built and sold another hundred-million dollar venture, Alarmguard, while Founding Rapid Response Monitoring Service in 1992, which among other customers, serves many of the high rises in New York City for fire alert, as well as theft response and invasion.

In MacDonnell, Dohrmann found a true partner. Embracing Dohrmann's vision, he expanded his facility to accommodate the anticipated flood of new monitoring customers resulting from a store-bought mass-marketed LaserShield. The two set about creating new technology that would automate and integrate LaserShield's revolutionary product capabilities, registration, monitoring, local law enforcement alert and customer notification—thus standardizing and speeding up the process at every step. Automation meant that quality of service would never be compromised by factors such as slow, inefficient staff or human error, as in many monitoring stations and manufacturing operations. LaserShield now has the highest quality global data management system and proprietary backbone ever developed for the alarm industry. Dohrmann and Rapid Response then successfully beta tested LaserShield in 32 markets across the country.

"This product is the first affordable, easily-available and dependable security solution for everyone," says Dohrmann. "It eliminates all the negatives—in-home sales calls, holes in the wall, major expense, and programming an alarm keypad. LaserShield insures that anyone who can afford a \$199.95 investment, and a monthly charge of \$19.95 can have peace of mind."

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