



**Protecting the Life of Your Business™**

## **A Competitive Edge for A Trophy Building**

*Online safety-training with BSS Guardian™ improves tenant safety, marketing clout for Chicago high rise.*

*“Attracting and retaining such high-profile tenants in Chicago’s competitive market ... is BSS Guardian™, the Web-based Life Safety Training Program from Building Safety Solutions (BSS).”*

Located in the heart of downtown Chicago, 77 West Wacker Drive is a 51-story, Class A “trophy” high rise. Its modern Neo-Classical styling and museum-quality art makes it a popular stop on Chicago’s architectural tours. Built in 1992, the building received the 2006 “The Office Building of the Year” (TOBY) Award from the Chicago and regional chapters of the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA). Its tenant roster includes several global law firms, the technology giant Microsoft, and its most recent arrival—the new world headquarters of United Airlines.

Attracting and retaining such high-profile tenants in Chicago’s competitive market requires much more than architectural elegance and first-class amenities, according to Myrna Coronado, general manager with Prime Group Realty Trust at the 77 West Wacker building. “Chicago has seen a lot of new commercial development, and these new buildings are equipped with state-of-the-art technology,” she said. “We have to prove that even in our 15th year of operation, we continue to invest in technological systems that not only keep pace with the times, but go above and beyond what the other buildings are providing.”

Among those best-in-class offerings is BSS Guardian™, the Web-based Life Safety Training Program from Building Safety Solutions (BSS) of Pasadena, Calif. The fully

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digitized program integrates 3-D graphics, site-specific digitized images and voice narration to prepare employees and tenants of 77 West Wacker for a variety of emergency situations—man-made and natural disasters alike—ranging from terrorism to biological and chemical threats, to fires and tornadoes.

Tenants’ employees can log on at their convenience and view customized, building-specific information on floor plans, emergency exits and evacuation procedures 24/7 from any computer. The application includes a quiz for users and a management tool that enables both landlord and tenants to track compliance. In addition, the system is equipped with various alert and notification features, which helps the property’s daily operations.

**A Compelling Product for a Class A Building**

Coronado began researching building safety systems shortly after she assumed her position at 77 West Wacker in 2002. “World-class tenants want to ensure the safety of their employees. As a result, in our competitive market they want state-of-the-art systems that are available in a few other competing buildings,” she said. “I knew we needed an emergency preparedness program that was more compelling and site-specific than the usual generic PowerPoint presentations, standard video, and certainly a system that was more professional than a generic cartoon program.”

In BSS Guardian™, Coronado found a solution that was both customized and cost-effective. The installation process included on-site visits from BSS professionals to familiarize themselves with the building.



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“Customization of the content is critical,” explained Coronado. “The BSS team took digital images throughout the building; they studied the mechanical drawings and interviewed our staff. After they wrote the script, they gave us an opportunity to review and edit it. We even used our own employees in the online training presentation. When you view it, you can’t look away, because you are seeing people and places that are familiar. Also, the notification and alert tools are significant components of our daily security operational activities.”

To introduce the system, BSS equipped building management with marketing material that included brochures, form letters, and graphics to introduce the product to tenants. They also hosted training sessions in which BSS personnel answered questions and showed tenants how to navigate the system.

Management at 77 West Wacker has integrated the program with its Web-based portal, which tenants can access anytime. Many tenants have made the online safety training part of their new-hire packages, and integrated the program into their firms’ policies and procedures. The building also offers a closed-caption version, and is currently developing a Spanish-language version for employees.

“The best thing about it is that it is empowering,” Coronado said. “Employees don’t have to wait for a biannual fire drill in order to receive this training. New employees or temporary employees can get vital information about the building without delay. Unlike cartoons and other sub-par online products, the BSS



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system is high-quality and professional, which has the capability to attract the attention of a fairly wide diverse tenant audience. Also, this system broadcasts accurate and consistent information because the information is available in the same format every time, and the convenience of having it online encourages people to use it, and that results in a safer workplace.”

And for 77 West Wacker, it has also resulted in a competitive edge that helps keep the building at the forefront of Chicago’s highly competitive commercial real estate market.

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