

# SECURITY SPOTLIGHT

## SQUEEZING THE MOST FROM YOUR SECURITY DOLLAR



### The Dilemma

In this new millennium forward-thinking security executives know that it's virtually impossible to purchase security technologies on the cheap. This is especially true since terrorism hit our shores in early September 2001 – when virtually every American began buying security-related technologies by the bushel and the prices began to skyrocket. How does a security administrator proceed? One possible approach to solving this dilemma might lie in learning to think outside of the proverbial box and seek to implement less costly security strategies that can do the job effectively. In today's budget-conscious atmosphere, stretching the security dollar is both an art and a science. The art lies in the company's ability to solve protection related deficiencies using existing resources, whilst the science lies in architecting protection strategies that meet and/or exceed industry benchmarks. Obviously, if security enhancement dollars are readily available then all is well. But in most cases such dollars are scarce and the secret to achieving success in this endeavor may lie in finding low cost initiatives that can further strengthen and deepen protection availability without blowing up the budget.

### What is Proactive Security?

Simply put – proactive security approaches and technologies involve devices and techniques that address crime exposures BEFORE they occur. The standard policing and private security model has been and continues to be a REACTIVE model. It was not until the 1970s that crime prevention and proactive security strategies entered our law enforcement and private security lexicons. One of the most cost-effective strategies developed during the evolution of the proactive security revolution was the birth of the SECURITY SURVEY. Information on how surveys are drafted and how they play a role in uncovering risk exposure can be found in an article written by the undersigned: "THE SECURITY SURVEY: AN INVESTIGATIVE TOOL" featured in The Texas Investigator Magazine: Spring 2018- pp. 39-42. The article offers a roadmap on how security surveys are structured.

### The Origins of Proactive Security

Great Britain is known as the world leader in fostering the modern crime prevention model of policing. Sir Henry Fielding, a British magistrate and criminologist in the mid-18th century organized the forerunner of today's policing methods by setting goals and objectives to assist law enforcement to identify and remove the root causes of crime and the conditions in which the flourish. In 1971, the United States followed Britain's lead formalizing a course of study

in the ABCs of crime prevention via a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grant awarded to the University of Louisville. This later helped to spawn The National Crime Prevention Institute which over the years has helped to train thousands of crime prevention practitioners in law enforcement and private security industry. One of the most important skills taught to all graduates is how to decipher criminality using the Security Survey.

### **Advancing the Proactive Security Agenda**

Security administrators need to cast an investigative eye on whether their security departments have a cadre of specialists that labor on searching out crime related risk exposures within the entities they work in.

Oftentimes these specialists are trained to conduct security surveys and search out preventative strategies for their specific institutions. Crime prevention training programs are normally offered by many larger police agencies and state criminal justice entities free of charge. Oftentimes the program includes training in a few sub-topics including but not limited to: history and theory of crime prevention, aspects of drafting security surveys, alarm and locking system applications, crime mapping techniques and technologies. The alternative of having a crime prevention team on board is to reach out to professional surveyors which can become quite expensive in deed! Seeing that security wisdom suggests that security surveys should be prepared on an annual schedule, hiring outside experts could be quite cost-intensive.

### **Thinking Out of the Box: Some Low Cost Security Initiatives**

Security executives might wish to consider marshalling support from in-house corporate personnel and begin a campaign to champion proactive crime prevention measures to bolster facility security. Several programs to consider include:

- Establishing a “Security Advocate” program that links all corporate personnel into a direct pipeline for receiving and disseminating timely security and safety information. A security advocate is an employee who is charged with keeping a watchful eye over all incoming visitors, and others entering their area of responsibility. The security advocate has a simple task to CHALLENGE unknown individuals by simply asking CAN I HELP YOU. In many instances, corporate security executives follow the advice of their security surveyor when positioning their advocate staff. An advocate is usually selected from among peers and their desks strategically relocated to a area that offers direct sight of access and egress portals. As such, anyone entering the area is immediately challenged by the advocate
- Formulating crime prevention initiatives that champion proactive crime control approaches. These approaches include: conducting security surveys to diagnose frail security deficiencies, enrolling company employees into local law enforcement programming such as: “operation identification” – etching company property with serial numbers, neighborhood watch, and other programs normally offered by most law enforcement agencies
- Asking local law enforcement agencies to design a series of personal safety lecture programs for company employees
- Encouraging in-house employees to work more closely with facility security
- Promulgating a periodical security/safety bulletin highlighting security and safety deficiencies, current crime trends, hazardous conditions and other cautionary security-related directives for dissemination to all employees
- Establishing financial incentive programs to thwart internal thievery
- Promulgating architectural initiatives that help deter criminal behavior such as: relocating business operation hubs from low to high risk environs, reconfiguring waiting room furniture to restrict prolonged horizontal positioning (sleeping), using air conditioning, heating and music systems as deterrents to extended loitering episodes
- Installing mirrors, CCTV and related detection devices in vulnerable locations (stairwells, elevators, etc.)
- Retrofitting exterior and interior critical access portals with secondary industrial strength locking mechanisms to

help bolster perimeter security and safety

- Erecting security specific signage in critical areas that offer safety tips such as: always walk with a neighbor or two in dangerous environs, listen to your instincts when feeling uncomfortable, remember to use the street landmarks such as parked cars and fire hydrants, etc., to accurately judge a possible perpetrator's height
- Inaugurate package inspection programs to reduce internal thievery and shoplifting episodes
- Ensure that all department administrators remove calendars, posters, and other paraphernalia from glass doors, and partitions to enhance overall visibility
- Inaugurate comprehensive background screening initiatives to help weed out miscreants
- Encouraging security and facility maintenance departments to work together to find facility lighting and locking systems in disrepair and other safety and security hazards before they wreak financial havoc.

### **The Role of Metrics in 21st Century Security Planning**

Security executives instinctively know that profit is what drives the business model. When a company needs to financially downsize, security is one of the first areas to be cut. One of the most important reasons why this is usually true is because security in general is not considered a profit center, but rather an expense. Showing how much money was saved because of good sound proactive security approaches such as: injuries and crimes avoided, is extremely difficult to substantiate. More forward-thinking security mavens have begun applying metric measurements in their security survey assessments to better help spell out the financial value and programmatic effectiveness of proactive security initiatives. An excellent discussion on how Metrics can be applied to help make the financial value case can be found in a trilogy of articles co-written by the undersigned and featured in the Journal of Healthcare Protection Management – a publication of the International Association for Healthcare Security & Safety: “AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECURITY METRICS” Vol. 31., No. 2.: 2015, “RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR APPLYING METRICS IN SECURITY AND SAFETY PLANNING” Vol. 32., No.1.:2016, “APPLYING METRICS TO 21st CENTURY HEALTHCARE SECURITY” Vol. 33.,No. 2.: 2017.

### **Asking the Right Questions**

The following is a list of questions that a security executive should ask when evaluating their company's proactive security and safety programming:

1. Does company management champion proactive security initiatives?
2. Are all company employees enrolled in the company's proactive security and safety initiative?
3. Are both low budget and high budget security strategies employed?
4. Are security advocates assigned protection duties?
5. Are security surveys prepared by in-house or external specialists?
6. Are security surveys prepared after all serious crime-related incidents?
7. Are security surveys prepared on an annual schedule?
8. Does the security department maintain a crime analysis and crime mapping program?
9. Does the company have an in-house bulletin to disseminate security and safety directives and announcements?
10. Does the company security department maintain an ongoing liaison with local law enforcement?

### **The ABCs of Evaluating Security Initiatives**

As with all programs, a system of evaluation should be promulgated so that the overall effect of the initiative can be accurately measured. Structuring such a program might include:



- Designing an instrument that evaluates before, middle, and after studies to help determine the actual level of crime reporting in areas where proactive approaches have been put forward
- Designing a statistical instrument to help gauge whether the proactive message is reaching its intended target audience

All in all, a structured program of evaluation will measurably help security administrators to better gauge their organization's proactive crime control initiative.

### Looking to the Future

These and other low budget strategies help to strengthen existing protection availability via fostering the philosophy that "security is everyone's responsibility". Oftentimes, this skillful display of resourcefulness influences top management to consider and approve more expensive protection specific systems. The security administrators' inventive ability to stretch the ever-shrinking security dollar often distinguishes him or her as a company asset and not a corporate liability.

### About the Author:

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