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Forging the Partnership

by Mike Moran

Partnering with an outside company to provide contract guard services is a tremendous opportunity to improve the security and life safety programs at any organization. It is also rife with potential for disappointment and insufficient service. The difference lies not only in the company selected, but in how both parties approach the partnership.

The relationship grows out of the bid process and is forged for good or ill by how partners on both sides communicate their expectations, their concerns, the multitude of operational details, and even their appreciation.

The Bid

“I only invite security vendors to bid on my project who meet my criteria for quality staffing and training and commitment to the community,” says LaNile Dalcour, manager, security and life safety, Greater D.C. Region for Brookfield Office Properties. By community, Dalcour refers to the network of professionals whose concerns interrelate with his as a security professional. “It is very difficult for me to take a security vendor seriously who I’ve never seen at a security-related function, including an ASIS function, or any of the local emergency preparedness meetings.”

Dalcour is intentional about exploring the vendors’ connection to the local business improvement district, local law enforcement, and national agencies for the purpose of information-sharing.

“Now I hear about a lot of things going on, but so does my vendor,” says Dalcour, who pays attention to the additional perspective that different networks provide on any specific intelligence or trend. It is only after comparing notes with his security partner that Dal-

cour believes he is ready to take information to his property managers.

Gary Kutty, vice president of sales for the Guardian 8 Corporation, says a security director shouldn’t look for a vendor, because what they are really looking for is a partner. “There’s an old saying: national companies are only as strong as their local branch, says Kutty. “The biggest factor there is the strength of the local branch manager. Experience in the industry, educational background, where else they have been in the industry, how they worked their way up” are all details that tell you about what you can expect.

Kutty suggests security directors pay specific attention to longevity at the branch management level. The person in this position is going to be your partner for what you both hope to be a long time.

“I think the security director has to approach this knowing what they really want,” says Leon Beresford, CPP, vice president, corporate operations with Admiral Security Services. “The budget is a limiting factor, but the security program has a purpose; it has objectives apart from simply coming in on budget.”

When preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP), “you have to be concerned about pricing, given the economy, given the business, and given the fact that your business has to make money,” says Beresford. “And of course even nonprofits are responsible for managing their resources efficiently. But an RFP driven primarily by price without consideration for those things that are essential for developing a great security program will lead to lowball, cut-corner proposals.”

Beresford has observed that it is the most

generalized RFP that can result in selecting the lowest bid provider. “If you have a well-thought-out RFP that specifies the scope and details of what is needed, then everyone involved is more apt to be focused on the best value rather than the lowest price.”

What the Vendor Knows that the Security Director Does Not

“The day an RFP hits the street it’s already obsolete,” says Chuck Brock, senior vice president, strategic account operations for G4S Secure Solutions. “The data that is in there is only as good as the day it was collected.”

Brock does not dispute the value of the RFP. He knows it to be an indispensable part of the process. But he also knows that it takes a lot of time and energy to put together a good RFP, and by the time it is finished it is tempting to think that part of the work is done. It isn’t.

Brock says it is critical to invite all the potential suppliers in and to ensure that all are given ample time to visit the facilities and have their eyes on the operation. “There should be an extensive Q&A period throughout the process,” says Brock. “You want everyone coming in eyes wide open.”

Done correctly, the process should not only produce the most informed bids, it should reveal a lot of things about the property that the security director was not aware of. It should also provide an up-to-date picture of the security market that is very helpful to the business. “We know what the current wage data looks like, what it takes to find qualified people to perform in that environment; what the health benefits programs are looking like, and what our competition is doing, so we have a lot of data about market performance and market challenges that may not be visible to the security director.”

Evaluating a Philosophy of Service

“I believe if you really want to know how the beehive works you have to talk to the bees,” Dalcour says. “The philosophy of service is a priority question, and the best way to find out what it is to talk to their security officer staff.”

Dalcour specifies in every RFP that his evaluation will require private conversations with officers at other properties. He will ask a security manager to leave while he speaks to an officer at random—he declines conversations with staff that have been selected for him.

A lot of these conversations go really well, the officer has great things to say about the company, some even rave about their company, Dalcour says. “Other times they’re revealing things that I would never have otherwise known. The complaints I have heard have typically stemmed from training or missed payrolls,” says Dalcour. “There will inevitably be payroll errors, but not paying an officer on time is an entirely different matter.”

Managing Turnover

“Security officers want to be appreciated,” says Dalcour. “Let’s be honest; it’s a thankless job.” Dalcour makes sure his contract officers feel like a part of his team as much as they are part of their company. He stresses that they are the public face of the organization they are charged with securing. They have more public interaction and make more first impressions than anyone else in the building.

“So they aren’t just a vendor to us, they are part of the team,” says Dalcour, who estimates his contract officers have a turnover rate of approximately 30 percent. “They are involved in team meetings, they are involved in team functions, there involved in holiday parties and potlucks.”

At the end of the year when his organization hands out bonuses, Dalcour makes sure everyone gets something directly from his company. “I think it’s important whatever they do or don’t get from their company, we’re making that gesture to show them we appreciate what they’ve done for the year.”

Dalcour’s success is not grounded in a disciplined adherence to best practices, though he benefits greatly by careful attention to them. Dalcour’s security program succeeds because his interaction with the security company comes from an innate sense of partnership. ■

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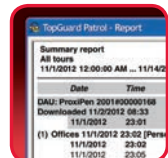
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Guard Management Solution: The new industry standard

In an industry saturated with complex segmented systems, a single integrated solution emerges as the new standard for guard workforce management.

Founded in 1983, Command Security Corporation (CSC) is a premier provider of security services. Since their inception, CSC has expanded operations across the United States. A 1995 acquisition of assets paved the way for CSC to expand into a variety of markets including transportation and aviation security. Today, CSC has sites in nearly every vertical in the security industry with more than 6,500 officers.

As CSC expanded, they were faced with the challenges of managing an ever-growing workforce. Not only was the size of the workforce increasing, but client expectations varied across verticals forcing action. To stay ahead of these changes, CSC looked to technology to manage and expand their operation. Early technologies provided some support, but the scope of their functionality was too narrow to produce notable improvements across the organization. Accordingly, CSC employed the use of multiple standalone technologies to satisfy their operational needs.

Prior to TrackTik, CSC deployed two guard monitoring solutions to manage field operations and multiple verticals. One vendor offered standard patrol pipe to wand guard tour system for checkpoint tours, while another added a GPS guard tracking system. With few options, CSC invested in the single-purpose proprietary devices offered by each vendor.

The challenges of operating both systems

quickly surfaced. "Our training costs increased significantly and the limitations of the devices often led to the systems being underutilized by employees," said Dane Dodd, CPP, CSC's Director of Training. In addition to adoption concerns and inflated training costs, the two systems siloed operational data making it nearly impossible to provide their clients with valuable information.

Management struggled to get a comprehensive view of their field operations, while officers struggled to effectively operate and adopt multiple systems.

In 2014, CSC researched emerging technologies for a unified guard management system and finally found an end-to-end technology that would allow them to manage their workforce with one simple

software. TrackTik, a Montreal-based guard management solution offered a departure from the limitations of early technologies. Leveraging mobile and cloud technology devices, TrackTik provided a robust, user-friendly and flexible management solution for security operations. Officers could use a single device, a single point of entry, for all their security needs. They were finally equipped with an all-in-one solution that also happened to offer management a central repository of critical and useful data. From smart tours, GPS tracking and incident reporting, this data would populate a real-time dashboard offering a comprehensive view of their operation. A



TrackTik is a mobile and web based security operation management software that provides compliance, tracking and scheduling solutions for the security industry.

view that would change their business and the security industry as a whole.

“The idea was simple; create a flexible platform that encompasses all facets of a security operation,” explained Simon Ferragne, CEO and founder of TrackTik. “We work continuously with our customers to develop user-friendly solutions to which evolve to meet the changing needs of the security industry.”

CSC deployed TrackTik and quickly noticed the benefits of a fully integrated solution. “TrackTik’s platform is simple to setup and easy to use,” said Dodd. “Our security officers find the application very user-friendly, and managers can set up new sites or modify existing accounts in just a few minutes. In other words, TrackTik provided the flexibility we needed.”

Following the implementation of the software, CSC now leverages TrackTik to grow their business. “We will be expanding the use of TrackTik to provide a higher level of value-added services for our clients,” added Dodd.

“We are thrilled to partner with Command Security Corporation who are well-respected in the security industry. CSC runs a tight operation and it is gratifying that industry leaders of this caliber are choosing TrackTik to streamline their processes and grow their business.” said Simon Ferragne. ■

CONTACT INFORMATION

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3.7.2.4 Training

Security officers should be trained and tested on the following topics (among others), as appropriate to the assignment:

- Ethics and professionalism.
- Security policies and procedures.
- Investigation.
- Observation techniques.
- Challenging techniques.
- Crowd control.
- Relations with law enforcement.
- Legal authority.
- Human relations.
- Public relations.
- Patrol procedures.
- Report writing.
- Ingress and egress control.
- Emergency medical assistance & first aid.
- Terrorism issues.
- Workplace violence.
- Use of force.
- Criminal and civil law.
- Operation of security systems.
- General fire prevention and safety.

If security officers are to be equipped with any weapons (such as firearms, batons, chemical sprays, or electrical weapons) they must be properly trained in their use.

Officers who will be equipped with firearms need extensive, ongoing training. Security officers should be given regular training reviews/as well as periodic proficiency testing.

Excerpted from *Facilities Physical Security Measures Guideline, ASIS GDL FPSM-2009*, Published by ASIS International

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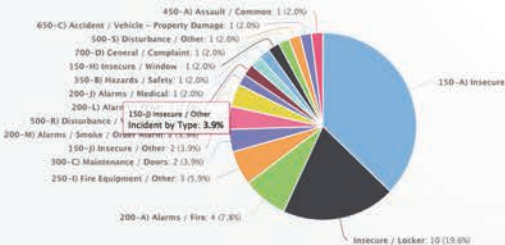
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