



Commercial Real Estate Council May 2007

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Security Research: Are you doing your part?

As a security practitioner, are you doing your part to contribute to the professional body of knowledge? What I mean by this is, are you conducting any kind of research that adds new knowledge and/or confirms or refutes a previously assumed practice? Security books and magazines are full of war stories, best practices, old practices, new practices, no practices and unconfirmed rumors. How many of them contain findings of well researched, thoughtfully analyzed challenges where conclusions were drawn based not on a problem simply disappearing but instead on careful analysis of data, duplication of findings and confirmation of actions?

How many security practitioners know how to conduct research or even recognize its value and make the time to conduct it? There are plenty of excuses why our profession does not produce much in the way of research. There is not enough time, training, and support from senior management or sharing of data with other practitioners. While every one of those excuses is absolutely correct, they are no reason to stop you from conducting your own research. Everyone is busy and it simply comes down to whether you are willing to make this a priority. You don't need to be a research analyst, just curious enough to ask for proof and know where to get started. There are plenty of primers out there on the internet on how to conduct research. Senior management is always making demands on your time but research usually pays off in increasing knowledge, justification of security programs, developing return on investment schedules and other program justifications. Your colleagues are not willing to share data with you? There are always the old school practitioners who believe that sharing information is a sin, but thankfully they are in the minority now so just keep asking people, you will eventually find those willing to share.

In conducting research, I am not talking about hiring an academic from an 'ivory tower' who will cost more than next year's budget on the latest gizmos and widgets nor am I talking about you spending the next 2 years conducting 'field research'. Research is about collecting security reports, categorizing them into whatever field you wish and then trying to find statistical proof about how or why or why not something is occurring. There are plenty of resources to get you started. I recommend going to the Center for Problem Orientated Policing at www.popcenter.org/. There are an outstanding number of documents to get you started including 'Analyzing Repeat Victimization', 'Assessing Responses to Problems', 'Crime Pattern Theory', 'Researching A Problem' and 'Using Analysis for Problem Solving'. They are all in PDF format and ready for download.

With a little bit of work you will find conducting research a rewarding and meaningful experience and you might have fun while learning something. Good luck.

Glen Kitteringham, M.Sc., CPP is a security professional, environmental criminologist and writer with experience in the security industry dating back to 1990. He has a Master's of Science post graduate degree from the University of Leicester. He has published works in a variety of mediums on security management, physical security, emergency response planning and guard force operations. His first book was published in 2006 and entitled 'Security and Life Safety in the Commercial High-Rise'. He has conducted research into such areas as crime pattern analysis in the commercial high-rise, retail theft and laptop theft.

Performance Management – Food for Thought

In the last decade or two, a handful of security companies stepped up in their efforts to bring a higher quality of professionalism to buyers of their services. Expanded features such as in-depth employee screening processes, enhanced employee benefits packages, holistic training and development programs highlighted by distance learning, automated payroll and billing systems and operational tracking systems marked the shift from the accepted service to the beginning stages of the desired service. As time has gone by, the competition has caught up and equalized service capabilities in these basic areas from one company to the next. For the most part, what one company can do in employee background checks, another can as well, it is safe to say that the majority of companies in the security field, whether local, regional, national or global, have responded to the tribal calls of the customer who has asked for these basic features.

But what about the customer who wants more – who is tired of settling for the customary mediocre performance which is markedly better than 20 years ago, but still lagging behind performance standards of most industries? It is that type of customer who is begging for the contract security industry to take the next step in its evolution towards the possible service, like the automotive and other industries did before. The big question – how? If the service features that were expanded in the last 20 years represent the accepted service and early stages of desired service, what are the next innovations and which companies are willing to create compelling differentiators to springboard the industry to higher levels of customer service?

When examining the improvements mentioned above that have been made in recent years, it is evident that all of the process improvements are important, but at the same time, merely a means to an end. The real desired *result* of the customer is high quality, professional security officers, whereas employee screening, benefits, training and automation are simply process steps to that end. One could infer that the needed innovation the industry has desperately sought for so long is something that can serve as an end to those means – real quality assurance through quantifiable performance metrics measurement. Taking that one step further, performance measurement that ties a company's profit to its performance, effectively "putting its money where its mouth is."

Major corporations have tinkered with the idea of performance measurement and pay-for-performance with its security contractors. A select few have even enjoyed moderate success in this area. But for the most part, when confronted with the idea of full disclosure, performance-based contracts, both customers and providers alike have run full-speed in the other direction. Why? The customer has been concerned about the amount of time it will take for its internal team to manage, audit and grade the performance metric process, and the contractor has feared allowing its customer "behind the scenes" into the reality of its management support structure and practices. Like other industries, many security companies have become very savvy at presenting themselves as being very attractive in a sales presentation, but heaven forbid allowing the customer to "peel back the layers of the onion" and take a close look at all the good and bad of their service delivery program. In addition, with slim profit margins, the prospect of placing profit at risk as it relates to performance objectives is not a paradigm into which most contract security owners would want to shift.

With 27 years of Commercial Real Estate experience, Carlos Villarreal serves as Senior Vice President of Whelan Security. In his role he is directly responsible for overseeing the 10 Star High Rise Office Security Programs in Whelan's 14 markets across the central part of the United States.

A veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, Mr. Villarreal is a certified Health and Safety instructor with the American Red Cross, a member of the ASIS and a Certified Security Trainer (CST) with the Academy of Security Educators and Trainers. Mr. Villarreal is past chair of the Commercial Real Estate Council for the ASIS and past chair for the Building Owners and Managers Association's Security Committee. Currently, Mr. Villarreal serves as a Board member for the Illinois Security Chiefs Association.

Additionally, Mr. Villarreal developed "Corporate Security Officers' training," which received accreditation from the Illinois Community College Board in 1994 and "The Property Management Security Professional," which received state accreditation in 1998. Mr. Villarreal has extensive background in emergency preparedness and response planning.