

Criminals and security professionals, who now has the upper hand?

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The objectives

- What do those working in the security sector think about regulation?
- What do they think about the state of the sector?
- What do buyers think about suppliers and vice versa?



The Security Research Initiative

- The aim of the SRI is to conduct research into security issues. It is supported by:
- ASIS International (UK Chapter)
- British Security Industry Association
- The Security Institute



Members of the SRI

- Advance
- Carlisle Security
- Case
- Caterpillar
- Emprise
- Eon
- G4S
- MITIE
- Nexen Petroleum
- National Security Inspectorate
- OCS
- Securitas
- Standard Life
- VSG
- Wilson James



Industry perspective

- 209 buyers of security; 151 of these described themselves as the corporate security specialist
- 509 suppliers (directors/managers)
- 504 security operatives



Corporate Views

- Over half of clients (53%) agreed that, 'private security adds value to our business,' and few disagreed
- In-house services were consistently preferred to contract services for quality; contract services were seen as offering better value for money
- Over two fifths conceded that, security was 'a grudge purchase'



Corporate views

- Security installers and guarding companies were not viewed as experts and did not typically exceed expectations
- Managers felt guarding companies they used were trustworthy, but that the margins they operated on were low and were critical of pay rates for guards and quality of management



Views on guarding

Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree (1-2)	Mean
Guarding companies are security experts	8%	4.24
They generally exceed expectations	14%	3.50
Guarding companies cannot really be trusted	15%	3.47
The problem with them is that the margins are too low	55%	2.35
Guards are generally not paid enough	58%	2.30
Management is just not good enough	63%	2.39



Views on installers

Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree (1-2)	Mean
They generally exceed expectations	14%	3.38
The problem with them is that the margins are too low	20%	3.37
They are security experts	11%	3.88



Priority given to mainstream functions

Function	Higher priority	Same priority	Lower priority
Finance	72%	16%	8%
Marketing	52%	23%	14%
Human resources	52%	31%	13%
Procurement	46%	28%	17%
Facilities management	34%	44%	20%



Quote

- *When wages are kept low to enhance competitiveness in gaining contracts it does not in general attract the best quality personnel. Until buyers of security services are prepared to pay a fee that will include a higher level of wages to the security guard standards are unlikely to improve much apart from a small number of companies.*



Quote

- *The issue of the quality of manned guarding services is not one sided. It requires the 'buyer' to work with the supplier to ensure that the old adage 'if you pay peanuts you get monkeys' is done away with by the raising of salaries and developing those in the industry so that they see it as a career*



Corporate views

- Most accepted that security was low priority, and their assessment of future spending was relatively pessimistic
- It was evident that the budget for contract security work had increased more than for in-house security
- There had been a shift in spending in the past two years from security guards to equipment, and they saw these trends as likely to continue



The suppliers (directors and managers)

- Almost two thirds agreed that, 'low margins change the focus of contract ... from security to cost control'
- About a half accepted that, 'Security is predominantly a grudge purchase'



The suppliers (directors and managers)

- More than two thirds cited the need to cut costs as a reason for severing contracts or changing suppliers in their area of security
- In general directors/managers felt that the training of security operatives was adequate, although many were unsure



Quote

- *Main area for the security industry not providing standards of service that are required and can be achieved, is the continued pressure on pricing by most customers. The industry is capable of achieving and delivering way beyond current standards if end users accepted this comes at a price and stop commoditising the industry*



Quote

- *The industry has greatly improved at all standards but is now severely hampered by cost saving initiatives driven by client procurement and budget management*



The suppliers (directors and managers)

- They felt that staff turnover in the industry was extremely high but were less likely to concede that it was a problem in their company



Suppliers' perceptions of staff turnover

Turnover	Very High or High (1-2)	Mean
In the security industry	71%	2.07
In their company	14%	3.75



The suppliers (directors and managers)

- Asked why people left contract security work in their area of security, directors/managers saw three reasons as crucial: poor pay; limited opportunities for development; and a feeling among staff that they weren't appreciated



Guards' views on why people leave

Reason for leaving	Agree or Strongly agree (1-2)	N of cases
Because pay is poor	78%	350
People don't feel appreciated	76%	351
Limited opportunities for development	72%	346
Working environment is poor	44%	345
Work is not interesting	44%	340
Training is insufficient	33%	341
People are not very good at the job	30%	339
Risk of conflict/violence	27%	345

Security guards

- 54% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the assertion that the public has a positive view of most people who do security work
- 49% said they were never given recognition for excellent work
- 56% agreed or strongly agreed with the assertion that 'most of my colleagues are totally committed to providing a quality service'



Offenders

- For an offender security poses a risk that needs to be managed
- The findings are reassuring!
- They need security not to work
- Security being a low priority, cost cutting creating inefficiencies, low status of security professionals are all good



Summary points

- Within organisations security is facing a challenging time
- Security management appears to lack clout compared to other business functions
- Corporate security managers are sympathetic to plight of contractors
- Security sector is not in a poor state



Summary

- Regulation within suppliers is seen almost universally as a good thing
- But not solved many structural problems, long hours, difficult working environment, lack of interesting work, lack of appreciation
- Simplistic to lay the blame at fault of companies, guards positive about supervisors and training



Summary

- There needs to be a collaborative venture highlighting what you get from good security that you don't get from bad security, and showing, via examples, how you achieve this cost effectively
- Can the sector unite in the interests of good security?



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