

Key Findings from

THE STATE OF SECURITY MANAGEMENT

A Baseline Phenomenological and Empirical Study

Funded by



MODULE 8:

Enhance Security's Brand and Reputation

The better the brand and reputation of the security profession, the more effectively members can carry out their duties in providing a safe, secure environment for businesses, organizations, communities, and people. Improved perception of the field also increases the influence that security executives can leverage in risk management decision making.

Perceptions of the security profession are critical. They have a direct impact on the effectiveness of protection strategies and the resources required to carry them out. Security executives must be mindful of how their mission is perceived by the public, by the customers they support (whether internal or external), and by the decision makers they aim to influence.

To help manage how these audiences perceive the security profession, both brand and reputation must be developed and maintained. Brand is generally viewed as how an organization presents itself to the outside. It is the image that is intentionally projected to others. Brand is how the group would like to be perceived.

Reputation, on the other hand, is how others actually perceive the organization.

It is beyond the organization's direct control and may be influenced by incidents, news reports, social media, the nature of interactions, and how satisfied the customer base is. Both play a key role in perception.

Perception, brand, and reputation support or detract from security risk management objectives. For example, enterprise security risk management (ESRM) is inextricably related to the practice of enterprise risk management (ERM), which enjoys high regard in many commercial organizations globally. Therefore, employing an ESRM approach and educating senior management about the philosophy can naturally improve the security executive's credibility and level of influence in the C-suite. It may also improve the ability to garner necessary resources and

encourage closer working relationships with other organizational elements, even external partners.

Perception can be adversely influenced at all levels of security operations. The reputation of the security services industry is harmed, for example, when incidents occur that generate a headline like “15-Year-Old Girl Beaten While Three Security Guards Watch.” Regardless of the facts of the case, the headline is what remains in the public’s memory. This negates the good that tens of thousands of security officers do every day around the world. Similarly, at the management level, perception is affected when a security executive fails to accurately assess or effectively communicate the security risk implications of a strategic inflection point or critical business transaction.

A poor public image of security has many downsides, including entry-level recruitment. When the field suffers from a poor reputation, people fail to see security as a desirable career choice at the entry level. Their perception may be limited to security officer positions with no potential for advancement or financial reward. Prospective members of the work force often fail to recognize the career potential for security officer services or even the existence of other career entry points, such as security systems work (installers, developers, manufacturers, R&D), security sales, corporate security administration, trainers, investigative assistants, intelligence analysts, etc. This hurts the industry overall. Organizations such as ASIS International and the International Foundation for Protection Officers (IFPO) highlight the positive career aspects of the field, and even sponsor award and recognition programs, but more can be done.

One excellent initiative was recently launched in the United Kingdom. O’Beirne (2020) writes:

The British Security Industry Association (BSIA), has joined forces with the Security Institute and the

SECURITY THOUGHT LEADER PERSPECTIVE:

Better Reputation Would Improve Security Influence in the C-Suite

“I don’t understand why the people at the top won’t listen to the subject matter experts they hire. Proactive is so much easier than reactive and potentially saves more lives.”

-Mary Hough, CPP
Vice President, Security Management
Corporate Security Overwatch

Security Commonwealth to run an awareness campaign designed to reset public perception of the security professional and the essential role that they play in public life. The campaign will showcase security professionals as a respected, valued, professional service provider contributing to and creating a safe and secure environment....

This type of collaboration among allied security organizations improves the brand and reputation of the security industry and the people who comprise it. More initiatives like this would be a welcome development.

Another positive step would be an effort to address the enormous legal liability faced by the security services industry and security management profession. Legal liability hampers security services, systems, and equipment providers globally. The legal liability issue is also beginning to affect law enforcement agencies in some areas. It will be increasingly important to seek a reasonable balance between use-of-force policy and the ability to perform the security or law enforcement mission.

Brand and reputation can affect the C-suite as well. Their perception influences the security professional's ability to influence.

Further emphasizing continuing or advanced education will also enhance the credibility and perception of security management. One of the study survey questions asked participants what value they place on various qualifications when considering a candidate for a professional staff position. Although experience was the most preferred

qualification, 55 percent of the respondents stated that they place "significant value" or "the highest value" on education.

Education and certification programs must better integrate business, strategic thinking, and executive communications skills with security skills. Enhancing the reputation, perception, and public image of the profession will enhance the effectiveness and influence of security management.

The eighth in a series of nine modules, this paper explores the findings of an ASIS Foundation study conducted by Kevin E. Peterson, CPP, CIPM II and Joe Roberts, Ph.D. in 2020 and 2021. To download the full *State of Security Management* report, visit [asisfoundation.org](https://www.asisfoundation.org).

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