

# SECURITY MANAGEMENT

## Advancing Your Security Career

*This collection of Security Management articles examines the possibilities of career advancement and the skills needed to move forward.*

# X2

### Career Pathways in Security

Unlike some professions that provide a linear career path, security is diverse, comprising many job roles, salary levels, career opportunities, and sectors.

# X7

### The Highly Evolved Leader

The practice of management is always evolving. Experts offer perspective and counsel on how it changes, where it's going, and how to keep up.

# X16

### How Security Leaders Can Use Their Own Stories

A security manager's personal and professional journey can be the basis for compelling stories that educate, inspire, and make emotional connections.

# X26

### Watch Your Language

Managers are often judged on how well they communicate. Leader language is clear and tight, informed by the big picture, and it conveys an "I'm listening" message.

# X34

### Knowledge Check

In a competitive security management job market, recruiters often look for prior law enforcement experience. As security skills and needs change, however, so does the ideal candidate's background.

Powered by

**ASIS**  
INTERNATIONAL  
Advancing Security Worldwide®

## Career Pathways in Security

*Unlike some professions that provide a linear career path, security is diverse, comprising many job roles, salary levels, career opportunities, and sectors. Find out how to define, navigate, and understand the role of the security professional.*



**A** career in security management comes with diverse options for growth and impact, and the many different pathways available are not always clear or intuitive.

When students are trying to plan for their future, or more tenured professionals are contemplating a career transition, there are many questions. What traits and competencies do professionals need at different stages in their careers? Should individuals focus on becoming more specialized or growing into broader responsibilities? How can you take your career to the next level?

ASIS International partnered with the Security Industry Association (SIA) to answer these very questions in the [Security Industry Career Pathways Guide](#). ASIS and SIA commissioned McKinley Advisors, who analyzed more than 2,400 survey results, conducted numerous telephone interviews, and performed other research, to develop the guide.

One finding is that, unlike some professions that provide a

linear career path, security is diverse, comprising many job roles, salary levels, career opportunities, and sectors. At the highest level, security can include a multitude of functions for business organizations related to the provision of security services and technology. Employment opportunities range in terms of salary and position from entry-level security officer positions to investigators specializing in specific areas to directors at major global corporations.

Security spans a variety of sectors and markets and each specialty has its own set of requirements and issues, such as shoplifting, privacy rights, or data security. Security also has interrelationships with other departments or areas, such as risk management, safety, law, finance, business continuity, network and computer security, risk analysis, facility management, and others.

The diversity of the profession provides opportunities for horizontal career growth potential, in which roles expand into other business functions or areas in addition to security. In today's technologically advanced and globalized market, jobs are becoming even more complex in terms of focus and growth opportunities. All of this makes security management a challenging and exciting profession to navigate, define, and understand.

### **THREE CAREER STAGES**

Security professionals generally fall into one of three career stages. The accompanying infographic (page 44) describes each of these career stages—examining sample job titles and responsibilities, core traits and competencies that enable someone to master each role—and identifies the skill gaps that can help people at each stage excel and grow.

**1. Professional Level:** These are the doers; people who are generally at the beginning of their security careers.

- 2. Management Level:** These are the delegators; the people who manage specific security functions and supervise people to carry out security duties.
- 3. Executive Level:** These are the visionaries; the people who bring strategic and critical acumen to helping an organization protect its assets.

For example, security professionals at the management level may have a job titles such as Director of Global Security or, simply, Security Manager. They will have oversight over one or more security functions, will direct and coordinate resources to accomplish those functions, be able to develop and implement strategies to understand and manage risk, and will likely have some budgeting, strategy, and human resources responsibilities. A successful security manager will have a strong grasp of security fundamentals and risk management and possess a high degree of leadership capability and integrity. To advance in their careers, security managers should work on acquiring general business acumen—understanding how security and other business functions interrelate—and gain a thorough understanding of compliance and regulatory issues.

The Security Industry Career Pathways Guide provides considerable information on each stage: how it was identified; detail on the knowledge, experience, and traits common to professionals at each stage; and what skills and competencies bridge from one level to the next.

### **ADVANCING TO THE NEXT CAREER STAGE**

The study also explored what fields, areas of study, or background security management practitioners came from prior to entering the security profession. In terms of educational backgrounds, most professionals working in security have obtained a master’s or bachelor’s degree. Some of the more

common areas of study include criminal justice, business administration, business management, political science, law enforcement and correction, economics, security management, information or systems technology, computer science, terrorism, emergency management, personnel management, or information management.

After obtaining a degree, professionals may take an entry-level position—a professional-level role—in security management and grow their careers from there, or they may come to security from an entirely different sector. The most common backgrounds include law enforcement, military,

---

*There are several common ways for security professionals to increase their expertise and credibility in gap areas, including certifications and credentialing opportunities.*

---

or business administration and management from another sector. A managerial or executive-level professional, for example, can come from a long career in the security profession, growing from professional to managerial to executive, or transition into the field from higher levels within military, law, or another sector.

There are several common ways for security professionals to increase their expertise and credibility in gap areas, including certifications and credentialing opportunities. The most common include the Certified Protection Professional (CPP) and Physical Security Professional (PSP) certifications, as well as the Certified Security Project Manager (CSPM) and Project Management Professional (PMP) for those interested in project management credentials. Additionally, volunteering with an association, or serving as a mentor to a less experienced professional can also boost a

professional's engagement with the industry.

Security professionals looking to advance to the next career stage should be developing and working improvement strategies that build on the skills and competencies they already have, so that they continue to excel in their current roles, while also working to acquire knowledge and experience required to excel at the next level.

Security professionals need to be intentional in how they approach career advancement. Security professionals may find that they fall neatly into one of the types described in the guide. Many will not, however, and that is part of the point. The myriad of security career pathways underscores the diverse nature of the profession. ■

## The Highly Evolved Leader

*The practice of management is always evolving. Experts offer perspective and counsel on how it changes, where it's going, and how to keep up.*

*By Mark Tarallo*



**I**n certain contexts, the expression “old school” can have positive connotations. It may mean straightforward or traditional or reliable; solid. But in the executive world, if someone calls you an old-school manager, it may be cause for concern.

The idea of successful management has evolved in the last few decades, experts say. The role of a manager has transformed; expectations are different, and relationships with direct reports have changed. The needed competencies and skill sets have broadened.

“Management’s evolved in a lot of ways, to be honest. I think a leadership role is different from a leadership role 25 years ago. Leaders then may not fit as leaders now, in today’s world,” says Steve Watson, a managing director for executive search firm Stanton Chase International. “... It’s difficult to recruit people who are willing to work for an old-school manager.”

Given this, Security Management asked veteran leaders

and management experts to sketch out some particulars regarding how the practice of management and its general conception have evolved.

In addition, we asked them how a current or aspiring manager could become a highly evolved leader—someone in tune with the needs and expectations of a contemporary workforce, who leads an engaged, productive, and fulfilled team, rather than a behind-the-curve manager who is grinding it out with decades-old practices. In other words, a leader who is in line with the times, and right for the current moment.

### **FROM MASTER TO SERVANT-LEADER**

Many experts often mention that the manager's position in relation to his or her staff has changed. Watson, who has held senior management positions for more than 30 years, says he sees an evolution from a top-down approach in dealing with employees to more of a bottom-up supportive role.

A few decades ago, it was more common for a manager to assume a command-and-control position above the staff, with the attitude of, “you’ll do it this way, and you’ll do it my way,” Watson says.

That type of leadership style is considered much less acceptable today. Watson cited a recent executive search he led, in which a company was looking for a high-level manager who would report directly to the global CEO. However, the global CEO had the reputation of being “old school,” in that he wanted to be intensively involved in a lot of the decisions that his manager would be making. Once word got out about the CEO's reputation, recruiting candidates to apply for the manager position became much more challenging.

Along the same lines, Sam Curry, chief technology and

security officer with Arbor Networks, says that he has seen management evolving toward a more egalitarian system. “There’s a democratization that has happened. There’s less of a sense that the manager is better than you,” says Curry, a long-time security manager.

“In the old days, there was a fairly common belief that workers were inherently lazy,” Curry continues. This often led to a we-need-to-keep-an-eye-on-them style of management, and, at many firms, a common attitude toward staff was, “Are they really working? Are they going home early?”

Now, management’s evolution has left those who retain that belief system far behind. “Those who still take that attitude are dinosaurs,” Curry says.

---

*The best managers are okay with being coached by their employees.*

---

These dinosaurs are not completely extinct; a few still roam the earth. But their attitudes no longer prevail. Today, the dominant management style has evolved toward the servant-leader, with an attitude of: what can I do to help you do your job in the best way possible?

And that attitude change ties in with another way management has evolved: more and more, managers are expected to serve not as drill sergeants or commandos, but as coaches and mentors, with a focus on developing staff.

When conducting an executive search, Watson says that some of the most important executive interview questions he asks are aimed at ascertaining if the candidate has had success in building a high-performing team by nurturing talent and developing individual skill sets.

Along with the evolution of managers vis-à-vis their staff, there has also been a change in the manager's position in the world. "Around 20 to 25 years ago, you didn't see as much of a global mindset with managers," says Siobhan MacDermott, an advisory services principal in cybersecurity for EY. More and more companies and organizations have broadened their reach from regional or national to international, so managers are expected to be adept in understanding cultural differences and comparative business practices, she says.

Finally, there is the evolution that sometimes feels like a revolution—the evolution of technology. Nearly all agree it has had a significant impact on the evolution of management. MacDermott says there is an expectation nowadays that an executive will possess an "agility and always-on mentality," and stay connected 24 hours a day. "You have to be tech savvy and gadget enabled," she adds.

## **COACHES WHO LISTEN**

It seems clear, then, that changes in the practice of management have been fundamental and far-reaching. Naturally, this raises a question: what makes a highly evolved manager, a successful servant manager who stays ahead of the curve, empowers staff, and keeps them engaged? Experts cite several attributes.

Clarity and attention are paramount. "I think communication skills are absolutely critical, and the ability to listen and make good judgments about what you heard is just as important, if not more so," says Chris Arnold, a coleader of Stanton Chase's financial services global practice.

Arnold, who has 25 years of high-level executive search experience, gives the example of a recent successful placement of a senior executive. At first, one of the candidates struck him as surprisingly quiet, but he soon realized this

was due to the intensity of her listening skills. When she did speak, virtually everything she said seemed insightful.

In fact, that's one way that Arnold has noticed management evolving. Generally speaking, an increasing number of managers are exceptional communicators with adept listening skills, and they use these skills to facilitate collaboration and encourage consensus.

"An old-school manager wasn't like that. They weren't consensus builders," Arnold says. Therefore, highly evolved leaders are usually highly collaborative, he adds. And Watson agrees, saying "It's all about developing teams."

Other common attributes of evolved leaders are their exceptional abilities as coaches and talent developers. This begins with the right attitude toward the staff; from the first day he or she takes over as manager, a highly

---

*A leadership role today is different from a leadership role 25 years ago.*

---

evolved leader starts from a place of respect, not of suspicion. "We have to work on the assumption that employees want to be productive and do great things," Curry says.

Moreover, coaching works both ways. In some security departments, at least one staffer is older and more experienced than the manager. A highly evolved leader is not threatened by this, and does not assume that the older staffer is gunning for their job. Instead, the leader draws on this valuable experience and makes use of it whenever possible, for the benefit of the entire department.

"The best managers are okay with being coached by their employees. It's not about being better or worse," Curry says.

He tells the story of an employee he managed who was significantly older, who had both an impressive résumé and a desire to contribute in any way possible. Curry used him as a critical resource, consulting him on decisions and encouraging him to share expertise. “There’s nothing this guy hasn’t seen,” Curry says. “He became the coach to everybody.”

## **A FLEXIBLE MINDSET**

Experts also say that highly evolved leaders are sensitive to the structural changes in the workplace, so their attributes often include a sense of flexibility, operational agility, and a broad perspective. These are qualities that are often possessed by managers with an open, agile mind and a tendency to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

In the last few decades, Watson has observed a general trend of organizational flattening, with fewer management layers and levels of bureaucracy than there were previously. “Managers today tend to run their businesses more than they did 25 years ago,” he says. This means more autonomy and operational authority for managers, which the best ones thrive on, he adds.

Accompanying this trend toward more nimble organizations has been a movement toward a more fluid hiring space. “You see more people jumping ship,” Watson says. Highly evolved leaders are cognizant of this, and they make efforts to keep staff engaged and fulfilled with their jobs. “I do think there’s a movement to really focus on human capital and on retaining good employees,” Watson says.

These retention and engagement efforts often include maintaining a sense of comfortable flexibility within the workplace. That involves allowing employees to be creative, to try new things, and to have a safe place to fail and learn from experience. “I think that’s a good attribute—

people are not criticized for failing,” Watson says.

Moreover, successful managers realize that employees need a certain amount of room and space to exercise their own creativity and judgment. Highly evolved leaders are not micromanagers. “Nobody likes to be micromanaged—many wouldn’t even interview at a company if the culture is one of micromanaging people,” Watson says.

Another change at many organizations is that the workforce, the customer base, and the supply chain are all becoming more diverse, varied, and international. In these environments, the highly-evolved leader’s comfort with other cultures and perspectives serves the organization well.

MacDermott provides the example of a manager who is leading a conference call with colleagues from Germany and Brazil. The German executive may expect everyone to dial in exactly at the appointed time; for the Latin American, calling in 10 minutes late may be perfectly acceptable. “Working around these issues requires a bit more flexibility on the part of a global leader,” she says.

However, flexibility and open-mindedness do not mean that the manager has a passive or “anything goes” attitude. The natural leader types, sometimes called “alphas,” can still be highly evolved leaders and highly successful managers. “I don’t think there’s less of a demand for an alpha male or female,” Arnold says.

But he refines this view by arguing that a certain type of alpha executive seems to succeed the most. They are often energetic, personable, high-action types, but they channel much of their energy into the collaborative work of building consensus and developing teams.

They also don’t intimidate, and they seem to radiate positivity. “People want to work with those who are positive, and have that positive energy,” he says.

## THE HORIZONTAL HIERARCHY

Evolution never stops. So today's successful leaders must continue to evolve, or risk falling behind tomorrow. How should leaders change? Many experts advise them to follow current trend lines, and to anticipate where they will extend in the future.

Take, for example, technology. Despite the technology revolution, the management ranks at some U.S. firms still retain some of the “technologically underdeveloped,” Arnold says: “A lot of people still don't know how to use it.”

But the IT revolution will continue to advance, so it will become harder and harder for those with severely limited strategic tech skills to enter the management ranks and stay there.

Similarly, Watson sees the trend away from always-intervening micromanagers continuing. In the future, micro-managers are likely to be anathema.

Finally, experts say that the trend away from command-and-control managers and toward servant-leaders will continue. Smaller IT companies are often the most cutting edge when it comes to management practices, and, at some of these, the constant collaboration between managers and workers has meant a de-emphasis of hierarchy.

“Sometimes, the delineation between a manager and a line employee doesn't really exist that much,” MacDermott says, adding that more tech-based security companies or departments that act like nimble start-ups may follow suit in the future.

Steve Denning, who writes about management innovation, called this trend a move toward “horizontal hierarchy” in a recent essay in *Forbes* magazine. It is likely to become more common in the future, he writes, with more managers serving as “enablers of self-managing teams and networks rather than controllers of individuals.”

As a result, the concept of hierarchy will also evolve, so that more and more will be competence-based and rely, Denning says, “more on peer accountability than on authority-based accountability.”

But while hierarchies will evolve, they will not be completely obsolete. “Someone has to sign checks,” Denning writes. ■

---

MARK TARALLO IS SENIOR EDITOR AT SECURITY MANAGEMENT.

## How Security Leaders Can Use Their Own Stories

*A security manager's personal and professional journey can be the basis for compelling stories that educate, inspire, and make emotional connections.*

*By Anton Doerig*



Stories wield immense power. They capture emotions and make the listener think. They often motivate us to imitate, or to refrain. They can move people into action.

For these reasons, stories offer great value for security leaders. Stories based on a leader's own personal history, experience, and career can trigger emotions in listeners that convince and energize them to make necessary decisions and take important steps. And stories cement one's legacy; those who have nothing to tell will be forgotten sooner than those who have something to say. But many security leaders and managers can do a better job of using their own stories than they have in the past.

In job interviews, conversations with recruiters, consultations with supervisors, performance evaluations, and department staff meetings, it is common for employees to discuss their professional experiences and accomplish-

ments in order to demonstrate their abilities and potential. Perhaps the quintessential example of this occurs when you are in a job interview, and the interviewer asks you to describe a situation in which you succeeded in dealing with a problem at work.

During such situations, conversations do not have to be limited to professional accomplishments. You may also weave in personal stories, such as how you developed certain skills because of personal experiences, or how you discovered your different strengths and abilities, or how a life situation offered you a new and valuable perspective. Successful business leaders learn how to apply these personal stories to situations outside the job interview, allowing them to connect with stakeholders and employees and to demonstrate their expertise in a relatable way. These stories often have much to offer as motivational tools and teaching aides. They can even help make security proposals more compelling to board members and C-suite executives.

Let's have a closer look at this, using the careers and life histories of three security managers as examples.

#### The Inner Compass

Paul has been a policeman for several years, and he has always had good instincts in difficult situations. He has what some call the sixth sense or a gut feeling; he immediately notices when something seems wrong.

One day on patrol, Paul and his colleague were called to a traffic accident in the city center. Upon arrival, the incident seemed to be a conventional one. Both officers took care of their assigned tasks: securing and photographing the site and interviewing all those involved. On the surface, things seemed normal, yet Paul had a gut feeling that something was not right. He called for reinforcements. When they arrived, the vehicles were searched more thoroughly.

Paul's instinct was right.

While checking one vehicle, an officer discovered photos and documents relating to a colleague at the police department. Included were photos of the officer's family, house, and surroundings—even his dog. There were also notes about his and his wife's daily routine, and details of the children's weekly activities.

Eventually, the investigation revealed that the people involved in the accident had been hired by a man who wanted revenge on the colleague's family, because the officer had helped arrest and convict the suspect's relative. The people in the accident had been hired to kill the officer's wife and abduct his children. These intended crimes were prevented because Paul trusted his intuition.

Now, let's say Paul is interviewing for a security administrator position with a private sector firm. He tells the interviewer the story above, about his sixth sense and how it has helped him foil crimes. To the interviewer, this story may demonstrate that Paul has an intuitive feeling for situations that remain hidden from most managers. This talent could save an entire organization from damage, and it gives the company a competitive advantage.

Paul gets the job. Early in his tenure, he participates in a meeting about the various personal threats company employees might face and the appropriate defense measures. Here, Paul's sixth sense story may also be useful. In a compelling way, the story illustrates how situational factors often cannot be seen or known at first, but they should be considered when formulating strategy regarding possible threats and responses.

This could help convince cautious, critical executives of the seriousness of a comprehensive approach to threats. As a result, a forward-looking, proactive approach might be adopted by leadership to ensure a secure companywide

environment. This could strengthen the link connecting business processes with security considerations, which often helps in saving costs and preventing damage.

Paul's story also demonstrates how taking responsibility for security can mean paying attention to things that are not always easy to explain. And it is an emotionally power-

---

*Experiences can often be the basis  
for powerful stories.*

---

ful reminder of the value of intuitive feelings in vulnerable situations.

Many former law enforcement officers can take the same approach as Paul when entering the security field. Thanks in large part to their training, education, and professional experiences, most officers are adept at reacting appropriately in tricky situations and know how to protect others from damage.

Their singular experiences can often be the basis for powerful stories. Stories that include astute actions in potentially dangerous situations can be especially impressive and influential to employees, colleagues, and executives who have not had such experiences. And they can also be an opportunity to memorably communicate one's own values—something that is often forgotten in today's dynamic market economy.

Common values among law enforcement offices often include the importance of protecting people and their environments from potential danger. These values, in turn, are prized by many companies, because they are a prerequisite for fulfilling most business goals. Other common

law enforcement values such as respect, discipline, order, honesty, reliability, professionalism, trust, and courage are also held in high regard in the business world. Many see these as values that turn managers into leaders and role models.

### **PROJECT MANAGER EXTRAORDINAIRE**

Maria, 28, is a security manager for a large company. Her company can afford to hire its own security staff to manage corporate security at several locations. To many, hers seems to be a great job, yet she is dissatisfied. She does not find her work to be highly engaging, and she feels that much of her professional potential is going unused.

As the single mother of a young boy, she learned to take responsibility and deal with difficult situations at an early age. She became a mother soon after her university graduation, and later separated from her husband.

As it happens, Maria's security department coordinates not only the standard security services but also the emergency management and crisis management functions. Maria is one of the youngest workers on the team, and she has something some of her colleagues do not have—a university degree. However, with her drive and frequent suggestions of new ideas, she sometimes feels some friction from her supervisors and others. While she is unhappy in her current situation, she is also afraid of losing her job.

Although Maria's concerns are understandable, she has many of the skills and experiences necessary for future success in the security field. She just needs to know how to use and promote her potential, her valuable life experiences, and the skills she has developed. For her to do this, a change of perspective from her own current point of view would be helpful.

As a college student, Maria learned to how to obtain,

analyze, and process copious information through various channels. She also learned to express herself well in writing. She is full of intellectual energy and ideas.

Outside of the classroom, Maria learned as a young single mother to take responsibility for herself and others at an early age. In this role, she uses her organizational skills and her ability to think in variants and monitor different channels at the same time. When difficulties arise, either due to her son or other personal factors, she must be able to act flexibly and create alternatives as quickly as possible, all while upholding her responsibilities as a mother.

Maria also wants her professional work to be meaningful, and she wants to play an active role in the development of her company. To gain a role she is proud of and engaged in, Maria should convey her abilities and skills through her own stories. She has what the corporate security world of today and tomorrow needs—servant leadership qualities. She has a talent for understanding the needs of others and is an excellent communicator.

This skill set, combined with her valuable life experience, could make Maria a superb project manager within her company. So, in discussions with executives about this possibility, Maria could use her story to emphasize how her life experiences as a single parent helped her develop her skills for monitoring different developments simultaneously, for thinking on her feet, and for creating alternatives quickly—all crucial abilities for a project manager.

In addition, Maria could be an excellent candidate to lead an initiative such as an internal think tank or advisory committee on security issues. Maria could take a proactive approach and initiate a discussion with human resources, framing her personal story to emphasize her drive, her constant creation of new ideas, and her university-honed writing and analytical skills. She could be the

perfect young leader to assemble a group of the company's best thinkers who could bring out the untapped potential of the firm.

## **FROM LONE LEADER TO MENTOR**

Frank is an old hand when it comes to security services. He currently works as a security director at a university hospital. He is convinced he has achieved a lot in his career, especially when one considers his past.

His career started as a part-time doorman in a pub. He later moved to a security company, where he carried out many different jobs, such as traffic services, event services, construction site guarding, and public order services.

Frank worked his way up from a line officer to a department head. Then, his company offered him a position as a contract security director in healthcare. For him, this was a crowning achievement.

But more and more he thought of all the sacrifices he made for his job. He has worked so many overtime hours, extra shifts, and weekends in recent years that he has hardly seen his own family, including several new grandchildren.

After two years on the new job, it is clear that the position is different from what he had imagined. In the past, Frank was always able to make a difference in his function as department head. As an old hand, his opinion was valued and sought after. He could always communicate with others.

Now, he is no longer on the road as a department head, but as a lone fighter on loan in a new environment. The nurses, doctors, technicians, and academics who presently shape his environment harbor very different attitudes towards safety and security than Frank was used to. He feels isolated among many people who do not seem to understand any of his contributions, despite his wealth of

experience. His proposals and efforts to improve security are largely met with disinterest.

He often thinks about quitting his job, but that seems impractical. He simply doesn't know how to make himself

---

*To use their own stories, managers  
must have a clear vision of themselves.*

---

heard at the highest management level. He sometimes wonders: is his experience worth anything these days?

The answer is that Frank can demonstrate the great value of his professional and life experiences by using his story to shift him back into a role he is better suited for and one he would prefer.

For example, Frank should view his career from pub security employee to department head to security director as a grand journey that featured an almost infinite number of learning experiences. These experiences could be turned into teachable moments and lessons for younger employees, highlighting how he is well-suited to be a mentor for the next generation of security leaders.

However, he needs to make a few adjustments. In his current role, he must better understand the language of the industry and healthcare professionals. He can make simple amendments to ensure his stories apply to other professional and leadership functions in the healthcare field, which will help his colleagues connect with Frank, his ideas, and security programs.

Small stories in a meeting, at a business lunch, or during a proposal to management are not only informative, but they help make an invaluable emotional connection. He could, for example, tell new managers how he tackled the challenges of going from specialist to manager, while

always remaining connected with the team. His open and honest storytelling manner radiates transparency, and this helps build trust. Employees would likely appreciate how he is passing on important information that will help them thrive in the organization.

Moreover, these stories could spur personal conversations and opportunities for Frank to learn more about the well-being of his employees. He can demonstrate that he is actively and honestly interested in their concerns, aspirations, and dreams.

Many younger security specialists and managers want a mentor at their side to help with career path challenges. This is a great opportunity for Frank to profitably share his own life experience with others. In this way, Frank can pass down hard-earned wisdom on the larger career questions that security professionals face. Offering such valuable mentorship may also increase Frank's weight in the organization.

## **THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP**

Everyone has a story to tell. Some may feel their lives, both professional and personal, seem almost too ordinary to be the basis of an interesting story. But that is not true. Those who feel that way should realize the unique value that their own experiences have.

If security managers disregard the importance of emotional connections, others will feel this lack. But if managers bring their own emotions into play and engage the emotions of others—in a positive way—they increase their chances of capturing the true attention of others.

To use their own stories, managers must have a clear vision of themselves. If leaders know what they stand for and understand their journey, they can provide true self-awareness and presence to their leadership. This

authenticity is key for making emotional connections.

The other key factors in making connections are being honest and open. Through storytelling, a manager can demonstrate that he or she has experienced challenges, danger, pain, confusion, humor, and failure, as well as success. These human experiences may connect the leader with others who have been through similar situations, despite differences in background. Those shared incidents and connections can build trust.

Stories manage to create interest, similarities, and emotional connection in the easiest way. Everyone has something to share. Tell your story and listen attentively to the stories of others, because their stories may hold something of value for you. ■

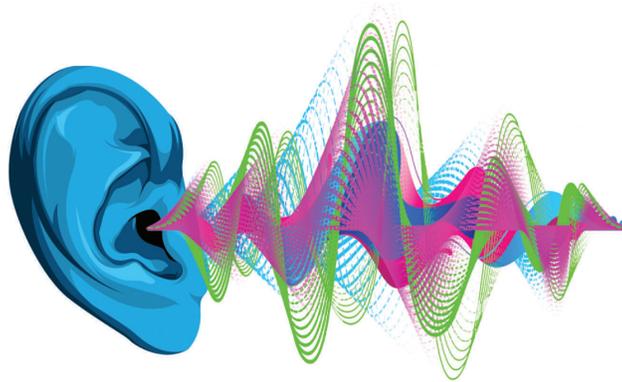
---

ANTON DOERIG, CSM (CERTIFIED SECURITY MANAGER FROM STEINBEIS UNIVERSITY BERLIN), IS A FORMER SECURITY SPECIALIST AND INSTRUCTOR FOR THE SWISS MILITARY POLICE. HE HAS HELD TOP SECURITY MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN SEVERAL COMPANIES. DOERIG IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED EXPERT, SPEAKER, AND AUTHOR ON LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND SECURITY, AND IS AN EXECUTIVE COACH AND CONSULTANT. HE IS A FORMER BOARD MEMBER OF THE ASIS INTERNATIONAL CHAPTER IN SWITZERLAND.

## Watch Your Language

*Managers are often judged on how well they communicate. Leader language is clear and tight, informed by the big picture, and it conveys an “I’m listening” message.*

*By Eugene Ferraro, CPP, PCI*



**W**ho would the CEO of your organization most likely invite to a round of golf: the CFO or you? The answer to such a question would be revealing—and it shows a great deal about security professionals and how they are viewed by their contemporaries.

It has become a truism that in order to maximize effectiveness, one must have a seat at the table in the C-suite. And communication skills will likely play a paramount role in whether or not the organization’s ranking security professional ultimately earns that seat.

Business executives realize that, like it or not, their usefulness to others is regularly assessed and measured. That continual evaluation is reality. Security professionals who aspire to earn a place in the C-suite should realize that this situation is their reality, too.

Given this, security professionals who regularly speak and write in the language and style of the military and

law enforcement run the risk of being valued differently from those who have MBAs and can communicate in the language of a modern business executive. Regardless of the ultimate value of their contributions, if security professionals communicate more like law enforcement officers than business executives, they will eventually be treated as such, and be compensated accordingly.

Much has been written on the broad topic of management and leadership development. But there is less guidance on the more specific area of executive communication, and the importance of these skills to the leader's success. This is unfortunate, because in the workplace the language and presentation of an idea can be nearly as telling as the idea itself. Sometimes, a staffer will take his or her cues from this language when trying to evaluate the significance of the idea itself. A sound idea, poorly expressed, can be unfairly dismissed.

## **GETTING ON THE SAME PAGE**

First and foremost, security professionals must recognize that one's professional success is not just the product of doing a job well. It also depends on the ability to effectively communicate and adapt.

A manager cannot succeed by resting on the laurels of past accomplishments. However justifiably proud a security professional is about past accomplishments and successes, he or she should realize that current customers—whether internal or external—were not necessarily the direct beneficiaries of those past triumphs. In order to provide value, professionals must be able to continually and effectively communicate with colleagues and customers whose needs and expectations are in the present.

Consider that the three most used business language phrases in 2018 were “we’re on the same page,” “action

plan,” and “game changer,” according to linguists. These terms are still heard frequently in workplaces, including security departments. Why might this be?

These phrases imply the need for action. When used in conversation, they communicate recognition of the increased productivity that will likely result when people get on the same page and agree to pursue a well-considered action plan. When executed properly, the resultant output is often a game changer. The phrases themselves may be getting a bit shopworn, but they still reflect the importance of teamwork and effort.

---

*Considering similar questions in advance—including how security can contribute to these business goals—helps a security professional show that he or she is on the same page as the executive.*

---

In addition, “getting on the same page” also has relevance when considering effective executive communication. To be on the same page as a C-suite executive often requires the ability to adopt a higher-level perspective.

For example, a manager is briefing the CEO about a security-related operational development. Before the conversation starts, the security professional should consider how the situation might look from the CEO’s perspective: How might this security development impact the company as a whole? Is there any long-term significance for the company? Can this development somehow help enable overall business growth?

Considering similar questions in advance—including how security can contribute to these business goals—helps a security professional show that he or she is on the same page as the executive. This preparedness and consider-

ation helps establish the manager's bona fides as a voice worth listening to.

Communicating big picture impact may also assist a manager with another key communication component: getting to the point. Most C-suite executives have multiple demands on their time, so a security briefing that seems to go on and on may not be well received. Big picture summaries serve as an effective way to end the communication: "The bottom line here is that this situation could be pervasive enough to impact..." Proposing solutions can effectively underline the conversation, but here the manager must be careful. In some cases, a solution may not be apparent, and it is dicey to suggest one that has a high possibility of failure.

Nonetheless, it is advisable for the manager to prepare for possible questions. For example, the manager can think about what might be unclear, especially to a non-security specialist, and have a thumbnail explanation at the ready. This can help professionals avoid getting bogged down with unnecessary detail as they struggle to explain concepts. If a manager is not exactly sure what the root of the confusion is, clarifying questions (e.g. "So what you want to know is how the funding aspect works?") can help, so the manager does not waste executives' time providing the wrong information.

In conjunction with preparing for questions, it may also be helpful for professionals to keep any arguments or proposals they are making as tight as possible. Avoid exaggeration or alarmism when discussing a problem. Double-checking statistics and spending time on the logical flow of arguments are good ways to do this. This can take additional preparation or a rehearsal, but it is usually worthwhile.

## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

For many security professionals, the majority of communications involves staff and coworkers, as opposed to C-suite executives. In most workplaces, employees vary in age, but recently a relevant trend has emerged. Millennials—people born between 1981 and 1996, currently aged 24 to 39, according to the Pew Research Center—are now the largest generation in the U.S. labor force.

By dint of this statistic alone, it is likely that a sizable portion of most companies' employees will be in this age range. And a tried-and-true rule for communication is to know your audience. Social change and dynamics are shifting rapidly in many workplaces today, and clear and appropriate expression is more important than ever. If a company's workforce is majority millennial, it behooves

---

*Younger employees' interest in seeking recognition suggests that professionals should regularly recognize them in their communications.*

---

a manager to know some of this age group's common qualities and attributes, so that communication style and content can be shaped for maximum effectiveness.

Those who study generational differences and behavioral patterns say that many millennials bring vitality and passion into the workplace, plus a strong desire to be heard. Many millennials also tend to openly seek recognition, fairness, and justice, regardless of their place on the organizational chart. For them, the rigidity and dogma of the past are obstacles to progress.

Security professionals should consider what these characteristics mean in terms of communication effectiveness. Millennials' strong interest in being heard suggests that

professionals should ensure their communications solicit input and feedback. Younger employees' interest in seeking recognition suggests that professionals should regularly recognize them in their communications. And their interest in fairness and justice suggests that managers should pay attention to those factors when explaining company policies and actions.

### **SPEAK TO, NOT AT**

While some communication methods suit certain demographics over others, some tips are universal. For example, always speak to someone, not at someone.

When verbally communicating, a manager should not attempt to either impress or suppress the other party—he or she should not try to approach the conversation as a competitive contest in which the winner wrests control from an opponent. Unfortunately, some professionals do strive for conversational control, either by piling on self-acknowledgments or actively minimizing the partner's participation.

Instead, a manager should strive to acknowledge the conversation partner's point of view. Doing so validates the other party and demonstrates the manager's interest in their input. Such an acknowledgment reflects active listening, and it communicates positive recognition. In addition, such acknowledgment may lead to further discussion of their idea. This can give a manager more insight into the idea, and ultimately he or she can respond more intelligently.

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

As remote workforces expand and digital communication becomes the default, a manager should err on the side of professionalism.

When communicating electronically, avoid shouting.

DO NOT USE ALL CAPS or end your message with “.....,” “?????,” or “!!!!!!”. The overuse of casual text abbreviations (lol, omg) should also be avoided.

Some experts recommend that, when replying to emails, a manager should always take an “executive pause” before firing back an angry reply. If the email that the manager has received is a provocative or accusatory one, the manager may want to set it aside and come back to it later, in order to send a more measured response.

Remember also that electronic communications, including text messages, are discoverable in the event of litigation. Childish or disrespectful communications can be embarrassing or worse for a security manager if he or she must later testify before a judge or magistrate.

In addition, curtail multitasking. Emailing while chatting with a coworker is not only rude, but it hinders the manager’s ability to learn. Verbal communication in the workplace is a great way to exchange information. While multitasking is sometimes praised by professionals as a way to enhance productivity, it can produce misunderstandings when mixed with verbal communications.

In addition to verbal and electronic communication, be aware of body language.

Many human resources professionals and some security professionals have received training on the use and interpretation of body language. This can often be useful.

For example, experienced fact finders know that when they are being told something less than truthful during an investigatory interview, putting down their pen and notepad silently communicates disbelief of what was just said.

Looking away during a conversation demonstrates a lack of interest in what is being discussed. Managers must be mindful of these messages.

Body language offers a manager an effective way to

convey openness with a clear listening stance. Giving executives and coworkers alike full and comfortable attention while speaking, without distracted gestures like fidgeting and checking the time, is a boon for effective communication. It conveys interest and respect, and it engenders confidence that the communication will be productive. It also shows that a manager leads by listening, which in the end is one of the most quietly effective leadership styles of all. ■

---

EUGENE F. FERRARO, CPP, PCI, SPHR (SENIOR PROFESSIONAL IN HR), IS A GRADUATE OF THE NAVAL JUSTICE SCHOOL AND HAS BEEN THE PROGRAM ADVISOR FOR THE PCI REVIEW COURSE FOR 12 YEARS. HE IS FOUNDER AND FORMER CEO OF THE GLOBAL COMPLIANCE AND WHISTLEBLOWER HOTLINE PROVIDER CONVERCENT, INC.

## Knowledge Check

*In a competitive security management job market, recruiters often look for prior law enforcement experience. As security skills and needs change, however, so does the ideal candidate's background.*

*By Joseph Ranucci, CPP*



“**P**rior law enforcement experience preferred.” This line appears so often in job postings for security management jobs, but should it? Are the skills and experience gained in a career in law enforcement transferable to a career in security management?

A common reason for businesses to seek out a candidate with prior law enforcement experience is to be able to leverage the candidate's professional network. Hiring someone with a law enforcement background can be beneficial when working with outside agencies on investigations and emergency responses.

Many industries are also faced with regulatory security requirements set by federal agencies. During a career of service, a law enforcement officer will have had countless opportunities to interact and develop connections with other local, state, and federal agencies. Hiring someone familiar with the regulatory authority can provide an advantage to the organization in maintaining compliance and fostering information sharing. But can a security profes-

sional who does not have a background in law enforcement also develop an extensive network of connections with law enforcement and regulatory agencies?

Success in a security management position goes beyond “who you know” and relies heavily on “what you know.” So, does a past career in law enforcement adequately prepare someone to step directly into a security management role? Is a security professional who worked a lifetime in security positions less qualified due to lack of a law enforcement background?

## **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**

While both public law enforcement and private security personnel are charged with protecting the general well-being and safety of people and property, the ways they go about performing these functions vary greatly.

Comparing the two roles is similar to comparing psychiatrists with psychologists. Psychiatrists are trained medical doctors who can prescribe medications, and they spend much of their time with patients on medication management as a course of treatment. Psychologists are not medical doctors and focus extensively on psychotherapy and treating emotional and mental suffering in patients with behavioral intervention. Because of different training, resources, and techniques used in treatment, someone who excels as a psychiatrist might not succeed in a psychologist’s position—despite having a more advanced education. Conversely, a psychologist could not move into a psychiatrist’s position without additional training. In the same manner, a security professional could not move into a law enforcement role without additional training.

The selection process and specialized training for law enforcement positions gives them a perception of exclusivity. “It’s not for everyone” is often told to candidates who

fail written tests or who drop out of police academies due to the rigorous physical and academic requirements. The selection process creates a somewhat false sense of superiority—a feeling that security is a lesser position because the selection process is not as restrictive as law enforcement.

There is a common misconception that security is the light version of law enforcement. A 2017 report from the Security Research Initiative (SRI) about the attitudes law enforcement officers have towards the private security sector found that out of more than 1,000 respondents, only 4 percent viewed private security as an essential partner, while about 30 percent of respondents said private security was simply tolerated.

The report, *Police Views on Private Security*, found that those surveyed generally favored private security performing roles such as access control and crowd control because they saw these roles as less critical than policing. The perception that security is a lower-level position tends to lead retiring law enforcement officers to seek a job in security management because they believe it is easier work.

But security management is its own profession with unique skill sets and knowledge bases that are necessary for success. While it is not impossible to gain security skills and education in the public sector, there is no automatic guarantee that a career in law enforcement will adequately prepare someone to transition directly into a security management role.

Using the ASIS Certified Protection Professional (CPP®) credential as a baseline of knowledge, there are several areas where a law enforcement career would be beneficial, and several where there would likely be a knowledge gap.

Of the seven domains included on the CPP exam—security principles and practices, business principles and practices, investigations, personnel security, physical security,

information security, and crisis management—some subject areas fall outside what would typically be learned from a career in law enforcement.

Investigations is often the top-scoring domain for CPP candidates who previously worked in law enforcement. Although there are differences in levels of authority, basic investigative techniques remain the same in public or

---

*There is no automatic guarantee that a career in law enforcement will adequately prepare someone to transition directly into a security management role.*

---

private practice. In a security management role, however, a broader skill set is needed, which is why investigations only accounts for 10 percent of the CPP exam.

Business principles and practices and information security are less common skills in a public law enforcement role, but they combine to make up 22 percent of the CPP exam. Financial planning and reporting, human resources regulations, contract law, liability, insurance, information systems, network security, and data protection are some of the topics covered in these sections, and they are deemed necessary for a well-rounded security professional to understand.

Let's look at two characters, based on real individuals, who both recently passed the CPP exam.

Sam, a retired police detective with 25 years of law enforcement experience, is now working as part of the corporate security team at Fortune 500 company. Initially hired as a contractor before being brought in-house as a corporate investigator, he demonstrated a solid record of completing successful investigations for the company. Sam had passed the Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) exam, and he was looking to add the CPP credential onto his résumé. After failing

to successfully complete the CPP exam three times, Sam attended study groups and collaborated with colleagues before finally passing the test on his fourth attempt.

John began his career as a security guard at an amusement park while attending college and earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. John worked his way up through the security industry from contract guard companies to in-house corporate positions. Eventually he ended up working as a security specialist for the same Fortune 500 company's corporate security team as Sam. Working with several retired law enforcement officers, John decided to take the CPP exam to boost his professional credentials. John passed the CPP exam on his first attempt.

Sam was an outstanding police detective and investigator for his organization. The CFE exam had more of a direct correlation to his work as a police detective, and Sam found it challenging but overall much easier than the CPP exam.

John's prior positions helped him gain a broad level of experience beyond just physical security. On the contract guard side of the business, he became familiar with human resources regulation, contracts, and financial planning. As he transitioned into corporate positions, he picked up skills

---

*The technological advancements in security are widening the knowledge gap and perhaps diminishing the value of a law enforcement background.*

---

on budgeting, network security, and regulatory compliance. When taking the CPP exam, he found it challenging but manageable.

Both Sam and John did ultimately achieve CPP certification, and in reviewing their exam results the differences in their backgrounds became clear. While Sam aced the

investigations section, it was John’s lowest score. John, however, outscored Sam in business principles and practices and information security. John also edged out Sam in crisis management and personnel security.

When looking back at the three previous failed attempts, Sam recognized that a contributing reason for his failures was that he was “answering the questions like a cop.” This made a significant difference for him between passing and failing—recognizing that security professionals and police officers respond to situations in different ways.

This is not to say that broader skills cannot be learned in public law enforcement. As someone advances in rank into more administrative roles, he or she will need to develop an understanding of business practices, such as budgeting, hiring, terminations, and public relations. This would make it easier for a high-ranking law enforcement officer to transition to the private sector, but there are still differences that may pose a challenge in a career transition.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE POSITION**

Anyone looking to obtain a security management position must understand the role of security management and security in today’s corporate world. This begins by understanding that there are multiple forms of security management. Contract guard services managers, security consultants, and corporate security managers all have important roles to play in the security industry, but each requires a different skill set that may or may not benefit from a background in public law enforcement.

Security consultants can take on a wide range of projects, allowing a retiring law enforcement officer to find a niche that fits his or her skills and experiences. Consultants typically work on short-term projects for clients to help solve issues, provide expert guidance, and implement risk mitigation solutions. The varying nature of clients’ concerns

allows a consulting agency to select the best person based on previous experience to service the client.

Guard force management makes up a good portion of security management positions. These positions are probably the most similar to the structure of a police department; however, there are additional responsibilities typically related to human resources and payroll that may be new to someone coming from law enforcement.

The guard industry is also an area where the security manager title can have diverse meanings. On some contracts

---

*Regardless of whether someone has a law enforcement background or has worked his or her way up through the security industry, there is a base of knowledge needed to be successful as a security manager.*

---

the security manager is largely delegated to handling scheduling and payroll for the guard force, with little to no involvement with the broader corporate security group. In other cases, the contracted security manager may be almost indistinguishable from the in-house corporate security staff, and he or she regularly has the opportunity to share input and contribute to the overall security program.

On the corporate level, security has grown beyond simply supervising security officers and monitoring cameras. A corporate security manager today may be an expert in business continuity planning, emergency response, and regulatory compliance. Often, they take on the role of project manager—responsible for everything from design and procurement to implementation and quality control. They must stay up to date on the newest technologies and understand the background network infrastructure on which security systems operate.

## THE TECH DIVIDE

More than any other single factor, the technological advancements in security are widening the knowledge gap and perhaps diminishing the value of a law enforcement background. In a typical law enforcement career, developing IT knowledge and skills is not part of the normal experience.

It is not unusual today for security professionals to work directly with IT staff to install and service security systems, such as access control and video management systems. A security manager must understand the impact of IP security cameras on network bandwidth resources and how data encryption prevents access control and personally identifiable information from being accessible, for example.

With the lines between physical security and information security becoming more blurred, a successful security manager must understand computer networks and information security. In some companies, physical security is even being merged with the IT group to create a converged security business unit.

## MAKING THE TRANSITION

An August 2018 Police Magazine article, “How to Survive the Academy,” cites a U.S. Department of Justice survey indicating that 14 percent of police academy recruits do not graduate. Rather than try to force a round peg into a square hole by pushing someone into a career they are not suited for, the academy identifies the recruits who are likely to be unsuccessful early in the process. However, there is no designated academy to prepare someone for a career in the private sector or to weed out those less likely to succeed.

A good portion of the skills and knowledge gained in a public law enforcement career will carry over to the private sector, but there are also many differences and extensive

knowledge which must be gained to be successful in the private sector.

A retired officer who seeks post-retirement work as an armed security officer, an investigator, or a security consultant will typically find success. These positions rely heavily on the skills and experiences gained in a career in law enforcement. However, those looking to make the move directly into security management positions may find unexpected challenges facing them.

To successfully make the move directly from public law enforcement into a security management position, a job candidate needs to research the position he or she is applying for and fully understand the expectations and responsibilities. Based on the job requirements, the candidate should look back on past experiences and identify potential knowledge gaps. Identifying these gaps prior to taking on a new role will help to direct the job candidate to take necessary steps to close the gap and expand upon his or her skill set.

Long before retirement, those thinking of making a career change should plan ahead. Developing a professional network that expands beyond other law enforcement personnel should be a high priority. A local ASIS International or other security association chapter is a good place to start to learn more about the private sector. Throughout a career in law enforcement, most officers have had an opportunity to develop contacts within private companies. These contacts can be used to create opportunities for a career transition, but also as sources of information on what skills and experiences are needed to succeed in their business market.

Regardless of whether someone has a law enforcement background or has worked his or her way up through the security industry, there is a base of knowledge needed to

be successful as a security manager. Anyone looking to advance into management roles needs to recognize his or her strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate steps to close knowledge gaps. Candidates should seek out continuing education resources to enhance skills and forge a robust network of contacts both in public and private organizations.

Developing a well-rounded skill set is the best advantage any candidate can have to be successful in seeking out a security management position. ■

---

JOSEPH RANUCCI, CPP, IS THE U.S. MANAGER OF SECURITY FOR ALMAC. HE SPENT 15 YEARS WORKING IN MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTIVE POSITIONS FOR MULTIPLE GUARD SERVICE PROVIDERS. RANUCCI BEGAN HIS CAREER IN 1993 WHEN HE WORKED AS A SECURITY GUARD WHILE EARNING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

# SECURITY MANAGEMENT



*Security Management* is the award-winning publication of ASIS International, the preeminent international organization for security professionals. *Security Management* is written primarily for security professionals. It also makes vital security information understandable to a general business audience, helping ASIS International advance security worldwide. Readers receive timely information on emerging security threats and practical solutions, which they can use to protect people, property, and information.

To join ASIS International and become a subscriber to *Security Management*, visit [asisonline.org/membership/join](https://asisonline.org/membership/join).

Copyright © 2020 *Security Management*. All rights reserved.  
2020 *Security Management* is an affiliate of ASIS International.  
The content in this document may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with prior written permission of *Security Management*, ASIS International.