



Situational Awareness of Hotel Security



INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION FOR
PROTECTION OFFICERS
KNOWLEDGE TO PROTECT



The Security Manager may feel inadequate because they may know that their region of interest is not secure due to a lack of funding and support. It is common for accountants to view security as an expense/cost that needs to be reduced, while being unaware of the potential implications. Also, HR may not have respect for security and simply ensure that security complies with the minimum standards.

These implications may be realized after the brutal/horrendous experiences of pain and despair that can rock a country. One wonders if the security budget will be reviewed by senior management of the hotel in Las Vegas in the wake of the tragedy. Hopefully, there will be increased investment into the security officers themselves seeing that it was in fact a security officer that was a key factor in mitigating the threat.

Hotel Managers could be in either urban or rural locations that perhaps face different and unique challenges. Regardless of location, the mentality towards security must be the same. There are some professional security managers that may refrain from continuously upgrading their knowledge or skillsets. One cannot escape the fact that the speed of technological development is mind blowing besides the methods to manage the behaviour of the guests – especially international guests.

When asking a few security managers at a workshop the question 'how many people you are responsible for?', they replied "two –four". However, they may not consider the outsourced security services as being part of their responsibility. I then asked, 'how many people are in the hotel today?', and their reply was 'between 600 to 700 guests.' It is a grave concern that security managers, that could handle life impacting or life & death incidents at any moment, are not aware that they are in fact responsible for hundreds of lives.

They may not know what is truly going on the ground and unaware of the threat that is taking place in theatre. More than likely that some guests could feel that they are being disrespected and reacting aggressively besides those that would provide bad reviews when they return to their countries of origin. One cannot afford reputational damage in this day and age of social media.

An example: International guests and foreigners react differently to situations, and interviewing methods. Not knowing the difference between cultural behaviour and body language, producers' misinterpretations for threat assessment, solving disputes or calming down volatile situations. Not knowing the true situation makes could turn the decision maker on the ground into the insider threat and they in-turn are unaware that they are the cause of incidents.

Unique Crimes

As stated above, the guests more than likely are made up of different cultures. This is a very important aspect to keep in mind as in one country some behaviour could be considered as normal and in other countries criminal. A simple example is in one culture it is perfectly normal to full a bucket of water and pour it over oneself when bathing.

Obviously, the water could pour over the floor and could damage the carpeting if there is such. A particular hotel ensured the one of the floors all rooms had only tiled floors to mitigate the issue. Subsequently, guests from that part of the world were purposely roomed on the dedicated floor.

Distinct crime related to this field of interest

- Hotel's biggest expense is related to loss that could be theft by guests as well as staff. Usually, the head of security is provided a list of the General manager daily of the loss percentage relating to all profit centres.
- There are specific crimes of concern as in staff could be selling rooms to enrich themselves. They could be using physical keys so that they can 'bypass' the computer system that records the times when doors and opened and closed.
- We can go further into the hotel sector whereas the office that sells time sharing could be pocketing a larger share that is disclosed to the time share owner or the ownership of the hotel.

Hotels could be captured to a degree by organized crime. When multiple perpetrators are working in concert with one another, staff being blackmailed, bullied, or extorted, and so many other crimes by external forces.

An example which was when a worker was being threatened to sell drugs to the guest. The security manager identified her and used the house keeping manager to discover the problem. To cut the long story short, the security manager informed a specific policing unit because the local police were corrupt. Not only was the drug cartel arrested but also the police officers involved. The worker still to this day has not idea that the security manager assisted in solving her problem.

Do keep in mind that there could also be an internal threat that could compromise reputation which would be a security officer. They could work in concert with staff with regards to the loss or they could be smoking dope or drinking on duty.

Security success depends on the level of situational awareness of the decision makers on the ground and their reaction speed. Security Managers would firstly consider historic data to consider the situation and perhaps may even go further by considering current challenges. The third issue, and biggest nightmare, is the X-Factor: what is truly going on the ground right under their noses that they are unaware of?

Security managers may not be aware of what is going on as staff are not forthcoming with information and may lie, hide or volunteer false information that suits their own agenda.

Not knowing = collateral damage.

Solution: Consider that the head of security and the team skills up on lie, deception detection. When the team knows that others can read them as well as they read others – then people that have something to hide will resign because the pressure will be too hot to handle.

Position that the security manager is in now

The first thing is keeping relevant.

- *The security manager uses technologies and the workforce to do the job.*
- *Gone are the days when the cctv is just recording as today by adding the appropriate analytics the losses could be reduced. The crime must be comprehended in order to select the appropriate technologies, therefore, do view the guidance booklets on AI and Tech.*
- *Also, analytics could be used to save people besides protect staff. An example by discovering a person that is in distress and lying in a passage or elsewhere and being unable to call for help.*

Implications leading to ineffective security management

Loss of revenue, increased theft and workplace violence or collateral damage due to life impacting or deadly incidents

Relevancy

As a surgeon has to maintain professional development so they can perform robotic surgery instead of ripping open a patient's chest – today any professional that is responsible for the lives of others should also ensure that they are in a constant state of professional development. The security sector not only has advanced in technologies but also in the educational science for security.

It's sad to say but we living now in a new norm where the perpetrators are smartening up.

The hotel security practitioners that are not relevant – will be redundant.

Learning Result: Method for Security Architecture: Hotel Security

by Jean – Pierre Roux MPhil.

Protecting and creating profit by enhancing security

From years of working in the hospitality industry as a criminologist, the Director of Nouveau Criminology has recognised the dire need to, amongst other things, protect reputation, and therefore, profit.

As a result, Nouveau Criminology has invested months of time, energy and money into creating an Evidence-based Crime and Offending Management Solutions (ECOMS) package. We have spent time investigating policing literature and field-tested strategies and embedded ourselves at a five-star luxury hotel to conduct field research on the existing risks and necessary solutions that need to be implemented in-order to mitigate those risks.

In the competitive hotel industry revenue per room and guest satisfaction are the core drivers of innovation, risk, and excellence. To this effect, the greatest threat to any luxury hotel is reputational damage, which directly leads to profit loss.

Principals

In this era of social media proliferation, dependence on easy to access customer reviews, and brand loyalty, the easiest way to damage a hotel's reputation is through theft directly from guests and the harassment of guests. For example, there have been horror stories in Cape Town hotels where 'whales' and entire tour groups have stated that they are moving their business to competing hotels due to room theft. Reimbursement costs pale in comparison to the loss of repeat business which accumulates to the millions in lost projected profit.

Shortly prior to the field research and testing, I went for Human Investigation Management (HIM) training. Once the seminar training was concluded, I began studying via the online training portal.

The instructor and myself discussed my field investigation observations and thoughts on a near daily basis. It was invaluable to the field research as I was at the hotel full-time and was having informal, unstructured, and unplanned conversations with many of the hotel's staff. These staff ranged from food and beverage, security, and housekeeping amongst others. None of these conversations were recording for later analysis which meant that all information needed to be processed, analysed, and verified in real-time.

Conversations with hotel employees, also required my awareness of cultural bias. Prior to HIM, I had not realised how important it was to be aware of my own cultural bias when perceiving others and processing the information that I was receiving from them.

Furthermore, I had no idea that my subconscious and habitual everyday behaviour may be offensive to the other cultures that I was engaging with. This is especially significant in the situation of an international luxury hotel, where guests and staff come from all over the world.

Situational awareness, which is stressed in HIM, was a massive advantage during my research. Every day and at every location, I was considering the situation, my position within the situation, and the possible implications of each interaction (SPI). SPI is an effective way of perceiving and structuring the environment in which we operate. SPI is a brain tool that one constantly must be using when "in theatre". It requires daily practice but has benefits beyond belief.

Besides what was taking place at the hotel, there was also a need for regular meetings with prospective service providers, employees, and partners. The techniques and concepts taught in HIM allowed me to read the situation during these meetings in real-time and be able to see what others were thinking and feelings during the meetings.

Mastering these skills provides one with a major advantage as one can communicate effectively and establish successful partnerships. During my field testing, it was essential to ascertain people's motives and separate those who are trustworthy and reliable from those who are not.

One of the core elements of HIM is the reliance on historical data. This was perfectly aligned with ECOMS which an evidence-based approach to policing

is. HIM teaches that if one is operating with incomplete intelligence and inaccurate historical data, then one cannot effectively detect and mitigate threats within an organisation. Only once we have all the historic and current data, can we make effective decisions that affect hundreds of lives. HIM's teaching on continuous crime analysis falls squarely within the objectives of ECOMS.

Finally, we humans are neurologically hardwired to believe that we know everything that is essential for our well-being. This is how our brain protects itself from the objective reality of how little we know about the space in which we occupy. This subconscious self-protection mechanism could not be more dangerous in the security industry.

HIM has identified the concept of the "X Factor" in an organisation. HIM teaches one to shed the subconscious mechanism and to recognise that there is always an unknown threat. It is that which we are unaware of, that is the ultimate threat. As many lives are in the hands of security operators, we need to be situationally aware enough to prepare for to investigate and mitigate unknown threats.

The easiest and most effective Critical Thinking Situational Awareness HIM Tool and Complete Manuscript for Research is available on [Human Investigation Management](#)