Reduce costs and risk with an effective security strategy

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There is no question that security is vital for business continuity. An effective security strategy can not only reduce costs and risk but help to avoid the impact of getting it wrong, which can damage both the reputation and brand of an organisation as well as its bottom line.

Introduction

According to the Reputation Institute[1], perceptions of corporate behaviour now matter more than perceptions of products and services; and reputational risks remain if companies do not immediately address those issues deemed most important by its customer.

A report by Deloitte[2] of 300 major companies around the world showed that reputation is now the biggest risk concern, mostly due to the rise of social media, which makes it harder for companies to control how they are perceived in the marketplace. When asked which risk areas have the most impact on business strategy the majority said reputation - not only overall, but for most individual industry sectors too. In terms of assets that add the most strategic value to an organisation, around a third said brand name and reputation, only human capital scored higher.
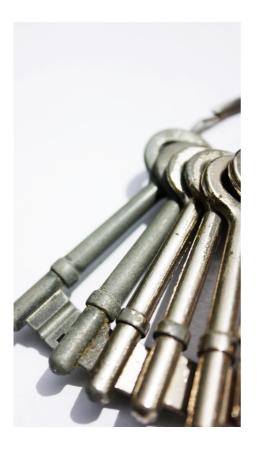
In the current economic climate the trend in the last few years, which has been fuelled by the recession, has been for decisions regarding security provision to be mostly financial.

Security is a thriving industry covering a wide range of services including manned guarding, CCTV, front of house, access control, remote monitoring, key holding and patrol services.

The British Security Industry Association (BSIA)[3] says its member companies have a combined turnover of £4.33bn, with manned guarding companies' turnover reaching £1.575bn and security systems companies £654m.

Reputation cited as top risk concern for organisations[2]

According to the SIA (Security Industry Authority)[4] there were 382,377 active SIA licences in January 2014 with door supervision having the largest number followed by security guarding and public space CCTV. It is a legal requirement for guards designated under the Private Security Industry Act 2001 to be licensed by the SIA.

A survey carried out by the organisation last year says the most commonly covered sector was security guarding followed by key holding, door supervision and CCTV. In terms of compliance, in addition to ACS (approved contractor scheme) registration, ISO 9001 was the most requested standard followed by SAFE contractor.

Almost three quarters of service providers said they had seen more emphasis placed on cost, whilst over a third said they had seen more emphasis on added value. For buyers of security services the top considerations are cost, compliance, SIA approved contractors, conditions and local offices & management.

The challenge for organisations is how to provide a cost-effective security solution whilst managing reputation and increasing the bottom line.

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You can never underestimate the cost of a poor reputation

As security becomes more important in today's world and, due to technology, more sophisticated, delivering efficient and effective security management is becoming increasingly complex.

Security can be seen as a cost rather than an investment, however, it is a means of contributing to the bottom line via its impact on brand, reputation and morale.

If people do not feel safe at work then productivity can fall and staff turnover increase; and if visitors have a negative experience then this can influence how that organisation is seen. Many companies fail to recognise the impact of negative perceptions both off and on-line.

With social media identified as a real risk for a business, damage to reputation can be instantaneous and go global in a matter of minutes.

An integrated approach

By taking an integrated approach to security, organisations can add value. Having a physical presence on site can often prevent a crime before it happens. It also cuts the time taken to react to a situation.

Security personnel can often be the professional face of the company and welcome visitors as well as help to keep on top of any building maintenance that may be required. They can also help to prevent unauthorised routes into a building and help maintain health and safety standards. Technology is an effective partner for manned services acting as a deterrent as well as providing evidence. In the current climate the need to reduce costs is a priority, but this needs to be done without compromising the security on site.

With an integrated manned and technical presence you can save up to 30 per cent* on your security budget
*subject to a needs analysis and acceptable risk.

Save up to 30% on your security budget with an integrated strategy

People need to feel safe

A physical presence can help put people's minds at rest and help them feel safer.

Developing your security strategy

Getting the security strategy wrong can have huge implications for an organisation. Bad experiences, security breaches, injury, loss of life, loss of business and negative perceptions are just some of the risks involved.

An effective strategy should consider how to best protect an organisation's assets – people, physical, technical and infrastructure; and mitigate any risks, analysing both probability and impact. This will also help to establish the number of personnel needed and the level of CCTV.

By aligning security strategy with business strategy, companies can add value and create a competitive advantage.

A security risk assessment will identify threats and vulnerabilities and their effect on business continuity and performance. For example:

- Are there vulnerable areas of an organisation's site(s)?
- Are they a potential target for terrorism, protestors, theft?
- Data protection - what information is critical to an organisation's business?
- Brand and industry an organisation is working in, do these make them a target?
- Are an organisation's clients a potential target, which would make them a target?
- Reputation of an organisation could lead to security issues.
- The type of product or service an organisation provides could make them a target.

Despite growing demand for technological solutions such as CCTV, remote monitoring and intruder detection, an integrated strategy can work best.

For example, security guards could be present during the working week supplemented with remote monitoring and CCTV out of hours. Security providers can also act as a key holder enabling them to investigate any fire or intruder alarms.

CASE STUDY:

University achieves cost savings by outsourcing security services

A London-based university with over 23 sites was facing a number of security challenges. Unauthorised entry, health & safety of its students and their welfare were the main areas of concern that needed to be addressed.

The University worked with Emprise, its security services provider, to help it adapt to a changing environment and develop a security strategy that would achieve cost savings of 20 per cent across its estate, whilst adding value in the form of improved security systems and increased performance.

The University also had a newly built site as part of its estate, which needed to be added into the existing services in a seamless and timely manner. It was important that there was a standardisation of services across all of the sites. There is also the additional management of licensed bars and the many issues that go with that.

The range of services provided as part of the strategy included manned guarding, keyholding, helpdesk, alarm response and mobile patrols. A total of 11 permanent and 12 temporary staff were employed along plus management and support services, as well as increasing the size of the contract for ad hoc security by 100 per cent.

One of the key elements was a flexible model that could be controlled under one umbrella, with the facility to make decisions 24/7 by having a night-time regional manager as part of the team. The on-site team also interact with the students and student unions, which enables them to have a partnership approach to managing security.

By outsourcing their security provision, the University was able to see added value as a result of regular reporting, which included maintenance sheets, defect reports, alarm faults, general reporting, housekeeping reports and fire extinguisher checks. All procedures were also updated and new ones created. This meant that less of the client's time was taken up with security issues and resulted in an improvement to the University's business operations. Security is now a much smoother, more effective and professional operation.

In addition, increased KPI (key performance indicators) and SLA (service level agreement) scores were achieved along with efficiency gains, cost savings on housekeeping and housekeeping patrols and a policy of turning off lights after areas were patrolled also helped the environment. This resulted in less of the University's time being taken up with security issues and, by creating an excellent working relationship with the local police, a significant improvement on response time to incidents.

This strategic, integrated, partnership approach and close working relationship with the University continues to support student welfare whilst significantly reducing operational costs and adding value.

Top tips for improving security

1. Recognise that security is a major concern for people
2. Make effective security a priority
3. Understand the potential damage to your organisation's reputation in cases of a security breach
4. Create a security strategy that is aligned with business strategy
5. Have an effective management support system in place
6. Work with a security services provider that operates strategically
7. Partner with an organisation that understands your values and objectives
8. Regularly review your security provision and look to your service provider to continually develop its risk assessments and improve any areas of concern
9. Put strategies in place to ensure all activities are carried out to the required standards
10. Ensure suppliers have a strong network of security staff and are adaptable to changing requirements

Benefits of outsourcing

With so much importance being placed on security and the effect it can have on a brand's reputation, there is a strong case for firms to outsource their security provision to ensure it is carried out to the highest possible standards.

There are many advantages of outsourcing security provision including cost, energy and time savings, providing expertise and contributing to the bottom line.

These include:

- Specialist security suppliers know how to reduce costs and maintain a great service.

- Working in partnership with suppliers to drive change and innovation can lead to increased revenues.

- Outsourcing guarantees that the responsibility for security lies with the provider.

- An effective security strategy can be a successful way of adding value to a business and its brand.

- An outsourced supplier can bring improved Return on Investment and new methodologies.

- Working with a specialist security provider delivers additional value as costs are absorbed by the supplier.

- A specialist security provider can reduce overheads and save time.

- An outsourced security specialist will manage both manpower and remote monitoring functions and be responsible for all training and development.

- Outsourcing ensures the provider will undertake a full survey and risk assessment based on an organisation's objectives and expectations and alert them of any security risks.

Conclusions

Organisations need to consider the cost of getting their security strategy wrong not just in financial terms but in the potential damage to its reputation and brand, and business.

Social media has the power to impact on an organisation in seconds and turn a local incident into global news almost instantaneously.

Security is clearly a big issue for both people and organisations and research shows that in the workplace, feeling safe is paramount. An effective strategy should consider how to best protect an organisation's assets – people, physical, technical and infrastructure; and mitigate any risks.

The challenge for organisations is how to provide a cost-effective security solution whilst managing reputation and increasing the bottom line.

Working in partnership with an outsourced service supplier can provide a wide range of benefits.

Outsourcing security services may be seen as an additional overhead but it can add value and create efficiencies including cost reduction, flexible staffing, recruitment and training, quality assurance and time saving.

The cost benefits of outsourcing these services and delivering an effective security strategy provides a strong argument for improving an organisation's security systems as well as contributing to the bottom line.

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To learn more about how Emprise can help you to create a more secure environment, get in touch with Emprise today

Call **020 7549 0800**

Or for more information about our company visit

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Sources

[1] Reputation Institute UK National RepTrak® Pulse Country Report 2014 http://www.reputationinstitute.com/

[2] Deloitte Exploring Strategic Risk http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_US/us/Services/additional-services/governance-risk-compliance/strategic-risk/index.htm#/

When asked which risk areas have the most impact on business strategy the majority (40 per cent) said reputation - not only overall, but for most individual industry sectors too. In terms of assets that add the most strategic value to an organisation, around a third said brand name and reputation (32 per cent), which was only surpassed by human capital (47 per cent).

[3] The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) http://www.bsia.co.uk/facts-and-figures

[4] Security Industry Authority ACS Review Report, June 2013 Snap Surveys http://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/home.aspx

According to the SIA (Security Industry Authority) there were 382,377 active SIA licences in January 2014 with door supervision having the largest number (58 per cent) followed by security guarding with 24 per cent and public space CCTV with 11 per cent. A survey carried out by the organisation last year says the most commonly covered sector was security guarding (94 per cent), followed by key holding (51 per cent), door supervision (41 per cent) and CCTV (28 per cent). In terms of compliance, in addition to ACS (approved contractor scheme) registration, three quarters of respondents (75 per cent) said that their clients require them to hold ISO9001 with just under half (47 per cent) saying they specify SAFE contractors. Almost three quarters of service providers (72 per cent) saying they had seen more emphasis placed on cost, whilst 38 per cent said they had seen more emphasis on added value.