



NEW YORK REAL ESTATE JOURNAL

Tuesday, May 18, 2004

COVERING THE ENTIRE STATE OF NEW YORK

By Daniel Kropp, Daniel H. Kropp & Associates

You can't put a price on the safety of your company, employees and assets

I used to find it curious that many otherwise savvy business people saw "security" as a commodity that should be acquired at the lowest possible cost – and with very little expectation that their investment would actually result in the reduction of crime or loss.

There's no doubt that many "security professionals" helped foster these misconceptions. If your expectation is that you'll suffer losses regardless of what steps you take to prevent them, then your vision of security might be an untrained, minimum wage-earning guard, nodding off in your front lobby. And if you'd like to pay fifty-cents an hour above minimum wage to get that guard, you'll no doubt find a company willing to accommodate you.

The same holds true for electronic security measures. If you want an alarm and a couple of cameras because a salesman told you that you need them, you can find them as well. Will these measures work? Or more importantly,

will they work together to reduce your risk?

These are fair questions. You're the one investing your company's money, and your security measures should be appropriate to your risk and to your budget.

The protection of employees and visitors, sensitive information, corporate assets, and even hard-earned reputations has become so much more of a priority in the post 9/11 world – especially in New York City. Businesses are now willing to make a greater investment to protect their interests, and they expect results as well as a measurable return on that investment. But if you're not an expert, how do you know what your risk is, and which measures are best suited to address them?

In 2003, ASIS International, the world's leading professional society serving the security industry, took a major step towards answering these questions when it released the "General Security Risk Assessment Guideline". The guideline includes a seven step process that serves as a "how to" for assessing your risk.

1. Understand the organiza-

tion and identify the people and assets at risk

2. Specify loss risk events/vulnerabilities

3. Establish the probability of loss risk and frequency of events

4. Determine the impact of the events

5. Develop options to mitigate risks

6. Study the feasibility of implementation of options

7. Perform a cost/benefit analysis

The guideline prescribes the approach that should be taken to assess the risk at any property, but allows for customized solutions by not prescribing solutions. For example, while the owners of a Class A Manhattan corporate high rise and a street-level retail storefront in Brooklyn should take similar steps to determine their risk, the solutions necessary to mitigate those risks might vary greatly. The most critical goal is that the solutions be appropriate to the risk – and that they work in conjunction with each other.

John Nemerofsky, president of Security Services and Technologies of Eatontown, N.J. agrees. "There was a time when many prospective clients believed incorrectly that

their closed circuit TV, access control, and alarm systems couldn't communicate with each other. Today they're better informed, and expect problem-free results for their investment. Having the ability to meet that challenge has been what's kept the top-performing security integrators ahead of the pack." Nemerofsky also hinted that the increased reliance upon technology has also resulted in more competent security professionals. "You can't achieve optimal results if you put state of the art electronics in the hands of unskilled employees," he said.

Corporate losses can come as the result of theft, poorly conceived electronic systems, unskilled personnel, and even post-incident litigation. Each of these factors can be minimized by understanding your unique risks and implementing appropriate strategies.

A complete copy of ASIS International's General Security Risk Assessment Guideline can be downloaded at www.asisonline.com.

Daniel Kropp, CPP is principal of Daniel H. Kropp & Assoc., Collegetown, Penn.