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Executive Skills

I always wanted to be somebody, but now I realize I should have been more specific.

Lily Tomlin, comedian

EXECUTIVE GROWTH

This chapter is 100-percent subjective. It is my opinion, but that opinion is based on observing, working with, and interviewing Security Directors worldwide. I have taken the good traits from those I admire and those who are successful and outlined them here. (I have even used a couple of the less successful ones to prove my points.) Everyone has their own style and these suggestions may not be part of yours, but I ask that you take some advice from the experts. That advice is presented for you here.

As the director of Security for your property, you need to decide what role you want to play in your corporate organization. One observation I have made is that Security Directors fall into two general categories. First is the passive response agent who is called up to the executive offices whenever anything happens related to Security. This director is generally told how much money he can spend, what size staff he needs, where his cameras will be placed, and when he needs to do something different. This director prefers to fly low and avoid problems and just wants to appease everyone.

Second is the director who takes a leadership role in the executive team. He presents himself as not only the Security expert, but becomes a spokesperson for the guests and what is best for them. He realizes that Security is everyone's concern and collaborates with all departments to make sure his needs are actually the needs of the entire organization. This director is seen as the expert on property and nobody would think of making decisions without him.

As you might imagine, my preference is for the second director. He or she will be more productive, more effective, and will be better compensated and more successful in the long run. Ironically, this proactive approach goes right along with the preventative nature of

our industry. These are my observations and solutions for attaining this level of leadership at your hotel.

You have three responsibilities as an executive in your company. One is to your boss and the executive team. Two is your responsibility to your staff and their development. Three is the responsibility you have to yourself and your personal growth. This chapter will devote itself to making your company, your department, and you as successful as possible.

FINDING YOUR PLACE

I have noticed that the office of the Security Director is placed somewhere in the hotel away from the “C-suite.” Marketing, Sales, and Operations are all there in the executive cluster, but Security is down in the basement. There is probably a practical reason for this, but it is also symbolic of the pecking order in a hotel. There are advantages and disadvantages to this separation, so make the best of the positives and reverse the negatives.

COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

Let’s talk about your place in the grand scheme of things. The perception everyone has of you and what you do is based entirely on you. Without a proactive approach to becoming a part of the team, the other department heads and even your boss may consider yours a supportive role. Worse yet, they will consider you and your department a necessary evil. This image probably comes from our predecessors who were perceived as gorillas, called in as the muscle to take out the trash. We need to put as much distance between us and that horrible, negative image as we can.

Allen Pinkerton was born in Scotland and became a successful businessman in the mid-1800s. His unwavering ethics and appreciation for protecting business from those who would harm it soon earned him a reputation as the first private detective. Spying against the Confederate Army and protecting industry from some of the dirtier union organizers built his reputation into a formidable business of its own—the Pinkerton Agency. In 1871 when the Department of Justice was formed, it did not have the budget to train and staff full-time investigators, so it contracted with Pinkerton. This relationship lasted about 20 years and was terminated by federal law. So you might say that the country’s first organized police agency was really a security company. Many of us in industrial security still trace our beliefs and our philosophies back to Mr. Pinkerton. Pinkerton’s legacy lives on as a division of the worldwide Securitas Company.

Start with your place in the organization. If your current situation allows a department head to tell you to install cameras in a certain location or provide security for a particular

event, you are not being a director. You need to get yourself into a position where you collaborate with your colleagues and come up with solutions together rather than being told how to run your department. You have to bring yourself up to an equal playing field. This is not a competition; it is about a well-rounded team where each member has his or her expertise. Your expertise is security.

Expertise is the key. Building your expertise is discussed in the personal growth section of this chapter. In this section, we detail how to offer it to the team. Start by playing offense instead of defense. Get out in front of situations instead of waiting for the call that tells you what to do.

If you can get up to that level where you are an equal—one of the executives who has an equal seat at the round table—take it a step farther. With security in your blood, you have an advantage that you need to impart to your colleagues. You are used to operating within a team, where everyone operates toward the same goal—the company. Your fellow executives—Sales, Marketing, Operations—have made their way in the business by competing with each other. They probably think and act more vertically (some call this “kissing up”) than they do horizontally (as a team). Your security DNA is of a different type. You realize as a team player that competition with your colleagues, even if it is only for attention from the boss, is counterproductive.

As you excel at the collaborative model, you will be known as a team player, one who is comfortable with his or her place and does not feel a need to compete for attention. I guarantee your boss will notice and will start using you to team-build and problem-solve. Are you still fuzzy on this concept? See if this example hits home: There are a couple of department heads that are so busy worried about what the other is doing, who will get their idea to the boss first, who gets a bigger piece of the budget, and who will blink first, that they are not getting anything done. You explain to your boss that you have already put together a team of select department heads to solve a certain problem. Your boss will notice this behavior and will reward you with more responsibility. When he or she has a new initiative or sets up a new working group, you will be the likely the first choice. Your boss wants global thinkers and not those who operate in their own silos.

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

Chances are, you are involved in some regular staff or operations meeting. If not, you should be. Study the agendas of these meetings and come prepared. Take note of plans to host special events, celebrities, and public officials. Use the contacts you made in your networking (see next) and investigate places where they have stayed before. Someone else has already managed this security issue, so take advantage of his or her experience. Your value increases when you come to a meeting prepared to discuss security concerns that Marketing has not considered.

Once you become a member of these collaborative sessions, make your input positive. The reason you were probably not considered initially is the perception that you will be an obstacle. Frankly, we in Security do tend to make ourselves obstacles by saying, “It will not work,” “I don’t have the staff,” or “It will cost too much money.” Look, think, and present yourself as a company person. Offer your objections only if you have a solution

(e.g., we may have to spend a little overtime, but it may be worth it to get our name out there. Or, that group tends to cause trouble at conventions, but that is why you have such an effective Security Department). Instead of saying no, you are saying yes and are providing valuable input.

Set up individual meetings with the departments you work with most. Risk Management, Human Resources, and Facilities, for example, are probably the departments you support. Work out problems before they occur. As mentioned previously, do not be an obstacle. Be willing to do anything you can to make their job easier and they will return the courtesy. Once you get comfortable with this process, try it with departments with which you may not work as closely. Go over upcoming events with the catering manager. Let him or her know you will not be an obstacle, but a resource to make the events run smoother.

You don't like hearing on Friday that there is going to be a group of 500 fraternity students staying in your hotel on Saturday. The Sales Department doesn't tell you because either they don't consider your opinion important or they fear you will throw up barriers. Work with these event planners so that they will tell you far in advance so you can make your own plans. Explain your point of view and that if you have time to prepare, you will not be an obstacle, but a willing participant. Either the fraternity group can trash the hotel or they can provide a lot of revenue, depending on how much time you have to prepare for them. As you offer your expertise, such as segregating the group from other guests, adding officers here and there, closing the pool, and so on, you will become known to those event planners as a resource.

Nothing is more frustrating than having the rest of the team plan a remodel or new addition without consulting Security. As they design and build a new bar, for example, they get caught up in the architecture, hiring, marketing, and menus and take for granted the placement of cameras, access control, type of clientele, etc. Approach this as with the meetings discussed previously. Get in on the initial planning and become a resource instead of an obstacle. Instead of whining that a bar will bring fights and problems and ruin our business, explain how some basic, cost-effective controls can reduce many problems. Show how properly placed controls will prevent theft and reduce loss.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE BOSS

Set up regular meetings with your boss. This is a chance to let him or her know what is going on in Security. Concentrate on what Security brings to the bottom line—losses recovered, losses prevented, and situations resolved. Do not wait for this meeting to notify the boss of important incidents. You never want him to hear from someone else what he should have heard from you. Establish in advance the types of notifications to provide (fires, fights, internal thefts), by what means they will be given (phone, email, in person), and when (immediately or the next day). I have seen how department heads will race to the boss to reveal some juicy information just to receive favor for being first to report. Do not let this bother you, as you will be following a protocol that your boss prefers.

Without dipping too much into your own personal style, I want to stress the importance of your relationship with your boss. We Security Directors tend to be quiet but honest, reserved but capable. Unfortunately, it does not matter how good you are if the boss does

not know it. You may need to manage your boss a little so that she knows you exist, trusts your judgment, and has you in mind when raises, bonuses, and promotions come along.

Start by keeping regular meetings with your boss. Have a weekly regular time set up (every Friday at 2 p.m.) and have some ammunition ready for those impromptu meetings. Come to the weekly meeting with your own agenda or notes on what to discuss. Bring a brief summary of your payroll, expenses, or financial status. (She already knows, but wants to know if you know.) Lay out briefly what you are doing to reduce expenses or overtime (before she asks). Summarize any big investigations, major incidents, or ongoing problems that your department has solved. Do not sugarcoat. The boss wants to hear your challenges as well as your successes. If you do not have the answer, ask for advice. Most executives want to hear that you will seek help when needed. Perhaps it is a problem manager or a rash of vehicle burglaries.

In addition to the weekly meetings, always have something ready for the “elevator meeting.” You may run into your boss in an elevator, the parking lot, or the lunchroom and you need to be prepared to speak of something besides the weather. We caught the guy stealing towels off the maid carts, or I think I found a better source for DVRs—I will have a report for you Friday. Better yet, be ready to answer his questions about overtime, who parked in his parking spot, or what the occupancy is.

Keep track of your personal and department task list. If you were given an assignment, or you mentioned at a previous meeting that you would see to some project, keep a mental list of that progress. Have this information ready and keep the boss updated. I completed the background check you asked for, compiled the stats of how many towels were missing year-to-date, and got prices on the new uniforms. I have not yet completed the yearly loss report, but I will have it Monday. Your secretary has the other reports. Keep your accomplishments on the top of her mind so that when the big assignment or even promotion comes up, the recollection of your performance is positive. Remind yourself that in Security, your achievements are not always obvious and you need to blow your own horn.

I mentioned in the beginning of this section that you want to avoid getting too comfortable. This is not where you want to be because others will resent you and your time will be short. Nobody likes to see someone kicking back, skating through the day, while they are working their tail off. If you find yourself with nothing to do, or that you are spending more time at work socializing and butting into everyone else’s job, you are too comfortable. I am not telling you to fake being busy because you cannot sustain that. You need to challenge yourself constantly. First, you are fooling yourself if you think your property runs perfectly and is crime-free. There is always a project you can initiate to further reduce crime or increase guest satisfaction (see Chapter 11 for some hints). Self-motivators are successful executives. Keep running, keep challenging yourself, and keep making your job better.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR STAFF

Other departments actually expect Security to be the experts at communication. We developed the preshift briefings, we use radios, and we document the important stuff in our

reports. Make sure you practice this good communication both ways between you and your staff. Let them know what is going on with the property as soon as you can, before they get the information elsewhere. Security officers like knowing things first—everyone does. Take notes at the meetings that you attend and create a process so you can get that information to your troops immediately.

Create a process where you know everything your staff knows as soon as it happens—24/7. Whether it is phone calls at all hours, text messages to your company phone, or emails to your iPhone, you should be available at all times. Do not feel bothered when you are called late at night. You are happy to hear it in real time rather than from your boss in the morning.

Many say that the success of a good leader is dependent on those with whom she surrounds herself. Your managers and supervisors need to have the same work ethic and be as smart as you. Some leaders are tempted to promote those who are good, but not good enough to pose a threat to their own job. When you think about it, that threat only exists in your own motivation. If you are following some of the traits and habits in this chapter, you will stay ahead and set the example for your subordinates. If they are biting at your heels to get your job, that is the best thing that can happen. You will have a stronger team and you will have some encouragement to stay current and energetic. Usually the lazy manager fears his subordinates. He deserves what he gets.

Remember the secondary duty you have in any position in the company is to prepare your successor. This is often called grooming and is a requirement more than a luxury. How are you protecting the assets of the company if something happens to you and the department is left with no clear leadership?

First, you need to select one or more likely candidates. Do this by asking them what their aspirations are. If they are comfortable and just want to finish out a few years before retiring, or have their sights set on another career, they are probably not your best choice. However, do not forget that many of our best Security professionals were on their way to another career when they came across this one. After all, how many kids in the fifth grade dream of becoming a Security Director?

Second, engage in some casual training. This type of training includes discussing certain factors in the decision-making process. Explain how you make decisions, prepare the budget, communicate with the boss, and handle difficult decisions.

Maintaining Morale

Transmitting news back and forth is one thing, but maintaining constant, open dialog is more complicated and, for some, more difficult to achieve. Many managers claim to have an open-door policy, but keeping everyone satisfied takes a bit more than that.

Security officers may be some of the most difficult employees to motivate. Many, by their own admission, are either finishing out their careers, waiting for a better opportunity, or just plain lazy.

In my experience, Security officers are motivated in several ways. First, just as they said in their interview, they want to help others. Most of us feel a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment when we help someone through a difficult situation and use our unique resources to resolve it. Second, they may not have admitted to this one, but most

want some action. That 1 percent of the time we get our adrenaline pumping is often the most satisfying part of our job. Third, and I really doubt anyone will admit to this one, is respect. As Security officers, in a position of authority, we like to be looked up to, give orders, and walk around looking handsome and professional.

Ask management if these motivators fit into their profile of the perfect Security officer, and they will definitely like number one (helping others), but probably are not too keen on numbers two and three: providing action and bossing others around. Most business operators want a Security force that is helpful, loyal, honest, and efficient. Imagine if you could combine the expectations of employees and management so that everyone is happy. Actually, you *can* give the officer those three things he wants (and more) and achieve a highly successful Security Department (and more). That is our job as Security professionals—to provide for the employee *and* the executives and operate a highly effective department—and here is how it is done.

Officer Empowerment

Employees who are treated like drones and expected to follow orders blindly will never reach any level higher than that of a guard force. I am hoping that you would rather have officers who make decisions, protect the property as if it were their own, and enjoy their work enough to pass that attitude on to guests and the bottom line. In Chapter 6, we discussed officers making decisions and learning from them.

One comprehensive way to experience the advantages of empowerment is to get officers involved in the decision-making processes of management. Assemble a cross section of officers into a focus group. This group needs to be managed closely and have strict guidelines. Use a manager to facilitate. If you think your managers are part of the problem, use a manager from another department. The objective of a focus group, in this application, is to solve problems, create new procedures, or address some specific issue. This is a step-by-step process that will certainly get you some positive results.

1. Select the group members. Take a good cross section of age, experience, and schedules. Quiet or loud, it does not really matter as long as you think each person will be honest and reasonable. This is a great way to reward those who always make suggestions and those who tend to complain without a basis. Be sure they are volunteers and that you pay them for their time.
2. Outline the rules. Facilitators keep the group on track so that the meeting does not become a gripe session, everyone participates, and the results are not outrageous. This is explained next. Meetings should be about an hour. Two-hour meetings become ineffective and tiring.
3. Start with an objective, such as “How to improve guest service,” “Improve our training program,” “Reduce turnover,” etc. The group will tend to go off on tangents and start solving other problems. The facilitator will keep the group focused on this objective. (By the way, use one of those easel pads, write this stuff down, and post it on the wall until the focus group is disbanded.)
4. The Perfect World. This is different from the objective in that it is the manner in which you would achieve the objective. For example, if the objective were to

- improve guest service, some of the items in this category would be “Every officer would greet every guest by name,” “Officers would smile,” “Officers would accompany guests when they ask for directions,” etc. This is a brainstorming session, so almost anything goes. Do not write the crazy stuff: “Officers could read the guests’ minds.” That is not possible or reasonable, so leave that stuff off and keep focused. Post this on the wall also. This will take one or two meetings.
5. The Current World. Yes, we are working backward for a reason. Now we list the facts of how we operate currently. “Some officers smile some of the time,” “Officers often do not greet guests,” “Officers point to the bathrooms instead of escorting guests,” and “Management does not know which employees do greet guests correctly.” These are all current facts. Leave out the negatives like, “Officers do not have enough training.” This is reaching for a solution and we are not ready for that yet. Post these on the wall also. This will also take one or two meetings.
 6. This might be a good time for homework and field trips. Send the group to other departments, other hotels, or other service businesses to see how others do it. This is very enlightening. Have them bring back their findings for the next step.
 7. Connect the dots. Now the fun part begins. Up to this point, everyone was probably trying to solve the problem. Just ask them to write their ideas down and set them aside. The reason for avoiding this premature problem solving is if they have not seen the Current World, how do they know their idea solves a current issue? Continue with the brainstorming format as you look at a way to get from each of your bullet points in Current World to your bullets in Perfect World. Presumably, you will come up with a training program, an evaluation process, and so forth. Some of the answers may surprise you. Disney developed its concept of being “on stage” to improve guest service. The smile and attitude becomes part of your “performance.”

The focus group (known by whatever name you want to call it—Security Circles, Round Tables, etc.) is not only a great way to solve a problem, but it also creates that important “buy-in.”

There are also simple ways to maintain and improve morale.

Image—Everyone wants a positive image. The officer wants to look good, smart, effective, and professional. What a coincidence! That is what *we* want, right?

Let’s start with uniforms. Uniforms are dependent on the type of business, and even geography. First, decide on the message your uniform is trying to convey based on the objectives of the department. A “high-class” hotel may want to present proper ladies and gentlemen who dress similar to the clientele and the other employees. A motel may need something more utilitarian. An amusement park may need a distinctive law-enforcement look to prevent criminal activity, relate to children, and provide visibility. I suggest asking your employees what they want. What are they comfortable wearing? What do they think gets them the most respect? What uniform allows them to use their equipment more effectively?

After one property began allowing employees to wear Hawaiian shirts on Fridays as part of a promotion, the director asked the officers if they wanted to try something like that. He thought he was being generous allowing them to dress casually. He was surprised to find that the overwhelming majority said “No way!” and begged him not to make them wear colorful shirts. They felt that nobody would take them seriously, respect them, or even

be able to pick them out in the crowd. What he expected to be a reward or a motivator turned out to be a punishment, so he did not do it. Try asking your employees what they think.

Title—What do your employees want to be called? This is a very big deal for most security officers. A guard is someone who stands by a door controlling access at best and a piece of metal that keeps the chain from falling off your bike at worst. We expect much more from our officers than guarding, such as rational thinking, discretionary decisions, and some personality. This is a couple of steps (at least) above a guard and your employees should be recognized for this skill. Try calling them “officers” and see how their morale and self-confidence improves. This is a big change for the rest of the organization as well. They will require some time to acclimate to this way of thinking. This morale booster costs you nothing except a little effort.

Recognition—Officers enjoy the satisfaction of doing a good job and solving problems for others. Most do not require financial reward, although that is nice, but love being recognized in front of their fellow employees. A memo on the board does not quite do it, although it is better than nothing. Try mentioning something an officer did well in your daily briefing or other meeting. Alternatively, take it a step farther and have the officer explain what he or she did and make it a training process. What could be more rewarding than having something that you did being used to train others? Whenever you get a letter or comment from a patron or other employee acknowledging the efforts of one of your officers, write the employee a thank-you note. Hand-write it and throw in a gift card for coffee or a burger. Have the shift manager deliver it in person with his own thank you because it makes him look good. This is guaranteed to foster “Aw shucks” embarrassment all around. They will probably cowboy-up and toss it aside as “just doing my job, ma’am.” I bet they will take it straight home to their significant other and gush through dinner. This is also low-cost and worth taking out of your own pocket, if necessary.

Proper training and equipment is very important to your officers. This improves their confidence and gives them more tools to help their guests and employees. Look at some of your equipment, especially the basics like radios, uniforms, and so forth. Spend the money to make them work correctly. Nothing is more frustrating, and likely to cause more damage, than radio batteries that are worn and do not hold a charge, dead spots when transmitting and receiving, worn uniforms, and anything else that does not work well. Your officers consider all of these things, especially the radios (and weapons if you use them) important to their safety, so take this issue seriously and ask them what they think. In the end, you will save money because good equipment is usually better cared for than the bad stuff.

Open Door Policy

Everyone claims to have an open door policy. (I have seen many a manager write their open door policy behind closed doors.) This is the notion that you are always available and always willing to listen. This “policy” seems shallow when the employee has to come to you with a problem. As stated previously, the best way to stay in touch with your employees is to get out there and talk to them. By the time someone gets up the nerve to come to your office with a problem, it may have gotten out of hand. Some will never come to your office unless you make them. Unless you want your office known as the place where

everyone goes to be fired, invite officers in just to talk. Tell them they did something well and it was noticed. Ask their opinion on the issue of the day or if they have suggestions for the property. Then your office really does become an open office.

PERSONAL GROWTH

Third of the responsibilities of a good executive is to yourself. Start with education and experience. If you are lacking in experience, you must network and learn from others. If you lack education, it is not too late. Most employers are happy to support continuing education if it benefits them. Obtaining a certification like Certified Protection Professional from ASIS is the best example I can think of to advance your education in security. There are also certifications and classes provided through your local university, FEMA and DHS, and many other organizations. Do these on your own time if you need to. Classes not only make you more knowledgeable, but also you will find that they motivate you to think of and try new things. They also are a great networking experience, which I will discuss more in length later.

Once you get your personal growth on the right track, you need to start attending meetings and conferences relative to your industry and to your market. This will do several things for you. You will network with other professionals in similar situations. They will learn from you and you from them. These will become your resources when you need advice for a challenge that is new to you. You will find that whatever it is, someone else has already experienced it and can help you through it. Conversely, your peers may come across something in which you have experience and you can return the favor.

Your Work Ethic

Another thing I have noticed with Security Directors is that they are usually overwhelmed or lazy. Maybe lazy is too harsh of a word, so let's call it "comfortable." You can probably see yourself in one of these two categories and I hope you see the disadvantages of each.

The overwhelmed director runs on a high level of stress because he does not delegate enough, has inadequate staff surrounding him, or takes on more than he can manage. The comfortable director tends to have plenty of time for golf, takes weekends off, spends time talking with colleagues (nothing to do with work), and appears a little too confident. Ideally, you find your place somewhere in the middle of these two stereotypes. Look at the following suggestions for finding that middle ground.

Stress

The more responsibilities you have, the higher your stress level. It is not all about work; we all have bills, car troubles, family problems, and other stresses at home. Add to those layoffs, downsizing, bad economy, revenue drops, and grumpy bosses. Don't forget that you manage a staff with all the same problems you have. The way we handle or reduce our stress not only affects our own family and work, but also it sets the tone for our employees

to deal with their own issues. If, for example, you yell at others to cope with your stress, that behavior snowballs downhill until the entire department handles all conflict this way.

This entire book is devoted to making your job easier, which is definitely a stress reducer, but here we will talk about ways to avoid and diminish that stress if it does pop up. Before we begin, acknowledge that stress, and even anger, are natural emotions. Do not feel bad, or less of a manager, if you feel them.

I am not a doctor, so I will not pretend to advise you on your physical or emotional health. Take these on with a psychoanalyst, physical therapist, or dietician. What I can do here is help you keep those causes of work stress down. It is true that rest, proper diet, and exercise are huge factors in reducing stress.

Time Management

When we run out of time, we have to neglect (or we forget) something we have to do. Keep a schedule, such as Outlook, so you do not double-book or overlook important meetings or events. Put everything in your calendar or you may forget even routine things like “walking around talking to employees” or “read incident reports.” This will hold those places to keep you from blowing them off to go to a meeting. If a meeting is scheduled during your email reading time, reschedule the emails. When you get to the point where you have so many meetings that office or floor time is impossible, something has to go. Delegation is a positive way of duplicating yourself.

The stress is not generally caused by one event, but usually not having the time or resources to deal with that event will contribute to it.

Delegation

If you go to so many meetings that it exceeds your work time, you have too many meetings. Decide which ones can be delegated to a manager or administrative assistant. Delegation not only duplicates you, but it empowers and trains those who answer to you, to learn your job and how to run your department. If you spend a lot of time on interviewing job applicants, maybe you need a hiring manager. If you attend many meetings to coordinate special events, perhaps you need a special events manager.

When delegating, make sure you take the time to train that subordinate on the subject matter, the limits of his authority, and the background he needs to properly address the situation. Make sure he reports to you, but also make sure the report of the meeting is not as long as the meeting itself. That saves you no time at all.

PERSONAL HABITS

Visibility

The Security Director should be the most visible person on the property. It is your responsibility to know every employee on every shift, especially your own staff. Set a time each day to get out and meet the employees and the guests. Set time each week where you work

a different shift. Seeing the boss is a real morale booster and makes you part of the team, rather than a memo writer in an office.

Besides being visible to everyone, your demeanor at all times should be above reproach. Visiting the bar after work, flirting with employees during work, and driving erratically through the parking lot all look bad and set a poor example. Remember that everything you do will be watched and scrutinized more than anyone else. This is partially because you are an executive and partially because you are Security. Employees will look for a double standard and assume one exists even if it does not.

Punctuality is a trait of a good leader. If you tend to be late, it shows that you do not manage time well. Awake earlier, leave for meetings earlier, and account for problems on the way. Do what you need to do to get to work on time and keep appointments.

Respect

One of the hardest personal traits for managers to achieve is respect. Many mistakenly place the desire to be loved over the need for respect. When decisions are made because a manager wants to be nice instead of what is best for the department, personal ego is now running the department. Some decisions will be difficult personally, but if they are in the best interest of the company and everyone understands the mission is to protect the assets, then the decision becomes clear to everyone.

When everyone is treated fairly and equally, respect will be almost automatic. Not everyone will like every decision, but if it is made for a good business reason, they will respect and understand it. My advice here is treating everyone you encounter, employee or not, as you would treat your mother, your boss, or someone whom you respect. You will feel better about yourself and those around you will respect you for it.

Attitude

Attitude is a big part of being overwhelmed. We have all seen how the exact same event affects people in different ways. Everyone looks upon your behavior so you need to be the model. Panic is a big stressor for people who feel overwhelmed. Being in Security, you probably have this under control. Perfectionism is another personal habit that leads to stress. If you expect perfection from everyone and everything, you are going to be disappointed often. You will never be satisfied, always stressed, and never get anything done if you expect perfection. I have seen this consume ineffective managers. That is not to say that you should not expect tasks and assignments to be completed correctly. Just cut down on being so "nit picky."

Negativity is an attitude that seems to permeate an entire organization when just one or a few people practice it. People choose to be negative. As mentioned previously, the same situation can be accurately perceived as a positive by one and a negative by another. Just prior to writing this paragraph, I told two people that I was having new shelves installed to store office supplies. The first person was very excited that her job would be easier and it would take less time to find supplies. The second person commented that it would probably take a week for our engineers to install and paint the shelves. Then he complained

about having to learn where everything was. Two people. Same event. One positive and one negative. Think about the attitude that you model for your employees.

Breaks are important enough that we make our employees take them. They reduce fatigue and allow the mind to clear. Make sure you take breaks as well. Avoid lunch at your desk and take time to walk away from a problem, if you can, to relax and clear your mind. Overwhelming stresses can seem much less significant the next day. Besides, break time is a great time to interact with your employees.

Another method to deal with stress is to talk things out with peers. Avoid sharing problems with subordinates. Perhaps another department head or someone away from work can provide advice, but also be a sounding board as you vent. Be sure not to vent to those on your team. This is explained in another section.

Your personal demeanor is important to everyone. Being seen intoxicated, even off-duty, or in your grubby clothes can tarnish your image. How do you expect your boss to be dressed? What would you think of her if she were not dressed to your expectations? What do you think your employees expect? Decide on an image you want and stay with it. Imagine a major incident occurs at your property late at night and you decide to head down there and take charge. Maybe the media shows up and you need to make a statement. Decide on the image you want for you and your property and present yourself in that way.

NETWORKING

Earlier, I mentioned personal growth, and networking is part of that. Many of us security types are not comfortable with this process. We are somewhat private individuals who do not sell ourselves well. If you ever watch a salesperson network, it is almost sickening to people like us. We conjure descriptive words like “ass-kissers” and fakes. Believe me, I was the same way, and I am still somewhat uncomfortable with “small talk.” Some Security Directors keep to themselves, talk to no one, and mind their own business. I do not consider them successful. Recall that example from the beginning of this chapter about the director who is more of a sheep dog.

One day, I realized that I did not need to sell myself as these salesmen do, but I did need to sell my hotel and my department to get what I wanted. Perhaps I felt like less of an idiot knowing that it was part of my job and not for my own career building. After that, I found it easy to network, make small talk, sit and converse with strangers, and build my address book. So, let’s go through the networking process methodically because methods are our nature.

First, we need an objective. Why network? Your reason for networking is to share information. Unlike that camera salesperson who asks you how you are doing at every association luncheon, you are not selling widgets. You are selling anything you have to offer in exchange for anything you need from the other guys. Here are some examples.

When metal thieves steal your brass sprinkler fixtures, chances are you will file a police report. It goes to detectives, and it may or may not get assigned to a human, who may or may not go looking at the scrap yards for your brass. However, if you call that sergeant from property crimes who you met at the security chiefs’ meeting last month, he

will likely put some emphasis on your report. By the way, he also needs a favor. He needs to get a photo of a known car burglar out to as many security departments as possible. Suppose you send his email to all of your colleagues in the entire city and save him some legwork. There is nothing illegal, unethical, or immoral about this transaction of information, but it could not be done without a little networking.

Now suppose you are planning an exercise to test your new evacuation plan and you want the fire department involved. Call the chief who you met at a city council meeting last week. If they bring their engine to the hotel and spend a couple hours helping you evacuate your employees, you can let them use your penthouse floor to do some high-rise drills next month when the hotel is under construction.

Call or email your fellow hotel security directors and invite them to send a few officers to the CPR training that you are hosting next week. They will reciprocate when they have training classes of their own. If they cannot host some training, maybe they have some other amenities they can offer for the good of the group.

Information is our objective and we have some tools we can use to trade and to open up conversations. It is now time to start. I have found the best way to network is to get involved in as many organizations and groups as you can.

Government meetings—City councils, committees, county commissioners, and any other governmental group is the best place to find police and fire chiefs, inspectors, code enforcement, city attorneys, etc. These people are much friendlier when they have met you and they know you are one of the good guys.

Associations—ASIS has a local chapter in almost every city and is a great way to meet like-minded people in your business. I always find it amazing that security professionals in other industries (retail, contract, utilities, manufacturing) have many of the same problems and solutions that we have. Other associations may have chapters in your town.

Local trade groups—I have mentioned Security Directors' Associations, but there may be other security groups focused on retail, fraud, or other crimes. These are a must-join because this will be your base of contacts and where you give and receive all of your information.

Nonprofit groups—There are always some community groups in every town that fight drug abuse, domestic violence, crimes against kids, etc. There may be a crime-stoppers or other citizen tip group that meets and exchanges information.

Public/private groups—In the past 10 years or so, local and federal government has really reached out to the private sector to battle issues of joint interest. Two that come to mind are emergency preparedness and counterterrorism. Every city or county is required by the federal government to have an Emergency Manager. Meet this person and find out what he or she does. They are usually very excited to get cooperation from private entities, especially hotels that can provide resources in an emergency. There are also fusion centers in every state that deal with terrorism among other things. They may have an advisory board or a communication group and they want to exchange information with the private sector.

Online—Finally, there are many groups on the Internet that network and share information. Engage these to your comfort level, but I find that I learn more from these people than anywhere else. The best way to get your feet wet is to log on and observe the conversations until you feel comfortable.

Regional Training

I mentioned several groups and agencies where regional training is a benefit and is probably already being planned. Airports, school districts, and fire departments do all kinds of regional training. Start by observing these exercises and using those network skills. Find out what your hotel's role would be in a disaster and which one of these agencies would respond to your facility. You can learn some valuable emergency training skills from these people and maybe offer some resources in return.

Regional Communication

Two of the groups I mentioned previously are keys to your regional communication trees. Your local Security Directors Association and Fusion Center are all about communication. The Directors group should have a listserv of email addresses that can broadcast information instantly. This is invaluable and necessary in every community. If you do not have a group like this, start one or join one in the next town. The Fusion Center will usually proclaim itself as the focal point for dissemination of official government information of importance to the private sector. Make sure you are on its mailing list.

COLLABORATING WITH OTHER PROPERTIES

Mutual Aid

The concept of mutual aid is generally considered a government relationship. Fire departments have aid agreements to assist each other when their resources are overwhelmed. Police departments call the next county when they need specialized training or equipment for a hostage situation. Private enterprise has actually been using mutual aid for years. You might be surprised to find that your own hotel probably has agreements with other hotels to “walk” guests in the event of an over-booked situation or a catastrophe.

These agreements between companies tend to be verbal, which have no teeth. In the event of an emergency, what will be your recourse if that other hotel decides it doesn't want to participate in the agreement? What if the other hotel doesn't even know what its responsibilities are to your organization? This agreement that was based on a handshake might cost millions of dollars if someone breaks it. Your insurance company and lawyers are going to be looking for someone to blame. You don't want to be the one who made the handshake with no documentation. Therefore, you need a written agreement.

Written Agreement

This is a step-by-step process to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for mutual aid. Start by determining your needs. What is the agreement about? (Evacuation space, food for displaced guests, hotel rooms, etc.) Then meet with the key personnel of each property that makes those decisions. When a verbal agreement has been made, document it as “the purpose.” Next, on the document state the authority by which it is made. (This is normally for governmental entities, but we can state that it is between management of each property.) Then we specifically list control and coordination of the agreement. This means who will be in control and who will coordinate these mutual activities. In other words, who is responsible for adhering to the agreement? Then specifically list the responsibilities of each department and each person if necessary.

The next part of this document covers the postincident information. Compensation is an important one. Who will pay how much for what and to whom? How is insurance involved in that compensation? Who assumes liability for certain activities on which property? Finally, the document is signed by authorized representatives from each property.

This sounds complicated and is too much information for a couple of paragraphs. That is because you will not write an MOU based on this book. Your legal folks have boilerplate agreements ready to go and you can probably fill in the blanks at their advice. If you are not using a lawyer, there are plenty of sample forms on the Internet.

Sharing of Resources

I always thought it was ridiculous that two hotels sitting right next door to each other have two separate shuttle buses, separate lawn mowers and snow blowers, and even 50-foot freeway signs. These have nothing to do with Security, but wouldn't it be nice if we could share some resources to save money? Those same two hotels might have perimeter cameras that look at the same area. Why not share cameras and pipe the feed into each hotel?

Consider people resources: The two security officers from each property probably pass each other doing their perimeter checks. What if Hotel A did it on the hour and Hotel B did it on the half hour? This reminds me of those old World War II movies where the German guards are on one side of the border with a gate and the Russians are on the opposite side (a foot away) with the same setup. Okay, they were enemies! Our two hotels are not enemies—they should be allies working toward the common goal of protecting everyone's assets.

The same applies for training—and this is where you can save some real money. It makes no sense to have one hotel train three officers for 40 hours and have another hotel do the same thing the following week. If you combine these resources, you not only save the money of training, but also you make your security programs more consistent. You read in Chapter 1 that your security will be compared to other properties in the event you are sued. What better defense than having the same training as your neighbors.

REGIONAL DISASTER PLANNING

In Chapter 10, we talked about emergency planning. Above, I mentioned the close relationship you should have with your regional emergency manager. This is where that

comes together. When I first assumed my position, I started asking around about emergency planning. You have a fire, a broken water main, a gas leak—no problem. You evacuate, call the authorities, and they take care of the rest. They are the experts and that is their job.

Besides the horrific images of death and destruction coming from the ruins of the earthquake in Japan in March 2011, we saw business continuity break down as well. Those who had mutual aid agreements, contingency plans, and backups of backups never imagined a disaster of that magnitude followed by a tsunami of even greater devastation. One example was airports. Imagine the hundreds of flights on approach to one of the island nation's many international airports. As one Delta pilot reported, they were on their final approach with little fuel, and their airport was under water. The backup airport was also devastated. The backup to that airport was already filling fast with diverted flights. The pilots had to do some fast thinking to find landing places before their fuel ran out.

Consider your plans in the event of a regional disaster. If you have agreements with other hotels, what will you do if they are also out of commission? You may not be flying an airplane, but you are responsible for hundreds of people that need a place to eat and sleep.

Then I started asking around about regional disasters. What if there is an earthquake, tornado, or citywide flood? Aren't those authorities going to be overwhelmed? So I started asking the other hotel directors and that is when I got scared. Almost all of them told me not to worry, just take care of the hotel and the rest is up to the fire department. The next day I called the County Emergency Manager and asked him the same question. He told me that is what keeps him up at night. "Frankly," he said, "in a regional emergency like that we do not have the community resources to take care of everyone. Those that we do have are going to be tending to hospitals and schools." We have seen examples of this in Hurricane Katrina and the Japan earthquake. Many people who were not prepared were left out. In Katrina, the companies that had planned for such emergencies like Wal-Mart and Toyota took care of their own employees and guests.

On that day at lunch, I made a verbal agreement with that emergency manager. I told him if he let me sit on his emergency committee and be on the list of those notified, I would make sure his important announcements got out to all other hotels in the area. I also told him my hotel would be the first to volunteer hotel rooms and convention space for evacuees when necessary. In return, I get to know before anyone else when trouble is coming and I will get first attention for my guests and employees from the authorities when it is needed.

The moral of this story is that you need to talk with these people before a crisis hits and not during. Since we set up the initial agreement, I have now been involved in many contingency planning groups, participated in regional exercises, and created a public/private group that plans and trains for disasters. Our community is more ready than it ever was.

SUMMARY

Security Directors in the hospitality business are a rare and unique type of leader. We can ensure our own success as well as those who employ us if we take advantage of the experience and style of other leaders in our industry. We just need to remember that in our business, protection of assets is our objective and our professionalism, experience, and knowledge will be the road we take to meet that objective. I wish you a long and prosperous journey, but most of all, I hope you have fun. Because as my father once said, you have to enjoy your work or you won't be any good at it.