



SECURITY OFFICER NETWORK

Security Consultancy White Paper Template

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The following sample demonstrates a white paper as developed by an unarmed officer who has been assigned to the third shift at a retail mall.

It's a basic document such as one might expect to see produced by a site-level officer. However, the thoughtful observations will not go unnoticed by the attentive reader who must be impressed by the fact that the officer has turned what might be viewed as a "routine" security assignment into an opportunity to compose a well-written set of actionable recommendations.

As the officer completes his white paper, he does it from the point of view of: *"If I were the owner, what would I want to know about securing my site?"*

The officer will source material for this white paper each night as he works his shift and makes observations.

The officer should work and rework the material in the white paper until he becomes confident in the soundness of the recommendations.

The completed work product must demonstrate the officer's thoughtfulness and place him into a mindset of writing recommendations as part of a potential, future career as a private security consultant.

Retail Niche Security Assessment and Recommendations Report

SO John Smith

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I. Background

The observations and recommendations that populate this document have been developed by SO John Smith following a 16-month commission to provide onsite security at a metro-area, high-end retail mall and plaza with a special focus on overnight safety and security policies.

Smith's assessments are based on his personal experiences and observations and the insights, excellent cooperation and candid opinions from private security co-workers, staff and patrons of the plaza.

II. Security Staffing and Personnel

Observation: At this mall, and likely many similar retail establishments, there's a constant turnover amongst security staff. At some points in time, as much as 50% of the security staff have been on the post for less than six months. Frequent and unexpected shift changes let the officers know that they cannot depend on day-to-day stability. The constantly changing schedules intrude into their personal lives. This lowers overall morale and creates a culture of unpredictability.

Recommendation: Retail establishments should insist that their security contractors make use of online scheduling software. This software allows officers to trade shifts and work out scheduling issues amongst each other instead of lobbying superiors and playing office politics.

Additionally, the security contractor should be enticed to pay officers at a rate that is higher than the area's going wage for unarmed security. It will cost more in the short term but the increased rate of pay will save money in reduced overtime and the avoided cost of constantly onboarding new officers.

The increased pay should not take effect until the officer has been assigned for at least six months. This will encourage him or her to stay on post.

As the culture of the site stabilizes, the officers will be more satisfied with their assignments and less likely to complain and gossip and otherwise destroy site morale.

Observation: There's a habit of assigning several officers to the day shift, not because they are regularly needed, but out of an abundance of caution. This leads to a lot of sitting around and gossiping. This gossiping isn't good for morale. As the night officer, I experienced this firsthand because the swing-shift officers would often stay late and complain. They said the day officers were talking about and criticizing each other and us. This destroyed the morale of the victims of the gossip and they oftentimes retaliated with gossip against the day officers.

Recommendation: It's understandable why the security management wants to schedule enough day officers to cover most contingencies; but, those officers should be assigned with meaningful and specific duties: duties that will keep them mentally engaged and less prone to goofing around and gossiping.

Some suggestions and ideas include: an officer who is solely responsible for the radio assets: he or she can inventory, log and maintain the radios; and, a training officer who can track FEMA certifications and help the other officers stay motivated and continue getting training and earning certifications; and, an intelligence officer who's assigned to listen to scanner traffic from the police and record notable instances that the other officers should know about.

These types of assignments will help the day staff get through their traditional down times and keep focused on "security work" instead of gossiping.

Observation: Officers tend to become lax in their appearance and to blend in to the crowd. This reduces their visibility in the public. Quite ironically, in the morning as day shift was coming on, I would get calls from stores with a request to "send security" even though a day security officer was right outside of the store. Less-than-distinctive uniforms caused the security persons to blend into the crowd and propagate a culture of mediocrity.

Recommendation: Retail security departments should feature a distinctive and identifiable uniform to increase visibility and awareness and make the officer feel exceptional. Another mediocrity-fighting tool is the promotion of an organizational image or identity (a brand) to encourage officer pride.

Observation: The plain-clothes, loss-prevention officers tend to get bored and spend time talking to uniformed officers and mall employees. This makes them easy to spot and less likely to catch shoplifting.

Recommendation: Security and retail staff should be trained to not engage loss prevention in conversation. This will assist the loss-prevention officer with avoiding his or her all-too-human tendency to socialize.

III. Physical Security

Observation: There's sparse enforcement of access control rules as it regards accessing previously-recorded, closed-circuit TV footage. This is a great liability to security staff and retail management because security officers are allowed to access and even delete footage without signing into the system with a trackable user id. It's also becoming routine for officers to share CCTV footage amongst themselves, others and even on social media. Management hasn't thought this through and are not putting control policies in place. They are not thinking about: *"How is it going to reflect on us for the footage of an embarrassing incident to leak out on the Internet?"*

Recommendation: Retail sites need user management, access control and logging of all reviews of CCTV footage. Retail management and security staff must collaborate on a policy to prevent the sharing of footage outside of the management's technology infrastructure. They should require all officers to sign an agreement to NOT share the footage on social media.

Observation: There's a tendency to overstaff the day shift at the expense of nighttime security. As the mall is mostly unoccupied, this is an understandable preference, but the integrity of the perimeter of large retail facilities such as these are difficult to maintain by just one overnight shift officer.

Recommendation: The use of temporarily deployed intrusion detection sensors notify the night officer of a perimeter breach whether authorized or unauthorized. These sensors have become inexpensive, are easily and quickly deployed at a set time of night and allow one security officer to achieve the awareness of two.

IV. Preparedness and Threat Assessment

Observation: It's quite easy for retail and security managers to lose track of their overall security situation. Oftentimes vandalism and vehicle break-ins are occurring at neighboring properties without any awareness at the retail site. This prevents an appropriate preparedness stance towards predictable security issues.

Recommendation: The daytime officer who has been charged with listening to the police scanner should compile a weekly compendium of incidents occurring both on the post and at proximate locations. The security contractor's post supervisor should examine these reports and adjust staffing to meet potential threats.

Observation: Officers are well-trained on routine security best practices such as response to perimeter intrusion, loss prevention and parking lot security but have not been trained with more-rarely-required responses such as dealing with a suspicious, unattended package or to workplace violence threats. As it concerns the latter, officers have a mindset of working on behalf of and protecting the employees, and their initial sense of loyalty to the employee can conflict with their ability to quickly deal with an employee as he or she creates a security liability.

Recommendation: Retail facilities and their security contractors are hesitant to spend resources to train their officers especially when the average life cycle of a post assignment is probably not more than a year; nonetheless officers can and should take advantage of low cost and free certifications such as those offered by FEMA. A daytime officer should be commissioned to encourage all of the site's officers to train for the less-than-regular eventualities that, though rare, will inevitably occur at retail sites.