



Safe Travels

COMBINE 'OLD-SCHOOL' PEOPLE SKILLS AND 'NEW-SCHOOL' TECHNOLOGY FOR HIGHLY EFFECTIVE HOSPITALITY SECURITY

In today's world of rapidly improving technology, some of the most effective tools for keeping guests and facilities safe are the basics of exceptional, overt people skills and customer service. When combined with appropriate technologies, having a staff trained to engage guests in a positive manner throughout the property is the best means of reducing security risks.

EYES OPEN

When staff members interface with guests it serves a dual purpose – giving guests a quality experience and placing any criminals on notice that they have been encountered by multiple staff members in a personal, memorable manner. The last thing bad guys want is to be memorable. The best way to accomplish this type of comprehensive interaction is to make it central to the mission of every property and deeply ingrained through training. It's wise to provide employees with examples of greetings that are both thoughtful to guests and strategic in reminding anyone with ill-intent that they've been noticed. Example: "That's a very nice blue coat." This greeting is both complimentary to regular guests and makes bad actors aware that they've been noticed to an extreme level of detail.

Ritz-Carlton, among others, is a fine organization that does an exceptional job creating a positive, interactive environment for

staff to support/impress guests while making any potentially problematic individuals aware that they've been noticed.

PROTECTIONS IN PLACE

Another important layer of guest and building security is comprised of "low-tech" but important elements, such as proper external/internal lighting, a clean and well-maintained property, appropriate natural and/or artificial barriers that identify property boundaries, etc. These are deterrent forces to those with negative intentions.

GOING HIGH-TECH

A third layer of security is incorporating "high-tech" elements, which are instrumental when combined with guest interaction and low-tech security elements to provide a comprehensive level of security for hotel properties. High-tech measures include advanced video surveillance – a staple in most worldwide properties – and the associated software, which is rapidly advancing and providing greater capabilities. Whether networked or not, video surveillance is both a deterrent and a post-incident tool for authorities to use in solving criminal activity.

Greatly improved cameras, graphics, analytics and facial recognition combine to provide properties with a wealth of capabilities. When integrated with key control systems, these technologies can provide security in



multiple ways, including appropriate monitoring of employees and highly segmented property access control. Even properties without attended monitoring can benefit from these technologies, as they can be arranged in a manner to provide cell phone alerts to designated senior staff when security violations occur.

One can see how the deterrent impact of video surveillance and associated technologies are greatly enhanced by the staff customer service/greeting policy. Return to the earlier staff greeting example: "That's a very nice blue coat." Now the potential perpetrator has it in mind that a staffer who saw his face up-close and will vividly remember his blue coat, will be able to advise authorities

of it. Even if he discards the coat, he's already been captured on video wearing it. Even if the video doesn't have a good view of his face, it can be supported by the staff member's description. The idea is to impact the person's thinking to such an extent that he will not see it as a wise move to commit any offense. The risk outweighs the potential benefit in that person's mind.

WELL-STAFFED

A fourth level of security is a dedicated security staff, if budget allows, or the participation of regular staff in observing and reporting suspicious activity. In addition to a policy of greeting customers, staff should be the frontline eyes and ears for issues

such as drugs, weapons and human trafficking. This can be accomplished through a strong staff training policy combined with programs like the Department of Homeland Security's "If You See Something, Say Something" program.

The staff should be aware of demeanor indicators, which include: people wearing unsuitable clothing for the weather or environment; people with unusual bulges under their clothing or wires protruding from their clothing; people who are sweating profusely, mumbling to themselves or fidgeting; people who appear to be attempting to avoid security personnel or law enforcement; and people who appear out of place.

It's also important to have a good relationship with law enforcement. Meet local/regional law enforcement to discuss issues, patrol schedules and coordinate responses to major incident scenarios.

Properties should conduct a comprehensive security audit at least twice per year, reviewing all policies and technologies for effectiveness, and tracking incidents to determine specific weaknesses to be addressed. It's also essential to conduct regular maintenance of all security technology/equipment, as reliability is compromised when maintenance wanes.

Comprehensive, effective security must start at the property boundary, and it requires a multitude of layers. Technology is important, but not nearly as effective without properly motivated, trained people and exceptional security policies.

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