

**HOTEL SECURITY MANAGEMENT-
STRATEGIES & TACTICS FOR
MODERN WORLD**

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David Rubens Associates is a specialist corporate security consultancy offering strategic security services to individuals and organisations across the world.

DRA has worked with government agencies, NGO's, international conglomerates and major global events, and brings a mixture of strategic vision, operational experience and academic research to all of its projects, however large or small.

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Hotel Security Management - Strategies and Tactics for the Modern World

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Introduction

In the modern world, where we are facing a wide range of what might be called 'new generation threats', international 5-star hotels offer an easily accessible target that have the advantage of also being an iconic symbol of power and prestige. An attack on a 5-star hotel is guaranteed to be the lead story on news programmes and newspapers across the world. The nature of the 5-star hotel environment, offering open access combined with an atmosphere of status and exclusivity, means that hotel security sets a unique challenge to create a balance between providing a safe and secure environment for staff, guests and visitors, at the same time that it maintains the impression of an open, welcoming space where all parties are free and at ease to carry out their activities.

The Principles described below are offered in order to give participants a conceptual understanding of how effective security management programmes can be introduced into international 5-star hotels in a way that is both cost-effective and appropriate to the wider hotel environment.

Principle 1 Three Basic Rules of Security Management

Despite the unique situation in which hotel security management is operating, it still adheres to the Three Basic Rules of Security Management:

Rule 1 Any attack is not an event, but the final stage in a long process

Rule 2 The earlier that we are aware of a potential problem (in both time and space)

- i. The more options we have to deal with it
- ii. The less effort we require to deal with it
- iii. The safer we are

Rule 3 We cannot control the motivation of the attacker, but we can control the opportunity. **If an attack takes place, it is because a weakness in our own management system allowed us to be seen as a potential target.**

Principle 2 Effective security management is not based on a list of unconnected rules or guidelines, but is a reflection of the general culture and ethos of the organisation as a whole.

As such, all three levels of security management must be recognised and respected if an effective security management structure is to be constructed.

Gold Command Level (Strategic Management)

This is at the 'Group Management' level, and is where the general strategic support is given. The importance of security management within an organisation can be easily judged by how important the security director is in the organisation hierarchy. In many organisations, the security director manager is low-caste, though this is often because the security director / manager does not have the same level of skills or capability as equivalent directors / managers in other divisions.

Silver Command Level (Tactical Management)

This is the level where the on-going security guidelines are developed and implemented, ensuring that there is an accepted level of security management capability across the organisation. This is where programmes are developed to ensure that all Bronze Level security managers are aware of their responsibilities, and have been given the training, resources and support to enable them to carry out their duties in an effective and sustainable manner.

Bronze Command Level (Operational Management)

This is the level of the front-line customer-facing security teams themselves. These are the people who create the security presence within the hotel, and it is the Team Leaders within these teams who are expected to set a standard of professionalism that will allow the hotel to maintain its security and safety to the highest degree.

Principle 3 The basic foundation of security management is 'Ownership of Territory'.

Within a hotel, this means that we should have control of the whole area that we consider as 'our territory', including approach areas, car parks, gardens, working areas, service areas (eg waste disposal, staff entrances, etc).

If there are areas which are 'un-owned', then this will be seen by the potential attacker as a clear sign that there are weaknesses in the security management system, and will automatically place give that organisation greater value in the Target Choice process.

Principle 4 Security is the responsibility of all staff, not just the security teams.

Although the security team is responsible for responding to specific situations, what will enable them to give the highest level of security protection to the hotel is the level of information that they receive from all members of staff, whatever position they hold in the organisation. Room maids, cleaners, car-park attendants and gardeners are all people who are likely to observe some sort of 'non-normative behaviour' that is an indication of possible bad intention – whether personal (drug use, prostitution), criminal (fraud, theft) or terrorism (pre-attack surveillance). The effectiveness of the security team will be dependent on the system that allows that information to be passed to them quickly and accurately.

Principle 5 Security is part of the customer-care package

5-star hotels are based on world-class levels of customer service, and an effective security management programme should contribute to that package, rather than be seen as a burden or imposition. A hotel with an effective understanding of security management will give a higher level of care than a hotel that doesn't, and as such it is important that security management is seen as a positive part of a hotel's service rather than a 'non-productive cost'.

Principle 6 Adding to Brand Value

In the present security climate, for many international companies the hotel security check is an important part of their pre-visit preparation. For the international business traveller, a welcoming, friendly but professional security capability is a positive mark in the assessment that they make of the hotel that they are using. A positive hotel experience is made up of many components, each equally important – but the quality of hotel security management is definitely part of that package.

Principle 7 Developing an Effective Security Management Programme

Nothing in a 5-star hotel is developed by accident, and everything is considered in terms of the wider hotel context, whether it is the sort of lights that are used in the lobby, the design of the menus or the colour of the elevators. Effective security management requires the same level of commitment and professional dedication, but given the right tools and attitude on the part of management and Team Leaders, security management can be delivered to a world-class level in exactly the same way as every other part of the hotel experience, and as it is based on effective management rather than high-cost equipment, it can be done on an extremely cost-effective basis.



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