**Security Managers, Security Supervisors and**

**Security Officers: Twenty-Five Points**

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Whether it’s an aspiring protection officer or a university student who is interested in a career in the security profession, we all know there is no substitute for experience but many times security managers and supervisors get real-life experiences as well as a formal education and industry certifications to help prepare them for the journey on the security career path. When we were both security supervisors, there was no manual, no text to read and basically very little other training materials available for supervisors. We salute all of the many contributors who assisted in compiling this International Foundation for Protection Officers (IFPO) text and sharing their expertise to help define the path to successful careers as supervisors and/or managers in the security industry.

In the last decade, there have been many changes – both nationally and internationally. The U. S. Department of Homeland Security was formed to address the ever-growing threat of terrorism. Organized retail crime, active shooter incidents, identity theft, cyber- crime along with natural disasters continue to be major concerns of protection professionals.

Consequently, the education and training provided in the security industry must meet these threats. Supervisors and managers must be well-versed in these topics and must inspire their subordinates to acquire more education – either a formal degree program or industry certifications (or both), on-the-job training and experience. They must continually emphasize professional growth and development of the individual officer, agent, or investigator in order to promote *organizational development*.

*Organizational development* occurs when substantial numbers of the protectionorganization have undergone professional development experiences.

Programs offered by the IFPO and our partner organizations are examples of professional growth experiences. Individual employers and colleges may create their own formal degree programs and industry certifications.

Regardless of the career path, the supervisor is the conduit for professional growth. He or she must embrace opportunities for professional and organizational development and this is accomplished in part by leading by example.

**What Is a Security Supervisor?**

1. The person who represents higher authority.
2. The person who assesses situations and conditions to make on-the-spot judgments without favor, prejudice, or fear.
3. The person who is a responder to any and all situations.
4. The person who must galvanize the efforts of many to attain stated goals.
5. The person who must assign tasks and ensure compliance and constant quality performance.
6. The person who is accountable and, therefore, first in line to shoulder reaction, both good and bad.
7. Finally, the person who must make decisions for management based on his or her own professional development.

What does it mean to be a supervisor? First of all, a security supervisor may be called on to handle different types of conflicts in a myriad of circumstances. Secondly, a security supervisor will be required to meet the expectations of management and/or the client in the daily routine of security operations.

*The supervisor is the backbone of the organization*. His/her scope of responsibilityis rather unique.

**What Is a Security Manager?**

1. A manager designs and develops security, safety and investigative programs.
2. A manager works with budgets and other resources (equipment, uniforms, technology, software, etc.) to ensure that the protective mission is achieved.
3. A manager oversees processes (procedures) that accomplish organizational goals and objectives.
4. A manager is responsible for staff functions if there is no supervisory span of control over line employees. This includes training, technical support, auditing, etc.
5. A manager coordinates activity rather than supervises them.
6. A manager is charged with policy formulation.
7. A manager oversees line supervisors such as shift leaders, sergeants, lead officers, etc.
8. A manager interacts with department heads and upper management (president, vice president, chief financial officer, chief, director, etc.)

**Professional Development**

Professional development is a critical concept. It is the pathway for supervisors to *become* managers. By professional development we are referring to:

1. Leadership and networking skills are critical and the supervisor in transition knows the value of industry certifications and career development,
2. Communicative abilities include, oral, written, and computer skills.
3. Reasoning and logical thinking are must-have abilities.
4. Formal training, accreditation, or certification are needed for professional growth and personal satisfaction.
5. A personal and professional code of ethics must be developed along with high standards by which to guide oneself.
6. Never underestimate the value of mentoring and coaching through on-the-job training and in-house programs.
7. Knowledge of risk assessment and security countermeasures are important.
8. Turnover and job rotation can create overall improvement *and* present a learning environment.
9. Stay current on industry events by reviewing news sources, trade publications, and web sources such as the IFPO Article Archive, among others.
10. As the job changes, so must the training and the level of skill within the department increase. Professionals develop a “discipline of training” and continuously seek to improve their knowledge and abilities.

**The New Supervisor or Manager**

The most demanding problem for supervisors within a protection department will be the transition from the position of security officer to that of supervisor. The supervisor’s role should be to assist in enabling the manager to provide a level of support within the organization. Supervisors must take responsibility for corporate regulations, the moral and ethical tone of the department as well as providing the required level of security and customer service required.

Similarly, new managers have some adjusting to do. We feel it is important to advise readers that as a new manager, one has to learn how to develop and exercise (not abuse) their newly acquired authority, power and influence effectively. This can be done by establishing one’s credibility—the earning of subordinate’s commitment and support.

Management is an art as well as a science; it is, perhaps, more art than science. New managers are at the crossroads, looking to make the right turns. Consider the following:

* A new manager is the person in charge. His/her elevation to the status of manager through promotion has given him/her the authority.
* A new manager is a person with a level of power and is a decision maker.
* A new manager is knowledgeable in his/her field.
* A new manager uses his developed skills, ideas, education, certifications and experience.
* A new manager supervises his subordinates and passes information down the line as well as up the chain of command.
* A new manager has the responsibility to be aware of employer policy as well as client requirements and the level of security required within the organization.
* A new manager develops his/her on-the-job experience as a new manager, and starts to understand and accept the new responsibilities as well as what it means to be a manager.

 A manager who has been promoted to the rank of supervisor or manager should:

* Learn how to supervise and adjust to the new role.
* Develop leadership skills and training of others
* Develop interpersonal skills and becomes a mentor to others
* Develop knowledge of who they are. *Know thyself*.
* Learn how to cope and deal with stress and emotion associated with management concerns.

 As one progresses in his/her career, these learning points become ingrained. They become second nature. They become part of oneself.

**The Leader as an Agent of Change**

As the last link between senior management and line employees or customers, it is the leader’s job to assist in the implementation of change. To do this, certain obstacles must be overcome. There are several strategies for reducing resistance to change. Much resistance to change comes from lack of trust or people having to operate outside their comfort zone.

Resistance can sometimes be overcome or the impact lessened if the following actions are taken by the leader:

* Fully explain the upcoming changes.
* Make certain employees or customers fully understand the change.
* When possible, discuss why the change is required.
* Identify and discuss the possible effects with employees or customers.
* Answer questions, or take the information and follow-up if you don’t know the answer.
* Build trust with your employees; they will better accept the change.
* Be honest and be consistent.

Change can potentially create fear in the organization and paranoia in the minds of executives, so it is important that information be disseminated the correct way through the organization by leaders.

**Conclusion**

Security supervisors and managers will be called on to make decisions every day. Some of these decisions will be easy and others will be quite difficult. Every decision must be based on a foundation of education, training, and experience, supported by “street smarts.” Decision-making ability may be introduced in a classroom or from a book, but it is perfected through experience. Being on the front line, being prepared and willing to make the tough decisions is what being an effective security supervisor and manager is all about.