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## contract guard services

# Keys to successful contract guard services: Communication, relationships, & expectations

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During the last twelve years working in the contract security services industry, I have listened to, and/or participated in, countless discussions with fellow colleagues and industry leaders on the most profound topic in our industry (and which is the driving force behind competition and market share in our industry):

### What makes a good contract security program?

Is it recruiting techniques, training programs, vendor experience, great looking uniforms, affordability, or the use of cutting-edge technology? The variables are endless, but make no mistake, the selected variables dictate success or failure of a company. The real answer is that there is no perfect list of generic variables because each client's needs are specific. Therefore, to set the stage for success, I offer the following subject which has a huge impact on all else. The key is communication. Communication is necessary in order to identify and establish relationships and to identify expectations.

During the initial meetings, two-way communications between the property management team and the security operations management team is critical, and should be the basis for all decisions to follow. Notice that I included the security operations management team. Most property managers never meet the operations management team until after the contract is agreed upon. The secret to a successful long-term security contract is not the various program components, but rather the management personnel who are responsible for implementing and maintaining the program.

**Relationships:** I'll be brief on this subject. I believe it is critical that an amiable relationship be possible between the key operational managers on both sides of the house. When we don't like, or don't feel good about the people we are working with, we are less effective and most likely will not achieve full potential. Communication would break down at all levels, be less effective, and this would automatically set the security officers up for failure. If I feel that there will be significant difficulties dealing with a particular management or leadership style, I would rather withdraw from the process at that point.

**Expectations:** There has to be a complete and concise understanding of what the property management expects. The property managers need to be the driving force in this area, and identify what specifically is needed at their property site. Security professional should offer solutions that meet those needs, and explain the details. There has to be a complete understanding of the needs of the facility. Standard requirement questions need to be asked and answered. Many contract security service companies come into the sales meeting and think that they understand the needs of the facility because they have a facility like it. Each site is unique, has specific needs, and a corporate environment of its own. Programs should be built to best fit those

needs. In this manner, security officers on post have been trained specifically for the needs and cul-

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ture of the building and will best be able to competently meet and exceed your expectations.

To continue meeting your expectations long-term requires frequent communication between the man-

agement teams, and supervision and program maintenance from the security management team. Some

security companies spread their resources to thin to minimize cost on the bid and maximize profits. Some property management teams expect their security management team to be on site daily. It is crucial to be clear up front on what is expected

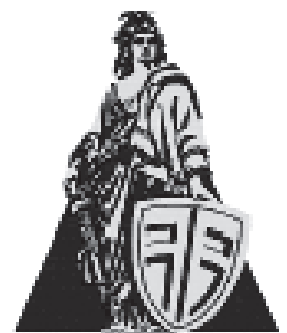
in this area.

In conclusion, identifying and establishing good working relationships, and clearly communicating expectations during the initial process, is imperative to a successful partnership. Maintaining open channels of communication usually solves most daily challenges. Good old fashion communication at the beginning will set the stage for success for all parties concerned. All other things will fall into their proper place. The vendor will be successful in meeting your expectations and you will be a satisfied client.

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