



Security: Smart decisions during difficult economic times

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During these challenging economic times, businesses are shuffling priorities and looking to cut expenses and streamline operations. This necessary adjustment is vital in this environment but tough decisions should also be smart decisions. Contracted security services are scrutinized like every other business expense; however, it is important to remain consistent with clients and stress the importance of guarding assets and property, especially during difficult periods. The smart decision is to continue to make the investment in contracted security services now to protect the long-term viability of personnel and capital assets.

Public safety initiatives suffer due to government budget cuts, and that means private companies must be proactive in securing their environments. Government agencies (police departments) attribute an increase in crime to the bad economy. For example, a Police Executive Research Forum survey found that 44% of agencies reported spikes in crimes linked to the economy. Of those, 39% reported increases in robberies, 32% in burglaries, and 40% in thefts. This report also found that 63% of the 233 agencies surveyed were bracing for funding cuts during the upcoming year.

This trend means that private security firms must fill the void. The visible services private firms offer - such as guarding facilities, parking lots, and employees - is an investment in safety. Reductions in security precautions will have an adverse effect on business and eventually increase costs. Additionally, there should be continued emphasis on ensuring that clients understand the true value of security and why the lowest bidder is not always the best service provider. The small investment in quality security services today can forestall the long-term expense of having to prematurely replace assets tomorrow. It is our job to make this message clear.

A quality-driven security company stays abreast of the latest in training requirements for security officers by reviewing and implementing the latest training trends and techniques. By establishing clear training protocols, security firms will improve retention and performance which inevitably provides better client services. Clients should expect their security providers to include in their training, at a minimum, communication and ethics; knowledge of company policies and procedures; medical and emergency response; use of force; harassment and liability; patrol techniques; workplace violence; physical security and access control. Responsiveness, quality supervision and leadership are paramount in the security business and should be expected - especially during difficult economic times.

Robert Tracy is vice president of security services at Summit Security Services, Inc., Uniondale, N.Y.