

# Promoting sector skills in security risk management

This report will assess whether it should be a prerequisite for those undertaking positions as security managers to have qualifications (vocational or educational) in security risk management.

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## Executive Summary

There are many organisations, both government and private, that offer courses in security management. A lot of these courses have amalgamated risk management into the course syllabus. This report will look at whether it is necessary for a security management practitioner to have a formal qualification in security risk management. It will discuss how having a security risk management qualification would aid in the management of security.

This report will also look at security management and the functions and responsibilities of a security manager and assess whether there is a need to have a formal grounding in security risk management.

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## Introduction

Security risk management is the processes of identify risks and protecting assets from those risks by applying mitigating factors (Talbot & Jakeman, 2009, p. 255). Security managers are responsible for the protection of an organisation's assets. These assets might include physical property, intellectual property, human life, reputation and more (Sennewald, 2013, p. 25). In order for a security manager to protect an organisation's assets it is essential to identify and priorities the risks and threats against these assets. This in effect is risk management.

This essay will analyse the function of the security manager and assess whether a grounded knowledge in risk management would benefit not only the security manager but also the organisation for which they work. This report will also analyse how adopting a risk framework when managing security will have many benefits. It will look at some tools and techniques used by risk managers and discuss how these tools and techniques can be used by security managers whilst striving to mitigating security risks. Lastly this report will discuss the challenge of profesionalising security. It will look at what constitutes a profession and whether or not gaining a formal qualification is necessary with regards to being a professional.

## Security Management

The function of a security manager is that of overall protection of assets of an organisation. This is a role that is measured by what does not happen rather than what does, meaning that the main objective is one of prevention (Sennewald, 2013, p. 25). In order to be successful in the prevention of threat against assets a security manager needs to have a clear idea of what the asset needs protection against. This requires the security manager to use knowledge, experience and a variety of tools and techniques to identify and prioritise all threats. A tool often used by security managers to identify threats is the security survey. The security survey is highly effective and is seen as the main tool used by many security professionals (Broder & Tucker, 2012, p. 45). The security survey is designed to identify and prioritise threats and risks against assets. This is very similar if not identical to the function of a risk manager in an organisation. It is not uncommon for a security manager to also have the responsibility of risk management in an organisation (Sennewald, 2013, p. 168).

Not only is it the security manager's responsibility to prevent adverse security risks from occurring, it is also important that this contributes to the organisation's bottom line. Security management should not be viewed solely as a loss preventative role but also as an opportunity for an organisation to identify areas for expansion or improvement. This ultimately means the objective of maximizing gain and minimizing loss (Talbot & Jakeman, 2009, p. 11). A security manager with experience only in security management but no formal qualification might very well be able to manage security risks, however it is no loss

for a security manager to have undertaken extra studies. These extra studies will provide an already experienced security manager with an arsenal of tools and techniques. The more a security manager has to draw on the less the likelihood of missing a potential threat.

The next section will discuss how adopting a risk management framework when managing security will bring a multitude of advantages and make managing security risk more holistic and comprehensive.

## Adopting a Risk Management Framework in Security Management

Security management is the overall protection of an organisation's assets, whether those assets are physical or not. This includes a range of activities from protecting an organisation's reputation through to the protection of executives whilst traveling. Risk management is defined as steps taken to manage risk, where risk is any event that may occur and the likelihood and consequence of that event occurring (International Organization for Standardization, 2009). These risks often, but not always, have a negative affect on the organisation. Therefore security management can be seen as a subset of risk management. The nature of security in that it is an ever changing and complex area of risk, coupled with the increase in regulations' and government means that practitioners should be aware of all tools and approaches available to identify, prioritize, and mitigate these risks. By adopting a risk management framework and making use of a variety of quantitative and qualitative assessment techniques a security manager can be confident that they have taking all steps possible to identify as many threats and risks as possible. This will include both external as well as internal security threats.

The approach of using a risk management framework whilst managing security risk has many advantages. Firstly it will assist in the implementation of security risk mitigation tools and procedures (BSI Standards, 2008, p. 13). It will also help develop a security risk conscious culture throughout the organisation, which in turn makes the training of personnel easier as trainees take ownership of security risk.

If a security manager takes on a risk framework they will inherit a process of security management that is common in risk management. The process consist of 5 steps which include identify, assess, respond, report and review (BSI Standards, 2008, p. 16). By adopting this process the security manager can be confident that they are approaching the management of security risk with a holistic and comprehensive plan of action.

There are a variety of different tools and techniques used by risk managers all across the world in a variety of different organisations. These tools and techniques can be adopted by security managers and used as part of their toolkits. One such tools that has been used by risk managers and adapted and used by security managers is that of the risk checklist and security survey respectively (Broder & Tucker, 2012, p.45; BSI Standards, 2008, p. 28). Another useful tool often used by risk managers is that of questionnaires. This is very useful as it gains the insight of many individuals, often from different departments. A questionnaire can be used by security managers' to identify security risks throughout the organisation. Where a security manager might be able to identify all security risks associated with access control, the use of a questionarre might help identify all security risk faced by payroll.

The next section will discuss the growing urge for security to be professionalised and how by gaining formal qualifications security managers can help in this cause.



## Security Management as a Profession

Security and the associated areas of responsibility, along with security's functions are often misunderstood (Sennewald, 2013, p. 28). The definition of security is also somewhat in a grey area, with the meaning differing depending on the function one undertakes as well as the environment it is performed in (Brooks, Corkill, & Griffiths, 2010, p.44; Pepper, 2003, p.1). Security management is a rapidly growing industry that now covers many other areas of an organisation such as risk management. With this extra territory comes extra responsibility. A security practitioner needs to realize that security is an ever-changing phenomenon, with a continuous barrage of new risks appearing.

Security managers have long been striving to become recognised as professionals. This would put them on par with the likes of doctors and lawyers. The word profession has been described by many academics as paid work that can only be performed by an individual with extensive knowledge, brought on through many years of studying, and vast experience (Brooks, Corkill, & Griffiths, 2010, p.46; Dingwall, 2008, p.12; Evetts, 2010, p.75; Pepper, 2003, p.1). In order for security management to become recognised as a profession individuals practicing security management need to be willing, no matter how experienced, to dedicate time and effort to achieved a formal qualification. It is, however, also important that security professionals as well organisations realize that the level of knowledge and experience that an individual possesses is of no use if that individual is unable to convey that knowledge and experience, or has the wrong attitude or ethics (Pepper, 2003, p.1).

## Conclusion

Security management in effect is the management of a risk area; that of security risk. In order to be successful in risk management it is essential that all risks are identified, prioritised, mitigated and reported. Security risk management is an ongoing process that is more like a living lifecycle. This is an extremely difficult task for a person who has not had any training or knowledge imparted as to how and why this is done. It is essential for any organisation that is to be successful. It is not only about the mitigation of negative risk that is imperative, but also about the need to identify potential for growth or exploitation. The advantages and need for a qualification in how to manage these risks is evident and important. This is not only important for the individual or organisation but for the future of security and the challenge of security management joining the likes of law and medicine in being a profession.

Pursuing a qualification or certification not only enhances the organisation but is also a great investment into a practitioner's future. This will show current and future employers the practitioner's will to advance their knowledge and willingness to continue learning. It will also promote a culture which encourages staff to undertake continuous training with the view of also wanting to advance themselves and the organisation. Although it is the opinion of the author that a formal qualification in security risk management should be a prerequisite for any person wishing to pursue this career, this does not take away from the importance of gaining experience in this field. It is all very well having a solid grounding in security risk management, however, should the practitioner not have any experience in

implementing this knowledge, doing it in a multiple level organisation would be extremely difficult.

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