



# Keeping watch

Vigilance over security can save you a headache and provide added peace of mind

By Corey Van't Haaff

If all you had to worry about were a wolf outside, huffing and puffing, then keeping your building secure would be easy. Instead, businesses have a multitude of threats against which to defend, and not all are coming through the front door.

Building security encompasses what you typically think of when you think about security: access control, theft and trespass

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**Audrey Ple,**  
vice-president of  
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deterrents, escorts for staff working late at night, security-alert or emergency procedures, perimeter checks and the familiar uniformed guard on foot patrol, in a vehicle or greeting visitors in the lobby.

“Our core competency is guarding,” says Audrey Ple, vice-president of marketing and new ventures, Commissionaires BC. “We were founded to provide meaningful work for ex-military and RCMP so we have a high calibre of employee.”

In addition to its guarding, security-consulting and technology offerings, Ple says Commissionaires BC provides peace of mind.

“We pride ourselves on taking away the headache of security. It’s not just the guard we provide, but a team of specialists behind the guard to take care of whatever comes up. We integrate as part of the organization. We’re thinking ahead. We implement the latest methods and procedures ... and train our guards to CGSB certification – a higher standard.”

Security also delivers a much more specialized and integrative approach, depending on the needs of a given business and its location and threat assessment.

Electronic security has a number of elements and can include a guard, but it focuses on securing the perimeter of the building (to control who gets in) and the vertical aspect of the building (to control who gets to what floor). Electronic security examines critical building functions such as elevators and telephones, fire-alarm signals and temperature sensors. It often discovers flooding. Integrating different elements and solutions provides a higher level of protection.

“MAPS – measurement and assessment of protection and standards – [allow]

people a way to measure where they sit, and where they should sit,” says Bruce Marginson, president of Fusion Security Inc. “It offers a quantifiable way of seeing where you are, where you should be and how to get there.”

It isn’t necessarily about spending more money, either. An assessment might show that a business is focusing too many resources on an area of small risk and would be better off redirecting that investment to an area offering more



**Bruce Marginson, president  
of Fusion Security**

appropriate protection for its particular needs and risks.

Risk management looks at risk avoidance (anticipating your risk), risk control (managing the acceptable level of risk), prevention programs (training, policies,



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**“You have to address what business they’re in. Is there a risk of violence? Of drunks? What liabilities does an employer face? You have to do threat analysis”**

– Mike Abbey, general sales manager, SimplexGrinnell

procedures, controls and compliance) and protection programs (physical security, locks, access control, lighting and alarms). The problem, though, is these all have to work together.

“It’s often piecemeal; people aren’t getting integration,” says Marginson.

He explains the “crime triangle” as consisting of victim, opportunity and perpetrator. There’s always a perpetrator, so a business must develop its physical security, make sure it’s working for best protection and educate tenants (the potential victims), in turn reducing the opportunity for crime.

“Fusion combines these different elements to make something new. We combine them so we have something unique, based on the building,” says Marginson, adding that the company also

works on the operational side of security, developing procedures for maintaining control of a security system.

“If you buy a card access, put it in and walk away, two years later there’s no control. People have come and gone [and taken their cards or passed them to other employees], and the asset is degraded. It comes to light when there’s a problem.”

A business has to consider what liabilities it faces; this can vary with the nature of the business, its assets and its location.

“You have to address what business they’re in. Is there a risk of violence? Of drunks? What liabilities does an employer face? You have to do threat analysis,” says Mike Abbey, general sales manager at SimplexGrinnell. “Building managers and owners and individual tenants have a stake in security.”

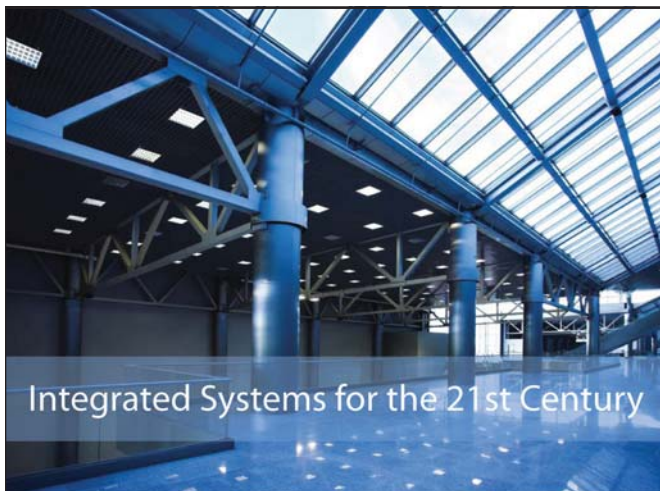
Abbey says that in assessing threats, a security company also looks at the history of the company’s risks and the work environment.

“The threat to a coal mine is very different than that of a CEO in Bentall Five.”

He also says there’s a lot of practical advice businesses should heed, rather than depending solely on security products like surveillance cameras. Convenience stores, for example, often aim their cameras at people coming in the front door. Problem is, most thieves wear caps or hoodies, covering their faces. Sure, the camera can tell you that you were just robbed by a human being, but that’s about it.

“If they installed it on the door frame coming out, they would see the person starting to remove their hoodie. As a person leaves, they often lift their head. It’s so simple, but it’s massively done incorrectly,” says Abbey.

Businesses don’t just need products. “We try to be different by being consultants, engineers, and then delivering the system. It’s the whole package. The design and engineering of the whole system has to come together.” ■



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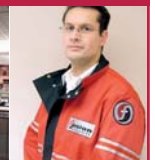
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