

## A Security Mindset

### **Amid new training requirements, it's often attitude that's the first hurdle**

*by Jodie Brown*

#### **Simple Surveillance Techniques**

How do we train employees to be responsible for security while making guests comfortable? We need to train how to watch, observe, survey, interact — and subtly surveil.

There are alternative methods to conspicuous surveillance:

- Install well placed security glass. It can be attractive and unobtrusive and is often lost on the customer. Show employees how to observe visitors by watching reflections in windows, mirrors, or other reflective material. People can be monitored without making them feel as if their privacy is violated.
- Watch for the unusual in people, such as furtive looks (no direct eye contact); body language (anger; hiding within themselves); unusual clothing (bulges in jackets, fabric that is out of season).
- Teach employees how to actively interact with visitors. If a customer or guest, particularly an unknown, has not approached an employee, the employee needs to engage contact and interact — not with a military challenge but with disarming conversation. The employee can then subtly study the stranger's mood and behavior at close range.

The fact that the events of 9/11 occurred by airplanes drives home how important aviation security is. The more paranoid among us have little problem seeing others as a real or potential threat. The rest of us have to exert some effort to remind ourselves that we are living in something of a state of siege.

In the past, airports and FBOs have resisted increased security because security by design drives inefficiencies in the business model. It creates one more checkpoint, one more delay, and one more frustrating hassle— for the customer. For the operator, it's an expense with little or no return on investment. However, if left lacking or lax, the resulting costs can be much more severe. As entities under siege, aviation businesses have no alternative but to increase security measures and train their employees to be "ready alert."

- **Hire for Attitude; Train for Skill**  
For heightened security measures, employees come first. They are the guardians of safety. Whether they maintain the runway, operate ground transportation, clean roads, greet customers, or fuel and service aircraft, they are our first line of defense, the eyes and ears of a secure operation. The responsibility to the flying customers and the public is to make sure our employees work under a new kind of consciousness. We must hire for it and train for it.

- **The New Consciousness**  
a new mindset is needed that is one of unstinting vigilance. Achieving this altered state will not occur overnight. But through discipline, leadership, example, and formal training, our frontline defense can become more acutely tuned to subtle signals that herald a threat.
- **Leadership and Example**  
Security consciousness begins at the top. How do we instill a sense of dedication, devotion, and sense of mission? We create a joint mission. In the most effective operations, a common cause, common purpose, and dedication to the mission contribute to the safety and security of the operation. CEOs must be present and enthusiastically endorse security training they ask of their employees.
- **Training**  
Law enforcement personnel, espionage agents, and some units of the armed forces go to specialized schools in order to learn how to see, sense, and feel things most of us would miss in our surroundings. Security training is an opportunity to strengthen mental skills most of us rarely exercise. Its goal is the enhancement of perception, the sharpening of the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and discrimination.

The techniques and tools used to enhance observation determine the difference between frustration or satisfaction, failure and success. In developing such perception, organization is paramount. One learns to prioritize and pigeonhole in ways he or she likely never thought possible. It is not the quantity but the quality of information that counts. By exploiting selective attention, one can make the most of the brain cells.

First, identify and anticipate the situations in which attention cannot be sustained. For such situations, create systems, procedures, and checkpoints to assist in capturing data.

Second, accept that attention is subjective and that personality, mood, environment, and cultural background all determine what a person records.

Understand that the interests and needs of individuals strongly affect their motivation to pay attention and concentrate. That is why our security and customer service training begin with the phrase: "We are at war. We must live with that fact or suffer the consequences."

In spontaneous performance in everyday situations, people will remember only ...

- 20 percent of what they hear;
- 30 percent of what they see;
- 50 percent of what they see and hear;
- 70 percent of what they say;
- 90 percent of what they do and say.

With the following basic principles, people are able to increase attention and retention:

- Observation training — selection, focusing and analyzing information to be recorded;
- The pause — taking time to be aware of what is going on around an individual;
- Relaxation — removing anxiety and tension to become more receptive;
- Selective attention — defining what one wants to pay attention to, for how long, and why;
- Image association — focusing on connections to see if perceptions make sense.

Can attention be improved?

Yes, by simply arousing curiosity through the techniques of observation training. By combining feelings and thoughts, emotions and perceptions, we then organize them by reasoning. People and things that are emotionally touching or interesting grab our attention and force us to concentrate.

Most of us are passive observers — particularly in our mundane, routine patterns of life. To enhance observation skills, ask: Do I like this or not? What is it that I like or not? This simple act develops selective attention — the art of focusing on a specific item or person.

Without motivation, the mind does not act. We are bombarded with information and sensory input. The brain needs direct commands in order to record information accurately. Therefore, we must determine what needs to be noticed and for how long. That is why we establish a Zone of Control.

### The Zone of Control

Whether or not a person is a pilot or parachutist, he or she may be familiar with the concept of "Zone of Control." Those old school checklist operators appreciate the value of constantly checking, touching, noting, adjusting everything within one's Zone of Control. Curiously, when placed behind a counter or operations desk as in a customer service or maintenance capacity, employees may abandon the Zone of Control (ZOC) approach and put up walls — walls of nonobservance, no interaction, no communication.

How often do we observe a customer pacing a carpet or sitting literally feet from an employee with no interaction whatsoever? In many cases, if customers are not specifically asking the agent something, the agent is enjoying a break in having to deal with them.

"The key to security is teaching our employees to engage everyone and everything constantly in their ZOC," says Dr. Derrin Smith, onetime president of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers' (AFIO) Rocky Mountain Chapter. Dr. Smith spent much of his career focusing on technology programs and operations of the intelligence community. "The ZOC is everything that the employee touches and impacts from locked doors and secure areas to a person walking across their line of sight."

### Strategy

1. Clearly define the zones of control for each employee.
2. Identify a "chain" of command in the event of something to report.
3. Define whom they pass the zone to when they're on "down time."

### The Art of Small Talk

By the simple act of conversation, intelligence officers can often find more information than they do by "cloak and dagger" methods. The best agents are vivacious, outgoing, and can strike up a conversation with a stranger at a bus depot. Law enforcement officers, intelligence officers, and security officers engage people and draw them out.

People love to talk about themselves. They enjoy sharing stories about themselves (where they found the great whatever, etc.). Safe topics such as the weather, a ball game, or traffic can give one a sense of how a person is acting, reacting, or thinking. The key to enhanced security is teaching employees to engage everyone and everything constantly within their ZOC. Alertness is an absolute necessity.

### About the Author

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