



THE STATE OF SECURITY MANAGEMENT

A BASELINE PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND EMPIRICAL STUDY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2022

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This ASIS Foundation study identifies themes and findings that set a baseline for the current state of the security profession and identifies how the security sector is evolving and changing.



Much has been written about the security industry, security risks and the how-to of security.

Despite the titles of many textbooks, college courses and training programs, there has been little in terms of a deep dive into the very distinctive realm of security management. This study is intended to provide a baseline for the state of security management as of the end of 2020. It views the topic through the lens of a senior security executive or chief security officer in a public or private sector organization of any size or type. The study assumes a global perspective and considers world events over the past two years as well as ways in which the security risk management field has evolved.

During the process of this study, our intent was to sideline discussion or inclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic as much as possible. Our team wanted to gather data based on as normal a condition as possible for the survey and interviews. We quickly learned that was impossible. Real-world events such as widespread civil unrest, economic calamities, natural disasters, and the pandemic were actually reshaping some aspects of security management perception and practice as we watched. This fact truly demonstrated in real time one of our key findings: Security executives and management professionals must embrace change (and do it quickly).

Overall, however, we found that the current state of security management is secure and positive. Despite this fact, as might be expected, there are some concerns and challenges within the profession that need to be addressed. This study seeks to highlight both the positives and negatives of the current situation, acting as a snapshot in time.

Based on the information gathered from these sources and our analysis, we developed eight key findings, as well as four noteworthy themes which are important, but don't rise to the level of a key finding.

Our Key Findings are:

- People matter (and by nature, security management is a people function as well as a business function)
- Security executives and management professionals must embrace change
- The security management field lacks a clear definition
- Parochialism in the security management field is a challenge
- Enterprise Security Risk Management (ESRM) is catching on and considered viable
- Security professionals need to broaden their perspectives global threats
- The security profession's brand and reputation must be enhanced
- Security management metrics are an increasingly essential tool

Through the noteworthy themes that emerged from the study, we take a brief look at a few issues related to the perception and practice of security management today. Among them are the gender gap within the profession, which is understandable in some ways, but not in others. Then there is the proverbial pink elephant in the room: the common practice of hiring former military or law enforcement members into senior corporate security positions, a practice which has pros and cons. We also note the trend

toward security services providers diversifying their market as well as their service offerings to remain relevant and efficient in terms of their business models. Finally, we note that our survey results revealed, in some respects, a divergence between the views of English-speaking and Spanish-speaking participants. These four themes add to the deeper understanding of security management as a profession and some of the issues that influence both the perception and practices of the field. Each of the themes lends

Key Findings



Noteworthy Themes

- ✓ Gender Disparity is a Concern
- ✓ Sourcing of Security Professionals is a Concern
- ✓ Security Industry is Diversifying
- ✓ View Differ by Language and Culture

itself to further study or research, and this report can serve as a launching point for such efforts.

The report concludes with 14 recommendations meant to be actionable steps which are addressed to a variety of audiences including security professionals themselves, employers, academics and researchers, C-Suite executives, and related and allied professional associations. The recommendations focus on areas such as education and certification, brand and reputation management for the profession, the need to expand the scope of risk assessments and other management thinking, increasing the use of data analytics and improved metrics for decision making, further integration of ESRM, and developing marketing strategies to bolster the security management profession.

The results of this baseline study will be useful as a standalone as well as in forming a substantial basis for periodic revisits. Such periodic revisits may update or expand on the issues key to the state of security management, and may also offer an opportunity to focus on specific subjects or challenges of particular interest over time.

Key Findings Infographic

The infographic above summarizes the results of the study. We identified eight key findings regarding the state of the security management field, and four noteworthy themes which also deserve special mention. A description of each key finding and noteworthy theme is provided in the body of this report. In summary security management is a collaborative effort. The individual is not meant to carry the burden on his or her shoulders, but rather serve as a trusted advisor and consultant to other executives and key decision makers throughout the organization.

Methodology

Our study team's methodology included an online survey, interviews of 10 energetic thought leaders in the profession, a literature search, and a special effort to seek definitions for the term "security management."

Coincident with the launch of our literature search, our team began developing a survey meant to be completed by mid-level to senior security executives and professionals (including chief security officers) in both public and private sector organizations. The survey audience spe-

cifically excluded security service or product providers, vendors, integrators, and others generally considered to be part of the security industry or services sector.

A pilot survey was distributed to 20 active ASIS International members who fit the profile of the intended audience. They were asked to complete the survey and offer feedback on its format and content. Thirteen security professionals responded to the survey and shared their perspectives. Based on their feedback, the survey questions and format were modified slightly, and a final survey tool consisting of 21 questions established. The survey included both demographic and substantive questions. Demographic questions allowed the team to analyze responses and seek correlation based on such distinctions as industry sector, reporting level, geographic region, ASIS member status, and gender. The substantive questions asked about the challenges faced by security executives, skills they seek, management tools they use, who they collaborate with, and their views on enterprise security risk management (ESRM). The survey was offered both in English and in Spanish in order to accommodate participants, but also to determine whether any significant differences might be found by comparing the results. A total of 545 security professionals completed the survey using a commercial online survey platform.

To complement the survey input, our team also conducted one-on-one (online) interviews with 10 selected thought leaders in the security management field. Interview questions were similar in nature to the survey questions, but offered the opportunity for open-ended answers and the sharing of more detailed thoughts. The thought leaders offered great insight and added context to the results obtained via the survey.

