

SASMA Portal 2011

Everyone likes a specialist ... - Dave Johansen

[Dave Johansen](#)

[Security Veteran Blog](#)



Everyone likes a specialist. We want to know that the people doing our brake-jobs, or our roof repairs, or teaching or kids is a genuine expert in their field.

Also...

Everyone like a “MacGuyver” on their team. A person who can really do it all. A jack of all trades, especially when the pressure is on.

Do you only have one vertical market slice?

In the security world, technologies have advanced, changed and merged. It is becoming very difficult to offer only one type of service to the customer and still get enough business to thrive. Security is being merged with information technology. Now businesses want their IT departments to also handle physical security in addition to network security.

What will you do, send your security people to IT certification classes?

Some of us in physical security realize that there will always be the need for companies that are specialists in physical security. Those skills are not taught in network certification classes. However, there is enough disruption in our market that the remaining players really need to change with the times. They need to add other services to their portfolio in order to stay in business. This is not as difficult as people might think, and I will give you an exercise which will help you see other services/products to add.

If you can arrange a visit to a type of building that you normally wouldn't have as a client and make a meeting with the security people there. Introduce yourself and make friends and ask for the grand tour. While walking around the site and looking at their security apparatus, Ask plenty of questions but also look. Look at everything and think to yourself, "How could I put a security product there?", or, "I could improve this system if I added XYZ". Try think as if you were the project manager and you were in charge of the whole security operation. What items would you want installed? Maybe it would help to think that a member of your family works in this place. Does that help motivate you to think more critically about the security in this building?

In my opinion, good physical security is an art-form. You can use any style you like to paint this solution. I like to use several styles in the same piece.



Here are some quick ideas on building site evaluations. I employ different methods to a site evaluation. I do walk-throughs with 3-5 different staff members separately. I like to use one security manager, one safety person and 1-2 others from other departments like operations or maintenance. This gives a wide variety of opinions.

Next I like to do a checklist using my physical security evaluation forms. These are available from different certifications or from different schools. Many are similar. I have several to draw from.

After that, I like to use a few more creative methods to get information. One way is to play the bad guy. What is valuable in this building? How would I steal it? What if I only need to destroy it? What if I am a kidnapper or a terrorist or a disgruntled ex-employee? What are my decisions? Where is my path? What do I try to do?

Next, I will try to think like an employee on the inside. Maybe I want to take something or maybe I want to hurt my fellow employees? What would I do and where would I go? What if I am involved in corporate espionage? How will I try to remove proprietary information or sabotage company efforts?

When I'm done with those notes, I try to think about the visitors to the building and I switch into "lobby management mode". Lobby management is a whole different post subject but for today's post, let's just say that the lobby is the most crucial place to protect because of the density of people, and the continual movement of everyone and their packages, bags, and visitors.

The list of items you just made? That's what you should consider adding to your offering. You started with CCTV only and now you are thinking about...visitor management solutions or biometrics or smart cards for access control.

By getting out of your comfort zone and opening your mind to a new thought process, you will be able to understand what new items your customers will need. Also, you will be getting new customers because you offer a wider variety of products and services. Before, you had stuff that was interesting to 5 out of 100 people and now you will have stuff that interests 15 out of that same 100 people.

There are other benefits also. By becoming a more varied integrator, you have the ability to contact your existing customer base and tell them you now offer XYZ products as well as the reliable stuff from before.

On a side note, there are quite a few security magazines out there. Some are ok and some are really useful. I like the ones that deal with security products specifically. I take inspiration from some of those ideas. Here is another thought that works well. Get the trade magazines

for the customers you serve. Most of the time they are free. If you want to sell security into the construction field, it will only help you to understand their business and see what trends are important enough to write about. Challenge yourself you apply a security solution to each article you read. Perhaps you will find yourself becoming an expert in a new security market!

Dave Johansen

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