



## TRAINING THE SECURITY OFFICER ? A MUSEUM'S SPECIAL NEEDS

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Many museums are like small cities. They contain a variety of specialty establishments, from their retail store to their restaurant, and everything in between. I worked in a large museum that occupied four city blocks, contained four auditoriums, a professional Broadway-type theater, a slide library, two book libraries, a restaurant, two cafeterias, four loading docks, and a variety of industrial operations such as a carpentry shop, paint shop, and plumbing/roofing shop. There were two mail rooms, a mail order sales operation, and art studios assigned to artists. The conservation lab had high tech. scientific equipment and radioactive materials. The fifteen major storage vaults contained perhaps a Billion dollars in stored art and artifacts. On some days, 10,000 people visited our million plus square feet of space. Our campus included a college that conferred degrees through the Masters level. We had a dozen or more cash handling locations and an alarm system with a thousand points of annunciation.

Here's a trivia question for you. What's the most frequently visited tourist attraction in Indiana? The Colts, you say? Guess again. It's the Children's Museum of Indianapolis. And the most frequently visited attraction



in Washington, D.C.? A museum again.

Is there any wonder that the typical security officer and his or her supervisors must master a broader range of security skills than security people in more specialized environments. Add to this the "soft" environment of the museum, and the need for better public relations skills becomes evident.

When I hired museum security officers, I knew that I didn't have the luxury of hiring a gruff old pro for the loading dock and a sweet young elementary school teacher for the children's gallery. Like most environments, I needed an interchangeable and cross trained crew. Both had to be in tune with the need for pleasant but firm enforcement.

Museums are, in a way, special security situations. While many assets are in vaults, most of the really valuable and important items are hung on walls for all to see, approach and "experience." This often means getting really close and examining the color and texture without the inhibition of even a piece of protective glass over

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the canvas or barrier between the viewer and the art. Similarly, museums are academic environments and an armed camp atmosphere is not acceptable by definition. Often, students and interns need access to the collection during after-hour periods or in vaults. Visiting curators come thousands of miles to obtain special access and study privileges. And much of the collection is in some way at special risk. Some, like many Native American pieces, have religious and cultural significance where the ancestors of the artists feel that the objects are stolen or insensitively displayed. At any given point in time a large amount of art or artifacts will be politically sensitive like the Iranian art that needed special protection during the hostage crisis or the Warhol portrait of Mao that was a regular target of vandals in the 1970's. And of course, such items as nudes elicit the worst in some people and become the target of protest and vandalism. Art and artifacts are at risk in many ways and we must be prepared to provide adequate protection.

Museum security officers must have a broad basis of knowledge about the overall concept of "protection" such as basic understanding of the conservation needs of their collection. Museums are strict "Don't Touch" zones and every museum security officer knows this. But I recall being called to a gallery only to find indentations from a ball point pen on the top of a \$100,000 table. A careful examination revealed that the marks were the fault of a security officer who used the table as he filled out his daily patrol sheet. The report

he wrote was clearly visible on top of the now much less valuable table.

Every aspect of museum security has its unique properties. When the fire department was called, our personnel swung into action with each person playing an important role in the overall picture. A portion of the crew maintained vigilance since a diversion would be an ideal way to cover a theft. One went to the front revolving doors, broke them open, and waited for the firefighters with floor plans in hand. Other officers took control of elevators for paramedic use and still others responded to magnetic delay locked doors which release completely in any fire alarm. But unlike any other type of organization, some officers took their places along the path of the fire hose, using their bodies to keep the heavy water-filled hoses from whipping against the delicate legs of fragile million dollar furniture and sculpture. Others went to special gallery closets and retrieved special tools needed to remove pictures from the walls and plastic sheets to cover them from water sprayed on the fire. Still others ran to the children's galleries and led the kids to safety, while others retrieved master keys from special key vaults in the control room so they could open the fifteen major art storage vaults in preparation for evacuation of the precious assets.

I think that you may now understand the extent of the training needs of museum security officers. They have a serious responsibility, since the institutions they serve often contain more assets than any bank in the city, with most of their assets



hanging on walls secured only by a screw or Plexiglas cover. And visitorship can be very high. The 1995 Monet exhibition in Chicago drew 800,000 visitors to that temporary show alone. Yet museums and their protection officers must present a friendly, non-intimidating appearance. They must enforce rules of decorum with equal diplomacy when violated by a nine year old third grader or a 90 year old blue haired lady. The nine year old could be turned off for life on the museum experience if the contact is mishandled by the security officer, and the blue haired lady might leave her inheritance elsewhere just because she was offended by a rude officer.

The largest art theft in American history occurred when two men, dressed as police officers, came to the door of a Boston museum and asked to enter. They said that they had a complaint of a disturbance on the premises and they were admitted by the officer who believed them to be police. They quickly took over the building and robbed it of a dozen works of art valued in excess of \$200 million.

The second largest art theft in American history occurred when a curator improperly stored hundreds of millions of dollars worth of art in a general storage closet keyed to a lock issued to over 80 people including custodians. A dishonest employee stole three of the Impressionist paintings worth \$75 million dollars (in 1979) by shipping them to himself in a crate, but was convicted on testimony of a security officer who saw him near the theft site before his shift had

begun and made a note in his notebook as he was trained to do.

The third largest art theft in American history occurred when a thief, using high tech means, defeated the phone lines in such a way as to confound even the FBI and other professional investigators. The theft could have been prevented because the museum's security officer was notified by the central monitoring station of irregularities on the phone line, but failed to recognize them as a theft in progress because everything appeared to be OK when he visually checked the building.

People kill for \$15 from the local convenience store but we assume they will not attack a museum with billions of dollars in assets using the best skills and resources available. Those of us who know better, provide as much training in as diverse areas as we can afford to provide. Much of it evolves around the concept of common sense. But even then, we often fail.

One museum trained its people so well on how to be visitor services oriented that the guard allowed a "mother" to wheel her "child" out of the museum in a stroller. The real child was actually carried out via another exit by the father, while the mother departed with a precious Greek bust carefully wrapped in a blanket to look like a sleeping baby. Good visitor services oriented officers would never wake a sleeping baby, so the theft was not detected.

In spite of some failures, many



museums are quite successful in training their guards. The first thing they do is look at the training audience and develop a training style that matches the audience. John Chuvala, frequent author in Security Management, and professor at Western Illinois University, has written on the subject of adult learning techniques, and his video tape "Training Adult Security Officers" is used by over 200 museums and many other security trainers. Chuvala maintains that you don't train adults like you train kids. And since many museums (and other security forces) actively recruit older people with life experience and common sense, it is important to teach them in a manner conducive to adult learning. Interactive CD ROM training for a 65 year old security officer might not be the best method of achieving training success. But interactive CD ROM training might be just what is required for an 18 year old college student hired for a summer art exhibition. Chuvala discusses the ways older adults learn and how they might differ from kids and younger adults and helps apply this knowledge to the development of the training program.

Museums are also communities with a greater degree of cultural diversity than many other environments. The need for multi-lingual security officers can only be satisfied by hiring those who are multi-lingual since we can rarely afford the luxury of language training. This means we end up with a lot of people in our training programs who do not regard English as their primary language and this complicates training. Similarly, other aspect of diversity also complicate training. We can no longer

reject disabled applicants for gallery attendant jobs if the job is rarely demanding or for control room and dispatch jobs if the applicant can do the work as well as other applicants. In fact, museums encourage diversity. We must develop training programs that meet the needs of the institution and not try to make the institution conform to what is convenient for us.

When a museum receives a proposal from a contract service that provides training for their officers, museums usually consider them untrained. That's how inadequate this basic, often state-mandated training is for the museum environment. Most museums require a curriculum that is museum specific in addition to the training provided under state law or by the guard service. A number of contract services are using pre-packaged museum specific security training to meet our needs or are developing museum specific training themselves.

"The Suggested Guidelines in Museum Security" published by the American Society for Industrial Security mandates that only the smallest museums can get by with one full day of training. All large museums, or smaller museums with high value or important assets, must provide a full 40 hour curriculum.

Most curriculums, like one I developed for use in museums, include basic topics geared specifically for museums: Access Control, Parcel Control, Posts and Patrols, Fire Prevention and Protection, and Dealing with Alarms. But they also include specialized training, too. Most



museum have extensive burglar alarm systems, far more extensive than those found in other businesses. And a daily walk test is imperative. "How To Walk Test Your Burglar Alarm System" is a widely used video that teaches security officers how alarms can be defeated and how they can detect such breaches. And "Calling Emergency Services" is a subject that explains to museum security officers exactly what to expect when they call the police or fire department. I realized early in my career that when under pressure, officers often forget to dial for an outside line when calling 911, and when they do get through, they sometimes hang up before the dispatcher can extract vital information from them. In a million square foot highly secure museum with ten foot high, ten inch thick bronze doors, it is important that the firefighters respond to the correct door, not the one that their axes are helpless against. When English is the officer's second language, it is important that they be able to communicate calls for assistance perfectly. And it helps if they know every inch of the museum including collection storage and the insides of vaults.

Museums offer a strong dose of public relations training and usually provide hands on role playing training that deals with the proper implementation of the policies and procedures of the institution. After all, in a quiet museum, the visitor will probably have first and most significant contact with the security officer so the impression of the institution depends upon the impression the officer makes in enforcing the rules. No one likes to

be told not to touch, not to get so close, not to carry a backpack, not to take an oversized parcel into the building, etc., but when told properly, the rules can be easier to accept.

All of the above special subjects are given to officers in addition to the traditional training programs provided to most officers like "Authority and Jurisdiction" and state the mandated programs.

When I was in charge of security at a major museum, I found that the greatest problem we faced was the drain on resources due to the need for constant training and re-training. I provided a full week of intensive classroom training for each new recruit in his or her first month, then placed the officer on post with a senior officer until fully oriented. Following this, the trainer visited each post each day to identify training needs and provide ongoing training. Supervisors also visited each post for the same reason. But few museums can afford to provide this level of training since pay is relatively low and turnover is so high. Training is constant and occurs at various levels simultaneously.

When I became a security consultant to museums I was regularly asked to develop a training program that made training less labor intensive. Smaller museums that lacked a full time training officer could not afford to dedicate someone--often the Director of Security--full time to training. Video was the answer. The result was the Horizon Institute Basic Museum Security Officer Training Program used by several hundred major museums. It



includes fourteen videos and a 480 page instructor's guide that helps make basic training as mechanized or as personalized as the trainer wishes. It also includes an ongoing roll call training module and an on job training module. It's manual allows smaller museums to simply sit a recruit down in front of a VCR if that is all they can afford or to provide intensive instructor assisted training in the ideal. In addition, instructor's materials are on computer diskette and can be easily modified and printed out. The key is the streamlining of training to permit more training to fit into fewer hours with less effort and time devoted by the trainer and managers. It's not perfect but in a declining economy it is a concept that works. Other industries can do the same, although it is economically unfeasible for any one company or institution to produce this much video training with a typical budget. But video can be used effectively by anyone with recurring training needs.

But the basis for any good museum security officer training program is identifying what information needs to be transferred to the officer being trained. Therefore, when I consult with a museum for the first time, I look at their policy and procedure manual to see if it defines in detail the security policies for the institution, and at the training manual to see if it defines how the policies will be implemented. Most often I find that there are no manuals. As a result, there is no information to impart in training. Every good training program covers two broad areas: security policies and procedures and

practitioner skills which tell officers how to implement the policies. When a client has a good policy manual, the training program can evolve easily. At least there is something to train. When there is no manual, the trainer is not well equipped to train.

Museums are also big on on-going training because museums are changing environments. Exhibits are here today, and tomorrow the space is under renovation. Next week there will be an access list, and people not involved with installing the next art exhibit will not be admitted to the space. Each day most major museums provide a 30 minute roll call training program that includes visits by curators and conservators on everything from art appreciation to art handling techniques. Officers who appreciate what they protect can do the job with greater care and attention to detail. And officers who know how to handle art properly in a disaster are less likely to harm it when carrying it from the burning building.

Roll call training is no easy thing to establish. It often involves obtaining funds to begin the work day 30 minutes earlier than normal and obtaining permanent use of a facility large enough to house the roll call training daily. Sometimes unions must be involved in the decision to establish a roll call period.

Most major museums use roll call training to introduce officers to disabled persons, diversity groups, and educators who expose them to the problems of the disabled, minorities,



and children or adult students. They learn how to distinguish the copy from the real painting when the student copyist carries it through the building, or the reproduction from the real Ming vase when the customer carries it out of the museum's gift store. Of course, other topics are introduced in roll call training and topics are presented three days in a row so that every officer, regardless of his or her days off, is trained.

Some museums also offer on-job-training as an ongoing refresher program. Many develop a long list of topics, put it on diskette, and update it as required. Each officer is trained by a senior trainer following the same curriculum. Each senior officer signs off that the training occurred, and the trainee signs that he was given the training and understands it. Such a signature is required for each and every one of the hundred or so topics in the program as evidence that training occurred. Exercises, like locating every fire extinguisher in the building, learning how to tell if any need service, and learning what to do and who to notify if a problem is discovered with an extinguisher, constitute just one of the hundred of topics in a typical OJT program.

The most important aspect of most museum training programs is the daily visit by the training officer while on post. A training officer who spends more than three hours per day in the office would not last long in my shop. At least half the day must be spent in actual training, and the most important training of all occurs when the trainer meets the security officer on post and

poses a question such as, "What would you do if . . .?" A good training officer also spends time each day with the first line supervisors, training them, and talking to them about their role in identifying training needs and actually training or communicating with the officers. After all, the most important person in any security operation is the first line supervisor. Without good first line supervision, your security program is doomed to failure.

When I was Executive Director of Protection Services for a major museum, I met daily at 9:00 am with my training officer. She and I discussed "things in general" and I felt she were totally in tune with my feelings about how policies and procedures should be implemented. I was so sure of this that we joked that if I ever wanted to know what I felt about something, I would ask her. She left my office and went to roll call training where she entertained questions from the officers about common sense issues. It was only through daily contact with me and daily contact with the officers that she could remain totally in tune with both the policies of the museum and the training needs of the officers. Whether she was discussing incidents that occurred the day before in our museum or dissecting a recent theft or incident in another institution, she made every effort to teach both skills and common sense.

Finally, museums must focus training on their supervisory staff. Museum security officers simply can't know everything. But they must know that when they don't know the right answer, they should call for a



supervisor who either does know or has the common sense or conceptual understanding of our needs to provide an answer.

Many museums are using "Common Sense Supervision", a best selling book by Roger Fulton, and a video by the same name that expands on the book in an extensive interview with Fulton. It comes as close to imparting common sense as any program can. And since no museum security program can be successful without properly trained and properly motivated first line supervisors, this training is crucial. I especially like this book and assisted Horizon in making a video from it because it has all of the elements of a good security supervisor program. It is short, has large print, and is broken down into small easy to digest chunks. Fulton took concepts like "you can't drink with the people you supervise", said why in one paragraph (it is hard to discipline the people you are friends with and sooner or later there will be a conflict of interest) and follows up with a quote from a famous person such as a sports star or statesman that illustrates the point. Short, sweet and to the point. The video added the missing element--pictures. And you don't even have to read!

In 1984 I hired three hundred museum security officers for a major traveling exhibition. On the first day of training they couldn't find their way to the rest room let alone be able to direct museum visitors to one of the 20 or so rest rooms in the million square foot facility. The nearest fire

exit was beyond their current level of knowledge and only a few had ever handled a walkie talkie. None had ever used a fire extinguisher. Of the 300 polled, only five had ever even been in an art museum and every other one who had been in any type of museum said that their sole experience was during a junior high field trip, usually at a science or natural history museum. Directing someone to the Post Impressionists would be a major learning challenge. Stopping an underworld art heist was a skill that would need a little work.

Motivation is an important part of museum security training. Our people wanted to learn and they wanted to be part of our security force. It was always a comfortable seventy-two degrees and fifty percent relative humidity in our galleries. No museum security officer had ever been shot on duty or even received callused hands from physical work here. There is a certain serenity being amongst that beauty, and the typical museum visitor is relaxed and friendly. My people liked working here and wanted to do a good job. All I had to do is convince them that the whole atmosphere was a diversion and the helicopters and repelling commandos would descend the walls momentarily if my officers didn't stay alert and attentive. They had to know how art thefts occur and how they are prevented. They had to know how to say no with a smile on their faces and when to press the panic button in anticipation of an attack. I had to convince them that the quiet and serenity was their enemy and that they would have to really out think the



master art thief if they were to achieve their goal of preserving the irreplaceable assets in their care so that their ancestors a thousand years from now could come enjoy the treasures in these very same galleries.

About the Author: Steve Keller, CPP is a security consultant in Ormond Beach, Florida. He is formerly Executive Director of Protection Services with the Art Institute of Chicago and has written and produced over forty training videos and several manuals. His training materials are used by over 500 museums on every continent except Antarctica. One video, "Museum Security: The Guard's Role" was the recipient of the first place award in the ASIS video and poster contest.

#### SIDEBAR #1

How basic is basic training? One program in Keller's basic museum security officer training program is simply called "Post and Patrols". Keller learned long ago that people are not born knowing what to do on the job. Even career military people or retired police need instruction on standing post or patrolling the museum's gallery. "Post and Patrols", one of the twenty minute "span of attention" modules in the overall program, shows security officers on post. "It was important that new officers have role models and know what we expect", said Keller. "Concepts basic to us are not basic to them. Patrol briskly and randomly. Look alert. Don't leave post unless relieved. Look people in the eye. Greet them personally. Be observant. These are all things that must be imparted."

Keller noted that he once responded to the theft of a picture in a museum and when he questioned the guard about whether she might have seen a specific suspicious person seen earlier by another guard, her reply was, "I don't look for that type of thing". She had never been told what to do. It was assumed that she knew.

#### SIDEBAR #2

The first video training program Keller produced was "Museum Security: The Guard's Role". This 22 minute program is used by hundreds of museums worldwide. It depicts about a dozen museum security officers performing their day to day duties in a documentary format. Several years ago when the Art Institute of Chicago needed to hire 300 temporary officers for a major exhibition, the museum used this award winning video for an equally important purpose. The Human Resources Department was spread so thin that they couldn't do the recruiting themselves so they hired contract personnel recruiters. Since many came from environments where security officers were merely warm bodies slightly under 72 years of age, all recruiters were shown the video and told to hire officers like the ones in the video--capable, articulate, multi-racial and multi-cultural who made a good appearance and projected the appropriate image. No actors were used. All were real security officers from the museum's staff. Sometimes the security department needs to train staff outside the security department to get the job done right.