Security Operations Management

by Robert D. McCrie

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Reviewed by Jim Calder

What a fine addition to extant textbook resources in the field of security management! Bob McCrie is well situated to write this quality product, particularly in view of his worldwide network of security contacts, his extensive discussions with security directors the world over, his editorship of *Security Newsletter*, and his academic work in security management at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. This book demonstrates the depth of insight that comes from true concentration on the engine of professional security operations—a management team and how it conducts its business.

The table of contents lets you know immediately that the book is aimed at a business-minded audience, and probably an advanced student in a security course. Part I contains six chapters on managing security operations: knowing the environment; the evolution and priorities of security functions; staffing; training; supervisory support and motivation; and employee appraisal practices. Chapters 7 through 11 (Part II) focus on the author's selection of special issues in the management process: discipline and discharge; accounting controls and budgeting; personnel-intensive programs; physical and technology-centered programs; and leadership. Two appendices are included to assist student reflection on professional ethics and standards and on the goals of the security field.

Noteworthy is the attention the book gives to applying theories to business management practices in the security context. McCrie opens by recognizing an inherent paradox in effective security management: that is, while successful organizations thrive on creative processes to affect product innovations, as well as on production and marketing efficiencies, the administration of a security program can introduce an atmosphere of stringent rules and orderly processes. Thus, a greater focus on security may drive significant restrictions on creative interactions and innovative processes. Senior management at Enron, for example, rationally may have traded impositions of security checks for unrestrained and costly (as it turned out) freedoms. In the case of Enron, the proverbial henhouse was rife with foxes confident that audit and security management functions presented no threats to the discovery of their fiscal chicaneries.

McCrie's book contains a good mix of best practices and of critical thinking about the difficult and contradictory conditions encountered by professionals. It is packed with standard management principles, but case studies and data are also richly represented. Instructors will enjoy this book, especially since section headers and information from the classic literature suggest new lecture topics. In a future edition I hope the author will include more discussion and case studies tied to white-collar crime, to the role of security in the social responsibilities of corporations, and to the economic and political factors that drive modern security functions. Security management in the post-9/11 and post-Enron eras, for example, will be increasingly impacted by probes pursued in political and economic communities. Will security professionals be invited to participate in these probes? Will they make significant contributions, or will they be marginalized bystanders? What will they defend? What will they downplay?

My two favorite chapters are 'Staffing to Meet Protective Goals' and 'Accounting Controls and Budgeting'. In the former the author emphasizes the critical nature of pre-employment screening, the complexities of personnel investigations, and the array of pre-employment integrity testing. He is sensitive to the tricky path between pressures to hire people from tight labor markets and pressures to uphold standards of employee integrity. In 'Accounting...' I like Dr McCrie's review of basic accounting principles and budgeting practices for security programs. References to the role of internal and external auditors, and to cases of corporate embezzlement, offer students fecund research possibilities.

I recommend this book to all security management instructors and to all operational security managers.

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