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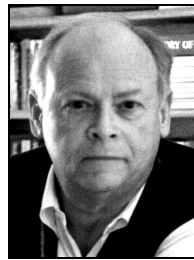
## *Security equipment: sooner or later?*

**E**arly in my career (when the earth was young), I made a surprising discovery: “Nobody really wants to buy what I sell.”

That doesn't mean that they don't buy it. It just means it is not on their wish list like the new car or the trip around the world. Consequently, they put off the decision (or at least the planning) to make an investment in security equipment and services as long as they can. It usually takes an “event” to make them think about security.

In the case of existing businesses, the “event” that exposes the need for security measures may be: missing office equipment; actual burglaries; threats; increased value of equipment or intellectual property; incidents nearby; new regulations (HIPAA); or just an increased awareness of the risks they are facing on a daily basis.

In the case of a new facility, the “event” is the new facility with new furnishings, new equipment, new location, all representing a larger investment, increased pride and a sense of responsibility for this new facility, its contents and its staff. They may decide to do “something,” but with all the other decisions, permits, contracts, meetings with architects, vendors, etc., they put off security considerations until everything else is handled or sometimes, until after they take possession of the



**Larry C. Giuliani**

President,  
CornerStone Security, Inc.

building. If the cost of the project escalates, they sacrifice on the unbudgeted security measures which were not included in the original plan.

Regardless of the reason for having security, since they really don't want to invest in security measures they often erect artificial conditions or standards. I frequently hear, “I just want a simple system.” As it turns out, “simple” has more to do with how easy it is to write the check than learning how to operate the system. In addition to their resistance to spending money to protect their property, etc., they may feel somewhat “immune” or an “unlikely target” so they want to spend as little as possible. In some cases, the consequence of spending too little is significantly higher than spending too much. Unlike insurance which offers help in recovery, prudent security measures have a preventative benefit, and sometimes even an employee productivity benefit.

My advice is to include your security professional in the initial planning for your building. It can pay off significantly. In one of our installations, we received the order late in the game. Had we been involved early, we could have saved the client nearly \$12,000 on

their final cost of doing access control on seven doors. In another case, I was included in the planning for a church building project. There was one door that was planned a certain way. Since I knew of the potential costs of controlling access for that door, I made a simple suggestion that saved at least \$2000 on the door contract and another \$1000 - \$1500 on our contract, with no sacrifice in functionality of that door.

In another situation a local firm, in building their new facility, did include security in their planning including integrated locking devices, for a cosmetically perfect finish. However, the security company didn't show up on time, and then sent a separate crew to finish the job. That crew knew nothing about the original design and installed additional locks on the doors. The doors work, but the expense of those concealed locks on the owner's part was wasted money, and they didn't get the “finish” they paid for.

Not to disparage architects, or general contractors, but neither the architect nor the general contractor offered any suggestions to help the church out, nor did they prevent the waste of the \$12,000 in the above examples. To be fair, it was not their job. It was my job! In one case we were included early in the process and in the other, we were not. As usual, “sooner” was better than “later.”