

# Four Strategies to Fill the Resource Gap

Over the last several decades, security professionals have watched risks increase due to factors such as globalization and technology. At the same time, shrinking budgets have limited access to security tools. Dealing with the resulting resource gap is a challenge for all security professionals today, but they can close this gap by focusing on four key levers: talent, technology, information and partnerships.



By Brad Brekke

**Talent.** Security professionals have historically transitioned from the military and law enforcement fields, and these are still great sources of new talent. But hiring employees with experience in disciplines such as finance, marketing and communications helps diversify the talent base in the corporate security industry. Seeking a wider variety of talent from other

disciplines can expand the collective skill set while ensuring the broadest possible view of the security mission. Security departments cannot afford a “siloe” view of the world in a day when the functions and missions in a corporation are so closely linked. Combining educational paths, degree levels (including MBAs) and technical expertise strengthens the entire team.

**Technology.** Our security teams may be smaller, but we have learned to accomplish more with less through effective use of technology. Digital video helps us combat theft and fraud and manage crowds. Virtual burglar alarms tell us when someone is outside a building even before they break in. And beyond applications in corporate security, expanded technology now provides enterprise-wide support, including operational and customer service capabilities. For example, technology enabled Target management to virtually visit stores from the East Coast to Hawaii on “Black Friday” last November. This allowed for real-time communication with store team staff about priorities ranging from crowd management to instocks and customer service.

**Information.** Some people say we are all drowning in data, but for a large enterprise, detailed analysis of data and metrics is a wonderful tool. We can now understand – operationally and strategically – the cost and return on our investments. We know the actual cost of shortage and how much margin we lose. We know which products are hot with thieves, and therefore can design merchandise protection strategies around those items that pose the greatest theft risk. Information is a key tool to help us make critical business decisions more quickly and with greater impact.

**Partnerships.** At Target, community engagement is a

passion. We have long partnered with local, state and federal law enforcement professionals to help keep our stores and surrounding communities safe and secure. Our focus includes innovative philanthropy, which extends beyond writing a check, and it reaps huge benefits. For example, in 2009, we introduced a program that provides corporate-style training to high-ranking law enforcement officials to expand their skills in finance, management, communication and personnel issues. As part of this program, Target leaders in areas such as HR and Communications provide expertise on opportunities such as recruiting, training and retaining diverse talent as well as building relationships with the media.

For many years, Target also has served as a sponsor of National Night Out to strengthen relationships between police and communities. And across the country, we have helped launch Safe City projects in more than 20 cities, building partnerships between businesses and police in these communities to share best practices and collectively leverage cameras and communication devices. These efforts support healthy communities, and healthy communities benefit us all. **SECURITY**

## About the Columnist:

Brad Brekke is vice president of Assets Protection at Target and a member of the Security Executive Council, a problem-solving research and services organization that involves a wide range of risk mitigation leaders. For more information about the Council, visit [www.securityexecutivecouncil.com/](http://www.securityexecutivecouncil.com/)

## Putting Data to Good Use

Information, put to good use, is a business' most valuable asset. Security programs can and should collect a treasure trove of data that can be used to measure cost and return on investment and to identify trends. But the value of that data extends even beyond the boundaries of the business. Benchmarking initiatives bring together data from many organizations to create a clearer picture of how companies are handling security and how they're finding success.

The Security Executive Council's Security Leadership Research Institute (SLRI) was formed to help the security industry document the entire spectrum of risk mitigation and security through research. It creates practitioner-based research reports and benchmarks that help its members make meaningful strategic decisions. The current SLRI benchmark is exploring security program costs, program ownership, reporting structures and more. For information, visit <https://www.securityexecutivecouncil.com/about/solutions.html>.