

NEXT GENERATION

SECURITY

By Rod Cowan*



TY

Looking around any industry function or association meeting, you will see mainly grey or balding, let's say, mature men, with about 20 years industry experience under their belts.

As the industry faces what Geoff Askew, when talking of his recent retirement as head of Qantas security, called a "generational change," it will need to figure out how to work with Generation Y, which includes those born between 1977 and 2002, who:



NEXT GENERATION SECURITY

- Having high expectations of themselves, aim to work faster and better than other workers;
- Place high expectations on employers, wanting fair and direct managers who are highly engaged in their professional development;
- Look for ongoing learning, seeking out creative challenges and view colleagues as resources from whom to gain knowledge;
- Want immediate responsibility and to make an impact from day one; and are
- Goal-oriented, wanting small goals with tight deadlines to build up ownership of tasks.

All in all, security could well fit the bill for such workers.

With eight years in security equipment wholesaling after finding the job in a local paper, 27-year-old Robert Glover, Sales Leader, ADI, says he is in the industry for the long haul.

"I'll definitely be staying in the industry," says Glover. "Once you know something and have also built up a relationship with so many customers, well, it is sort of hard to walk away from that."

Being part of a large organisation (ADI is owned by Honeywell), Glover says: "There's always opportunities for advancement. That's why I am working there, because they are a larger organisation and you can stand out."

One difference, Glover admits, is his generation's outlook when it comes to associations or industry groups.

"There is really no benefit to being a member. At the end of the day, you have got to sell to installers and a lot of the time they are not even part of those associations. To be honest, that's why I'm

not part of any association," says Glover. "You'd definitely go to [meetings], if it was going to be something beneficial to you, but if they are talking about things you already know or general things, it really isn't worth your while, is it?"

Central Monitoring's 29-year-old marketing manager, Scott Kiely, whose entry into the business was part of succession planning – his Dad, Neville, owns the company – agrees attitudes are less altruistic.

Having witnessed firsthand through Kiely senior's long involvement in ASIAL, he says: "The fact that it is such a big commitment to get involved, means there are only certain people who will put in the time and effort – I know how much time Dad puts into it – whether or not you get anything out of it for yourself and for your company. People just think, "Well, I've got my own job to do."



Scott Kiely, Central Monitoring

Even though GenY also communicates in a different way and are more likely to turn up on Facebook than at an association breakfast, or contribute to Wikipedia than a standards committee, Kiely says: "You still have to have people willing to do the work and front up with the information. Whether people are having input at meetings or whether they are doing it online, you have got to get people to read it and to actually contribute to it." My generation will just let it happen, and when it doesn't happen the way they like it, they'll complain about it."

Attitudes towards the industry in general are also a problem.

"There are a lot of misconceptions about security. You get a lot

UNIGUARD SYSTEMS

Using a combination of robust, durable and long-lasting hardware with powerful software, UniGuard is able to track employee movements over the course of their shift, and even assign them a predetermined patrol route if necessary.

UniGuard 11's most basic version will report on your officer's movements, any visits missed as well as alert you to large intervals in time during the patrol. Software is available in four different versions to accommodate the end-user's needs. The system is very easy to use, yet able to generate complex and powerful customizable reports.

Find out more at...

www.uniguard.com.au

P: (02) 9626 2000

E: sales@uniguard.com.au

UniGuard

Patrol Management Systems



- NO ONGOING COSTS
- 5 YEAR BATTERY LIFE
- SHOCK SENSING
- WATER RESISTANT
- VISIBLE/AUDIBLE CONFIRMATION
- 25 MONTH WARRANTY
- FREE DELIVERY
- FREE SUPPORT
- EASY-TO-USE SOFTWARE



Distributed by ValuTronics Australia PTY LTD - PO BOX 359 Plumpton 2761 NSW

of young people who see security mainly as security guards, and think bouncers, nightclubs, and that sort of stuff," says Kiely.

"There are lots of good spots and companies, and there are plenty of positions for people who are good at what they do. This is an industry you can get on in, if you are willing to learn and do things properly."

Adam Lopes, 24, also followed his father, Vinnie, into the family business, Inner Range, after working as an installer and gaining a software engineering degree at RMIT.

He, too, says there are plenty of opportunities – and promotion can be fast.

"Generally speaking, the technical component of the security industry, compared with things like electrical trades and the more mainstream building controls work, is a lot more lucrative and usually a lot more buoyant than other areas," says Lopes.

"I know of a few people who have worked for building control companies in mechanical services and things like that, and they tend to be made a commodity of, whereas in this industry you generally find people go from having very little experience, to gaining that experience, and then being quite a well-respected member of the team.

"The company I used to work for, we had three apprentices come through, and they have gone from knowing absolutely nothing to being able to work on their own – one of them has even gone and started his own business within five years."

So, why don't more young people think of security as a career?

"It's just not as well publicised. It's not something that comes to mind when people are considering a career. It's like being a

photocopier repairman: it pays quite well, but no one thinks they want to do it when they leave school. They want to be an electrician, or a plumber, or something like that," says Lopes.

Wilson Security's national operations manager, John Rogers – at 41 years old, not exactly Gen Y – says security remains an industry where it is possible to start at the bottom and work to the top, pointing out about half of Wilsons' state managers started as security officers.

But, he adds, more needs to be done to capture and nurture talent.

"I think in a well-run company, with good succession planning, there is a career path for management that is maturing, but a lot of work is still to be done at that security officer level," says Rogers. "The first thing I think we can do is look internally, structure career paths, then communicate those paths to our current staff, and as we communicate those new roles, communicate how they fit into those career paths."

Having an antenna out for spotting talent in the first place is an "absolutely vital ingredient for good talent management," he says.

Provided shrunken super funds don't force the current crop of senior managers to work into their 70s, the most immediate task will be to let Gen Y know the industry is here and could be just what they are looking for.



John Rogers, Wilson Security

*Rod Cowan is an independent Contributing Editor and can be contacted at mail@rodcowan.net.

SECURITY RENT IT.

To meet either short or long term requirements, Security Equipment Rentals has a comprehensive range of equipment to meet your specific needs.

It includes baggage cargo • x-ray systems • walk through/hand held metal detectors, and explosive trace detectors suitable for use with:

- Cruise Ship/Seaport Security • Passenger / Visitor / People Screening •
- Airfreight Screening • Mail Screening • Distribution Centre / Warehouse Security, Lobby / Entrance Security • Weapons / Explosive Detection •
- Transport Security • Border Security • Stock Pilferage...

SECURITY EQUIPMENT RENTALS



Phone: (02) 9553 0934 Fax: (02) 9553 0644 Email: sales@securityequipmentrentals.com.au