

## Security Officers Research Feb 2020.

### Background

The purpose of the survey was to ascertain what was happening within the industry, and what ways could be found to improve the industry.

This might come from identifying further training ideas, better ways to assist Security Officers in remaining within the industry, as often within any company retention of staff is more important than recruiting new staff.

The survey which was shared through Facebook groups, and asking people to pass onto colleagues had a disappointing return rate, with only 53 people taking the opportunity to respond to the survey which does not always help with accurate results within the industry, and find better ways of improving the industry.

### Results.

When asked what their primary roles were within the security industry the following results were recorded,

- 58% were in Security Officer/ Guard roles
- 30% were in Crowd control,
- 30% identified as other- unfortunately we did not capture what this was,
- 17% were in Patrols
- 7% were in Cash in Transit operations
- Approx 2 % identified as working in the Aviation or Airport security sectors.

47% of respondents indicated they were employed on a full time basis, 18% were employed on a part time basis, and around 33% were employed on a casual basis, which has most are aware security have a lot of casual jobs, e.g. weekend event work or week end hospitality work at bars and clubs especially in the crowd control sectors.

Approx 85% of respondents indicated they were Male, and 15% were females, which again indicates that the sector is not attracting female guards.

When it came to pay rates, and understanding the award the following results were raised,

- 39% were paid according to the award rate
- 28% were paid as per a workplace agreement
- 22% were paid above the award rate
- 2% identified as being paid below the award rate
- Around 7% were not sure on the award rate and therefore unsure on how their wage compared to the award.

92% of the respondents felt confident in their workplace on a regular basis, however again the survey did not capture why the other 8% did not always feel safe and what can be implemented to rectify this issue. OH&S/ WH&S should be important for any business owner.

It was good to note that 60% of the respondents, felt supported within their workplace, which you would feel would be the response when you consider most of the respondents felt confident in the workplace, It is possible if people weren't feeling as confident within the workplace, then they were not be feeling supported as much.

Whilst the survey did not indicate the type of resources which are included in a workplace, it was satisfying to see that 60% of the respondents indicated they believe they had sufficient resources within their workplace to do their job, however it still means the employers of the other 40% still have a way to go in order to ensuring everyone has the resources to do their daily tasks per shift.

When it came to length of service within the industry, the following was noted,

- 10 years Plus and up until 19 years was 37%
- 32% had been in the industry for more than 20 years
- Around 18% had been in the industry for 5-10 years
- Less than 5 years there were 11% of the respondents.

It was good to see in general security that the majority had been in the industry for more than 10 years.

When looking at retention of staff and how long staff were planning on remaining in the security industry the following was noted,

- 52% were considering staying 7-10 years
- 36% were planning on leaving the industry in under 5 years
- Around 13 % indicated they were planning to remain in the industry for 5-7 years.

Survey respondents were asked to rate their team leader or Management, where the survey lacked was instructions on what we were actually looking at and this might be a future survey based on leadership and management opportunity in the future, however the following responses were noted,

- 45% identified their TL Or managers as good
- 35% thought they were average
- 9% thought they were poor,
- 15% thought their leaders had poor Management skills
- 7% think their leaders have poor communications

In the past as a Manager, I have heard many security say their Managers are not the best, however when they go and start their own companies, they suddenly realise their Managers were doing a great job, based on all the variances which happen in the industry on a day to day basis, however it

should now encourage leaders/ Managers to survey their own staff to see what improvements can be made.

It was interesting when it came to the question about Qualifications the majority of the security officers relied on the certificate III; however what we did not capture is what would encourage staff to go to the next level of training, e.g. is it just a cost factor or other factors, however the following results were recorded,

- 45% had the certificate III
- 18% had the certificate IV
- 16% had the certificate II
- 15% had a Bachelor
- 13% had either the Diploma of Adv Diploma qualification

The interesting results was when asked whether security staff thought the initial training e.g. those through either a cert II or cert III course helped them meet with the requirements of the job, the following results were noted, 51% of the respondents felt it did not meet the requirements, however 49% of respondents thought it did, again it makes it difficult due to the low number of respondents, and also not knowing everyone's background prior to doing the course.

As a former employer of security officers and knowledge of the HR sector it was pleasing that 58% of the respondents were given an induction prior to their first shift in the industry as we know an induction helps people to better understand their roles, however 42% of the respondents were not offered an Induction. If you are a company who does not offer inductions or does not always offer inductions maybe these can become part of your recruitment processes in the future.

It was pleasing to see that 55% of the respondents were offered training during their employment with the company, although this means 45% were not, however it was also noted that 56% of respondents indicated that if they did training they would have to pay for their own, and only 44% of respondents had their training paid for. This might be an opportunity for security companies to review their budgets and their training plans and see if they can improve their training options for staff. Understandable it can be difficult as you don't want to pay for a lot of training for staff and then watch them leave out the door, so choosing the right ones could be interesting, however in any industry training needs to be considered an investment into your business and not an expense.

When asked what sort of training staff was considering doing in the future the following was listed,

- Traffic Management
- Cert IV, Diploma in Risk or Security was identified by a couple
- More on legislation/ law
- Investigations
- Self Defense
- Management training
- Evacuation training and plans.

When it came to asking the respondents what they would like to see in their initial courses, which is difficult as the survey does not indicate the responses to this in line with whether they did the cert 2 or 3 courses.

- Common sense
- Communications
- Flexible training- e.g. more after hours, less time in the class room
- Cert III should be mandatory for all officers within 12 months of getting cert 2
- Investigations
- Self defense
- Radio use
- Situational awareness/ more on the job type scenarios
- Violent person management/ Conflict management
- Risk Assessment
- Basic use in Alarms
- Body Language
- Fair work legislation in regards to staff rights etc

When asked to make general comments about the industry, whilst only minimal took the time to think and comment, the following were the stand outs

- Companies to stop under cutting each other
- The Standards are too low, need to raise the bar and increase wages
- Flexible training
- National Licence.

## **Summary.**

The main reason for the survey was to find ways in which can be done to improve the industry, as most people working within the industry, seem to be dissatisfied with the industry, and believe the industry needs to lift its standards to a better level.

Unfortunately what the survey does not capture, although might be another survey required, if companies are prepared to do a general survey to their clients to find out what clients actually want from their security. As it is hard to lift standards if we don't know what clients want, or even if they want anything different.

There needs to be more focus on security officers choosing this as a career and not just as a part time role, or just waiting for another job to arrive, security officers need to do their own choice of PD from time to time as in any industry.

I can see a focus on training needs to be improved both being offered by the company and the RTO system needs to be improved and I believe the authorities are working on this over time, just not something which can happen overnight. Management need to understand that training is an investment into their company, and not just an expense, improve the quality of your staff who are often the ones seeing the clients, and your business could grow even bigger.

There were good signs when it came to what people thought about their leaders and Managers, whilst often in security Management don't get regarded in the highest of lights, think many employees are becoming understanding of what Management need to go through from day to day, I know a couple who once worked under me, who thought I was doing very little, are now out running their own little security business and have commented on now I understand what you were doing and what it was like, and I get more of an appreciation of what you did back then.

In completion, the numbers responding to the survey were a little disappointing, I would have hoped for at least 100, but the more responses which are survey gets, it can only help to improve the survey, if as employees in the industry we are prepared to take opportunities to complete surveys, provide feedback etc, then we are not trying to improve the industry, but like the old saying- do you want to be part of the problem or part of the solution, however I also understand how frustrating it can be, when you provide feedback and the feedback is not used anywhere.

Enjoy your time in the industry.