

Chartered Security Professionals: ‘The Gold Standard’

We’ve all met them. The self-proclaimed security professional whose opening gambit is: “Well, of course I used to be...” and then they wax lyrical about their time working in law enforcement or the military. The slightly cynical response might be: “Yes, but who are you now?”

There’s no doubt time spent in the uniformed services provides experience in a wide range of areas and realises many transferable skills, but there again so do plenty of other professions.

For far too long, those of us who operate in the very diverse security arena have relied heavily upon a former career with an almost widespread acceptance that anyone from a uniformed background harbours the necessary experience and knowledge to transfer seamlessly into the commercial security arena (and, *de facto*, become a security professional).

I’ve heard it described as “a culture of ignorance combined with arrogance”.

On joining The Security Institute back in 2000, someone said to me they felt such types of membership group can be very ‘Officer clubby’ and rather ‘clicky’. For the record, that someone was a former officer in the British military and also happened to be a female.

Significant and positive change

Fortunately, over the past decade or so we’ve seen significant and positive change.

For its part, The Security Institute has been responsible for many laudable initiatives and indeed achievements, promoting greater diversity, education and training and winning numerous awards along the way.

The incumbent Institute chairman is Emma Shaw CSyP and, in recent years, we’ve seen a number of women serving on the Board of Directors (including the widely-respected academic Dr Alison Wakefield and Lisa Sharkey – a practising solicitor).

However, in my view the Institute’s most significant achievement thus far centres on the establishment of a link with The Worshipful Company of Security Professionals and the subsequent creation of the Register of Chartered Security Professionals.

The Register took almost two years to develop and initially came into being as a result of a relatively small number of dedicated people from the ranks of senior operational security posts, leading academics and a quite brilliant barrister by the name of Keith Lawrey. Consultations followed with a wide range of individuals engaged in the delivery of security

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services and functions as well as the buyers of such services, other sector membership groups and distinguished members of recognised professional bodies.

It was a huge amount of work, delivered mainly by volunteers – dedicated people who cared and had the vision and commitment to realise a professional standing that’s ultimately comparable to the traditional professions. Of course, I’m talking here about accountancy, architecture and engineering.

Indeed, it was with the guidance of the Institute of Civil Engineers (and by studying its Register) that we were able to model the Register of Chartered Security Professionals.

The modern security professional striving for excellence can now aim to become a registrant – to be admitted to the Register of Chartered Security Professionals and warrant the post-nominal CSyP.

In order to be taken seriously, we needed a seat at the top table of the traditional professions. Those I have mentioned, but also not forgetting lawyers, doctors and even the clergy. Qualifying to be at that top table requires study and practical experience – or, as the Bar Council phrases it, ‘practise skills’.

CSyP: The Way Forward

Lord Alex Carlile QC CBE, chairman of the Registration Authority (the governing Board and rule-setting body), has described CSyP status as the security sector’s ‘Gold Standard’.

Personally, I believe that within the next two-to-five years, major organisations, insurance companies, Government departments and the key professional bodies requiring security services will insist on the provider of those services being a registered Chartered Security Professional. There will be no place for the ‘well-intentioned’, recently retired uniformed service personnel.

Security projects will require to be signed off by a Chartered Security Professional, just as a property survey has to be signed off by a Chartered surveyor.

This is the way forward.



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