

# COLLABORATING TO MAXIMISE MANNED GUARDING SYSTEMS

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By Adam Baker, Director ABM UK, May 2018

With five terror attacks last year in the UK and a further 10 thankfully thwarted by the UK security services, 2018 will see an increase in demand for manned guarding services as well as innovative, technical-intelligence-led security solutions.

The UK will continue to face the threat of terrorism for the foreseeable future, and the accessibility of crowded places like shopping centres, sports stadia, bars, pubs, and clubs make them attractive targets.

One of the main challenges we face in continuing to deliver world-class manned guarding services is keeping operational teams motivated and avoiding any appearance of complacency. Whether guarding against unauthorised entry to a building or premises; guarding against the destruction of or damage to a building or premises; or protecting a person from assault or injury, the challenges remain the same in the current climate.

Having been at the national threat level of severe since August 2014, rising to critical on two occasions last year, it would be understandable for some security personnel to be suffering from threat fatigue. Keeping them motivated is critical. It is up to businesses like ours to ensure that positioning and posture and routine-variation are at the forefront of our security teams' minds at all times.

A rapid and regular stream of communication through which to share intelligence updates is also essential to an effective security team, whether manned guarding or otherwise. Achieving the right behaviour is enabled through an understanding of the variety of the threats out there and a clear understanding of what is required.

Dedicated, motivated, and professional security staff are an essential component of protective security regimes, which is why our award-winning



people development programme and robust management systems have helped to establish ABM UK's reputation as a leading security provider, delivering operational excellence.

Through our Operational Security Strategy, the programme is designed to drive behavioural change through visible leadership, defined objectives, and unambiguous measurements of effectiveness. Training our collective focus on the fundamental principles of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery underpins everything we deliver.

However, at ABM UK we believe that it's not enough to just focus on security personnel in isolation. Effective counter terrorism is about reducing the likelihood of an attack, and getting it right requires everyone on site to work together, just as they would in response to a terrorist event.

Our position as an integrated facilities management service provider means that we also work with cleaners, engineers, and parking attendants, to name only a few of the teams present on a site every day. All of these people see and hear a lot of what happens both during and after opening hours, and play pivotal roles in helping us all to deter and detect those who may have sinister intentions.

At ABM, we make sure team members are all trained in counterterrorist strategy and that they can play meaningful roles in reducing the chances of an attack. While any given site is likely to have a combination of staff working for the managing agent, any number of facilities services providers, as well as numerous subcontractors, we believe that when it comes to counter terrorism, competitors must become collaborators. Not only should they share the training room, but they must be in constant communication.

Before an attack, terrorists will carry out reconnaissance on a target site. Often, they are looking for patterns in the behaviour and movement of both visitors to a site, and the people working on a site. Patterns that repeat over a period of months are helpful to their plans, but when those patterns are disrupted, their confidence is dented and plans can be dropped.

Randomising operational patterns of behaviour and introducing new counter-terrorism approaches will cast doubt in the eyes of those planning an attack. Doubt is the key to successful deterrence. Although patterns should appear randomised, they must be changed with confidence and executed with precision by everyone working on site. That only happens with clear, consistent, and concise communications across all parties.

Just as the nature of terrorist threats has changed, so must efforts to deter them. Preparing to respond to the worst-case scenario is clearly important, but preventing it from happening in the first place must be the collective objective of everyone working on site. For this collaboration is key.



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