

SMOKIN' SECURITY

Dignity, respect and loyalty are not terms commonly heard when talking about manpower security. But, as **Rod Cowan*** finds out, British American Tobacco Australia's security team aims to be far from common.

As the 14 employees attending a two-day session file into a meeting room there is an air of nervous anticipation.

You could be forgiven for thinking the source of anxiety is the man at the front of the room supervising the obligatory fiddling with computers and projectors. After all, Brian Sankey, National Security Manager, British American Tobacco Australia (BATA) barrel-chested, thick arms, shaved head and broken nose is a formidable looking character.

It could also be that each of the employees who will stay at a nearby hotel and go to dinner together that evening at the company's expense has been told they will be presenting and expected to offer their thoughts, opinions and ideas during the program, which will cover everything from electronic security to business risks, with guest speakers and senior managers dropping in



(BAT)
British American Tobacco

to contribute. All of which would be standard fare at any management gabfest. But these are not managers. They are security guards unused to attending such events and having their say far less being paid to do so.

"It was not so much a training function or workshop but a get-together, so we could push forward," says Sankey, who's quiet voice, easy smile and obvious education (he has a business degree under his belt and is studying an MBA) belie his physical appearance.

"There was very little training in there. There was bonding, getting to know each other, learning more about each other. Showing the team that they're respected and showing the new direction that being good is not good enough. There was a lot of brainstorming, as well, and trying to pull the answers from each other. I didn't want to preach to them for two days. It was to stimulate discussions and creating a new paradigm, a way of thinking that they were free to take risks and experiment, knowing what the business expected of them and what their capabilities were.

"I told them this would not be a spectator sport. The theme was 'be remarkable' and that is what we are going to be."

That includes, he adds, going beyond BAT's corporate aim of staying "one step ahead."

"One of the key messages was that the game changes so quickly in business generally and especially in the security industry and we have really got to be two steps ahead," says Sankey. "I pushed on the workshop that we have competitors, just like marketing, just like the business in general. Our competitors are people who will stop us achieving our objective. They could be people wanting to contaminate the product, undermine our brand, steal items, hijack our vehicles, and we have got to have an enormous amount of dexterity and the ability to quickly change."

One session involved a panel of six key BATA managers from HR, IT, manufacturing, supply chain, engineering, and warehousing, addressing the group to give them their feedback on security.

"It is almost an annual performance review. It was a real wake-up call for the guys to recognise that they are doing a good job," says Sankey.

"The old security mindset is not business focused. We can integrate into the business, enable people, and be strong business partners. I can't do that alone. I need the security team to be at the front doing it. Because we are the touch point for the first contact to a lot of people to our business, our job is to be business people that deal with security."

The BATA security team's journey to being remarkable began nine months ago when Sankey awarded the manpower contract to SNP.

"One of my key drivers through the procurement process was finding the right company. Generally the prices were fairly consistent, but [it was about] finding the right ideologies, the right philosophies, and how their managers think, which



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cascades to how their staff behave, systems, procedures, etc., and partnering with the company and the staff so we have a tripartite system: there is the provider, there is the buyer, and there are the guys at the sharp end, the staff. There has got to be a synergy collaboration between all three to make it work. That's just pure teamwork, and partnership."

In order to ensure the contract runs smoothly, SNP assigned a manager, David Drew, to be the point man between it and the client, and arranged for key meetings between the HR, finance, and IT departments of the respective companies.

Doing so convinced Sankey that SNP understood what he was after: "It was the open mind, the willingness to look at things differently, and to understand that, yes, this will be a partnership."

While the team is responsible for security of the 43-acre Virginia Park, Sydney, facility, which manufactures cigarettes for Australia, New Zealand and a number of the Pacific Islands, Sankey is also responsible for BATA security operations nationally, including a national leaf warehouse in Queensland, which holds raw leaf stock, and state offices in each capital city.

The "depth and scope" of his position is "huge," says Sankey: "It's got the whole continuum there. It covers everything from assets imported, through to the supply chain. Once the leaf hits the Australian shore, it is everywhere in the process: from the transport, logistics, out into the shops, and that's just the products side, then we have the information technology, the internal risks, information loss, and reputation of our brand."

The latter "brand protection" has always been high on the agenda for the company, which, he adds, is "very consumer focused."

"We all know the issues around tobacco regulations, and the anti-smoking groups. But, we want to be not only a good manufacturer, but a good employer, as well. This is a priority for British American Tobacco across the globe. So if we don't protect our brand, perhaps the lobbyists will find us a more



attractive target. If we're not seen as a good corporate citizen, then we're not going to recruit the right people. It's going to be a downward spiral," says Sankey.

All of which adds up to a different approach to security by wearing "different hats and being aware of each different function."

"It's very important for security to be right across the business," says Sankey. "We have got a global catchphrase, which is that our security across the world is global, consistent and integrated: global in our approach, consistent internationally, and integrated cross-functionally at all levels. And that's the most important thing that I think we can push: understanding each functions' key issues. What keeps them awake at night? What will help maximise their success in those functions? And, identifying that, and different ways to help them."

Getting to know the business means attending the likes of BATA's leadership team meetings, and understanding senior management roles, not only in terms of their functions but also their needs, or as Sankey puts it: "What their challenges are, what their risks are, not just security risks, but risks that they face in achieving their objectives, and thinking how can I find a way within the security remit to help them achieve their objectives?"

The cornerstone of Sankey's approach is the company's philosophy.

"It starts with the BAT culture as a business, of treating people well, with respect and dignity. It is irrelevant whether they are security, cleaners, marketing experts or IT experts coming in, treat them all the same with a high level of respect and dignity," says Sankey.

Such an approach may be groundbreaking in security, but at the same time it is common sense, says Sankey. "It stuns me that some people think this is amazing, that nobody does this. Nobody does conferences or workshops with your group, or 5am barbeques like we do. But I really think it is common sense and things that I wish people had done for me when I was on the tools and on the sharp end in different industries.

"It comes back to respect and partnership. But, with that comes the ability to apply the resources. That's what I've got to commend the bosses of BATA for. They recognise that and they enable us to use those resources. They let us go and buy \$80 worth of bacon and fruit juice, because they recognise the return on investment."

It's not just the cost of breakfasts, either. Each of the guards was paid to attend the two-day program, an expense most security managers would balk at.

Sankey, however, says it is a case of juggling resources and realising the payback comes in engagement, loyalty and commitment.

"One example, David [Drew] and I noticed through the two days, was a 19 year old with almost no security background, surrounded by all these people in security and special guest speakers and he just blossomed through the two days. He spoke out. He spoke his mind. [Drew and I] just looked at each other at

Training and standards key to success

Underpinning British American Tobacco Australia's (BATA) security operation are some heavyweight training and standards activity.

At the core is a competency based training programme, developed in house by the BATA security team.

"It is a very comprehensive system that provides consistency, accuracy and measured learning outcomes," says Brian Sankey, BATA's National Security Manager. "It may take up to 9 - 12 months for an operational guard to become fully qualified in all subject areas."

Having such rigorous training, says Sankey, provides a robust, legally defensible, and evidence based training and assessment that is linked with BATA's risk assessment process.

The programme took around 18 months to develop and includes 22 subject modules and 124 lesson plans to cover all duties on site.

"The training material is frequently updated to ensure it remains the smartest way to work," says Sankey.

In the standards area, BATA's security operation has linked with the business Integrated Management System (IMS) to such an extent that it has achieved certifications for:

- ISO 9001: 2008 (Quality Management)
- OHSAS 18001 : 2007 (OH&S Management Systems)
- ISO 14001: 2004 (Environmental Management Systems)

"We understand that we are the first security function in the world for BATA to achieve this," says Sankey.

the end of the two days and thought: that's what it's all about. He grew, we enabled him, and if nothing else it showed to me that it worked because of what happened to him," says Sankey.

Being remarkable is a challenge Sankey says he wants to take beyond his team to the rest of the industry, which has much to answer for.

"What have we done as an industry? How have we damaged the industry? I think we have done that through trying to drive the price down. People get what they pay for, or they get the return on investment that they deserve. We have wanted cheap, cheap, cheap, and that results in poor quality, inconsistent quality and unsustainable functions that is not delivering the value that the business demands now, or that it needs now," says Sankey.

By taking a business-focused approach and investing in people, Sankey says: "I think we can start to turn the industry around and counter some of those negative issues on publicity or public perceptions that [security] is big, burly blokes and there is no business acumen there. We created that [image] and now we have a duty of care to turn it around."

Whether the industry will step up to the plate, remains to be seen.

But, at least in one small corner of the security world, one client, provider, and staff partnering as a team is proving it is possible to do so.

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