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Research shows better security for business travellers needed

How a Master’s dissertation led to a new industry standard

Gian-Rico Luzzi, the winner of the Ambassador category in the International SOS Foundation’s 2017 Duty of Care Awards, has been an “industry crusader” working to establish guidelines and standards for Travel Risk Management. His career spans 17 years in private and corporate security. He observed that a substantial proportion of organisations did not prioritise and mitigate risks associated with employee travel, while lapses in Duty of Care were increasingly scrutinized by the media, legal entities and governments.

The research examines how the workplace, profoundly influenced by globalisation and expansion, provides many strategic and operational opportunities for personnel to travel for business. Consequently, it is common for employees at all levels to travel as part of their jobs.

However, business travel poses several types of threats. These include the risks to people, employer reputation, data and equipment. There are also legal and financial risks as well as impacts to productivity. The most important of these risks is the health, safety and security risk to personnel. The research assessed the practices currently in place to protect and ensure the health, safety and security of travellers, as well as determine the maturity of these practices.

In-depth Research

Gian-Rico Luzzi is the Corporate Security Manager, EMEA at Zebra Technologies. He has worked in the private and corporate security industry for 17 years and has been closely involved in protecting people.

Given the increased interest in the risks faced by business travellers, widely debated within organisations, in the media and

elsewhere, he decided to study this area as part of his Security Management Master’s degree at Loughborough University. He produced a dissertation: ‘Flying by the Seat of their Pants: An Examination of Contemporary Business Travel Security Risk Management.’

This research analysed the core components of current practice: stakeholder identification and ownership; risk assessment and promulgation; risk treatment; and programme evaluation. The methodology comprised a literature review and empirical research collection using a mixed methods approach.

Quantitative data collection included surveying recognised business leaders, security and human resource professionals. Qualitative data collection involved interviewing representatives from several large multi-national organisations responsible for their functional areas.

As Gian-Rico Luzzi observes:

“There are several factors driving contemporary travel risk management. These include organisations ensuring that they comply with Duty of Care principles, avoid criminal liability, ensure business continuity,

prevent reputational damage and demonstrate positive corporate social responsibility. The research highlights that the health and safety aspects of business travel are well-researched, promulgated and well-managed. It is the security-related risks that are not being addressed appropriately, both academically and strategically.”

Gian-Rico found that the responsibility for security while travelling on business is considered equally shared between the traveller and the organisation. Stakeholder involvement in the practice is very much dependent on a business’s size, industry and location; various departments within organisations are often tasked with managing the function often with no sense of ownership. Overall, organisations provided ‘poor’ or only ‘adequate’ planning and protection for travelling personnel. The research identified that the following key components that should be covered in a travel security programme, are frequently not fully-delivered:

- Dedicated travel security policy and associated procedures
- Pre-trip advisories and or briefings
- Security-specific training



- Compulsory pre-trip authorisation procedures
- Active traveller tracking
- Dynamic security updates

The research concluded that travel risk management is still in its infancy. It recommended that organisations should assign an accountable person, preferably from the security function, to design and implement a proactive and robust travel security risk management programme. It further suggested that a business travel security standard should replace the ad hoc practices currently in place. Specifically, a new British Standards Institute (BSI) Standard was proposed. The research project was well-received by industry experts, being nominated for the Imbert Prize in 2015, and attracted significant media attention.

Setting Standards

In 2014, while finalising his dissertation, Gian-Rico Luzzi approached the BSI to propose the development of a new British Standard on business travel security. He was invited to join the BSI steering group to help develop the standard. In 2015, it was decided to fast-track the process to create a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) on the topic. ‘PAS 3001:2016 Travelling for work: Responsibilities of an Organisation for Health, Safety and Security - Codes of Practice’ was published on the 27th September 2016.

As Gian-Rico Luzzi says:

“This document is a hugely significant development, providing businesses of all types, sizes and industries, with strategic direction and operational guidance on the how they can protect their personnel.”

Brian Medendorp, Global Security Manager at Zebra Technologies, underlines the importance of this work:

“Gian-Rico’s first-hand experience and knowledge on the topic is invaluable to Zebra enabling us to provide a comprehensive travel safety and security programme. Apart from the massive contribution of the PAS, he is constantly striving to improve the industry management of the function and the way in which third-party service providers tackle the challenge. He continues to promote the topic and plans to take the work to ISO level.”

KEY TAKEAWAY

Research confirms poor adoption and implementation of core components: Dedicated travel security policy

Pre-trip advisory or briefing

Security specific training

Compulsory pre-trip authorisation procedures

Active traveller tracking

Dynamic security updates

For more information on the 2017 Duty of Care Awards winners, go to www.dutyofcareawards.org.