A Workplace Violence Prevention Gap Analysis Uncovers a Dangerous Surprise

**SERVICE:** Workplace Violence Prevention Gap Analysis  
**INDUSTRY:** Financial Services  
**CLIENT:** A Global Employer with Multiple U.S. Offices

### Client’s Challenge

“When can we speak with the receptionist?” When Hillard Heintze’s practice leader for security risk management initiates a gap analysis of a company’s workplace violence prevention capabilities, this question to the client’s lead security manager often raises eyebrows.

But direct engagement with frontline personnel can offer eye-opening insights into major vulnerabilities – some of them in plain sight. Even companies taking a proactive approach to reducing the risks of an active shooter or other incidents of workplace violence tend to overlook a key resource and security asset: their people.

### The Hillard Heintze Solution

In this case, the Hillard Heintze team had already examined written policy for mitigating workplace violence, interviewed key stakeholders on programs and processes to manage the risk of workplace violence and conducted a physical security assessment. Now they were speaking with select personnel – including executive assistants and receptionists – for insights into crucial, but often overlooked elements of the company’s safety posture. “Do individuals respect the company’s weapons policy?” they asked.

Apparently not. The Hillard Heintze team learned of an extreme vulnerability: a contractor had been working with the company for several years and carried a gun to work with him every day. Following a negative evaluation, this contractor followed the receptionist to her car to complain about her boss. The contractor’s threatening behavior put her in a frightening situation and compromised the safety of the entire workplace.

### Impact on the Client’s Business

Based on this conversation, the team alerted the company to a gap in how it communicates critical workplace violence prevention policies to employees and contractors – and the lack of information sharing to enforce it.

Grateful for the insight, the company is now considering its next steps, including (1) training employees on warning signs for threatening behavior, and (2) creating an anonymous hotline for reporting potential threats.

### UNPLUGGED

**A FRANK OPINION**

The Perspective of Hillard Heintze’s Project Manager

“Frontline staff aren’t generally invited to security meetings, but these are the folks who often know the most about the day-to-day interpersonal dynamics, including the greatest gaps in workplace safety and the biggest offenders of policy.

All too often the first words we hear from frontline staff are, ‘Thank God you’re here.’ As outside experts, we can capture the concerns of these individuals and identify the changes that can have the greatest positive impact on safety and security.”

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