

SECURING CANADA

ARE WE READY?

Given that heightened concerns surrounding public safety and security are likely to be with us some time to come, what are the implications for management consultants and our clients?

BY JOHN GELDER FCMC

SENIOR PARTNER, OTTAWA OFFICE, GELDER, GINGRAS & ASSOCIATES

Reports of recent terrorist events, including bombings at the 2013 Boston Marathon, an alleged plot at the BC legislature, and attacks in Algeria involving Canadians, have brought renewed attention to the issue of public safety and security. Indeed, the challenge of combating such threats is costing government agencies and businesses billions of dollars annually to secure and protect people, infrastructure, and assets. Public Safety Canada, the federal portfolio department responsible for dealing with national security, emergency management, and law enforcement, wields an annual budget of more than \$6 billion, and the combined cost of policing in Canada now exceeds \$12 billion annually. At around \$18 billion, spending on national defence is larger still.

Given that heightened concerns surrounding public safety and security are likely to be with us some time to come, what then are the implications for management consultants and our clients?

Significant Opportunity

While there is no simple answer, the safety and security sector represents a significant opportunity for those

consulting firms with the right resources. Indeed, large firms such as Accenture already have well-defined solutions for the defence, security, and public safety sectors. Not surprisingly, these solutions focus largely on cost reduction and operational efficiency as clients respond to growing pressure to rein in spending in the face of persistent demand.

Headline-grabbing cases and high-profile events aside, the task of 'Securing Canada' is a work in progress that requires a 24/7 effort. In fact, the safety and security sector has been a focus within our own practice for some time and in recent years we have provided support to a number of nationally integrated enforcement programs designed to combat the increasingly complex and sophisticated nature of organized crime. Meanwhile, other consultants have also been busy playing their parts. For example, DAMA Consulting of Ottawa provided support for both the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games and the 2010 G20 Summit in Toronto. DAMA has also helped clients evaluate transit security – an area of particular concern ever since the 11-M attacks in Madrid and the 7/7 London bombings.

Mike Appleton FCMC, Former Canadian Forces Colonel
Managing Director, DAMA Consulting Services



“Partnerships are usually required because the ‘deep expertise’ in fields such as intelligence and counterterrorism is not typically resident within the management consulting community.”

Management consultants by nature are trained to see problems as opportunities requiring new and innovative solutions. However, DAMA Consulting Services Managing Director Mike Appleton FCMC, himself a former Canadian Forces Colonel, points to some important prerequisites for consultants seeking work in the safety and security sector. First, partnerships are usually required because the ‘deep expertise’ in fields such as intelligence and counterterrorism is not typically resident within the management consulting community. Second, due to their sensitive nature, most sector-related projects require consultants to obtain stringent security clearances as a condition of engagement. Thirdly, consultants must exercise caution with respect to the handling and sharing of information due to legal statutes and privacy laws, which can vary significantly across jurisdictions.

Notwithstanding these considerations, Appleton anticipates plenty of opportunities for management consultants to assist clients in facilitating and managing processes, or to lead or coordinate projects. Global influences mean that these opportunities are both national and international. For their part, clients will need to strike the right balance between managing security risk and expenditures, while at the same time recognizing that others do not always play by the rules we take for granted in Canada.

Recent high profile terrorist incidents serve as reminders that safety and security concerns will continue to be important drivers of demand for consulting services for some time to come. The sector presents significant opportunity for consultants who understand the evolving and complex nature of the risks and are prepared to help clients respond to them in new and effective ways. While not all threats can be avoided, management consultants who are ready to take up the task can play an important role in helping clients reduce vulnerability to them. ■

FOR FURTHER REFERENCE:

Public Safety Canada, National Security and Cyber Security
www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/index-eng.aspx
www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/cbr-scr/index-eng.aspx
Nortel Hacked
<http://goo.gl/OXoxX1>
CSIS and Corporate Espionage
www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/prts/spng/index-eng.asp
Frontline Security
www.frontline-security.org
Economics of Policing
www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns

While governments have naturally been preoccupied with combating terrorism and organized criminal elements, other areas within the safety and security domain are also receiving considerable attention. Interoperability – the ability of diverse systems to work together – has been an important focus of concern ever since the events of 9/11 highlighted the immense communications and coordination challenges faced by first responders in crisis situations where normal channels are disrupted or damaged.

Online Security

Similarly, as anxieties mount regarding potential threats to electronic systems, networks, and infrastructure, cybersecurity presents an emerging area where consulting expertise is likely to be needed. Indeed, Canada's Auditor General, among others, has suggested that Canada's corporate sector is not doing enough to protect valuable assets from cyber-attack. In the U.S., it is estimated that cyber-attacks may be taking up to \$140 billion and half a million jobs out of the economy every year. Retired Canadian Forces General Clive Addy, Executive Editor of *Frontline Security*, a publication that tracks public safety and security trends, sees cybersecurity as a major strategic issue that encompasses a broad range of 'globalized' security concerns. These include safeguarding communications infrastructure, protecting intellectual property, and maintaining the security and integrity of the banking and financial sectors. Reports that computer systems at Nortel Networks were hacked by outside interests for over a decade highlight the seriousness of the risks involved.

Exploring New Models

Many of these same global forces are also affecting the law enforcement arena where the 'economics of policing' are coming under close scrutiny. General Addy notes, for example, that in the face of organized criminal gangs, old models of community policing are no longer effective and must give way to new approaches that recognize the increasingly diverse nature of Canada's population. As such, public officials responsible for law enforcement are likely to need help to explore new models and to manage the related transformation and transition processes.



“Cybersecurity is a major strategic issue that encompasses a broad range of ‘globalized’ security concerns including safeguarding communications infrastructure, protecting intellectual property, and maintaining the security and integrity of the banking and financial sectors.”