

Are you investing in security wisely?

By Marc-André Aubé, President and Chief Operating Officer, GardaWorld Protective Services, Canada

Selecting a security provider based on pricing alone compromises public safety.

Prior to issuing a service proposal, security professionals evaluate client-specific needs, and what is required to meet them, in order to determine an associated cost. These assessments, if done correctly, allow long-term decision makers to choose their security provider wisely and responsibly. Some organizations nevertheless are deprived of this expertise and instead opt to use the concept of the lowest compliant bidder, meaning the decision relates exclusively to the price. Such an approach is not only unjust, but ultimately, counter-productive.

The calculation should be simple: wage rate + margin = rate billed. Ideally, pricing is based on two sides of the balance beam: the first – altering wages – is an ethical problem, the second – compromising margins – reduces the quality of services rendered.

Bidders who are prepared to drastically compromise their margins sacrifice in their recruiting, training, health and safety, performance evaluations, and sometimes shockingly, all of the above as a result. In the short run, saving \$15,000 by selecting the lowest bidder can represent a loss of \$100,000 in administrative and operational fees.

For these reasons, to agree to the concept of the lowest compliant bidder is self-deprecating, for service providers themselves, their employees, and the general public. Private and public organizations should not have to resort to a war between price (lowest bidder at \$14-18/h) vs. quality (police officers at \$80-120/h). Competent private security firms offer a middle ground that allows clients across Canada to benefit from a higher-quality service offering that is also easy on their wallet.

Investing in an integrated security program leads to a safer environment and a positive ROI – a win-win partnership.

Above all, we must stop classifying security as a mere commodity and instead consider it a strategic investment. In a nutshell, investing in security is to minimize risk and insurance costs, improve customer service and user satisfaction, reduce instances of theft and loss of assets, and prevent accidents at work. As with any investment, the price variable cannot be at the root of the decision. Businesses must examine bidders' complete portfolio of services, or in other words the quality behind their cost.

This is why, at GardaWorld, we commit to responding to request for proposals transparently by detailing our quality. We have the experience and expertise to recruit and train employees, allocate technological resources, manage operational teams, and support invoicing systems in an efficient and effective manner. We see our customers as business partners. **Together we strive to establish an integrated security program based on the ROI it generates for our clients.**

Security program objectives tracked by monthly key performance indicator metrics can set contract standards. A loss prevention team can save millions in retail inventory. On-site access control can reduce instances of theft. A health and safety program can diminish accidents in an industrial environment. Hospital patrols can allow healthcare staff to focus on providing care to patients. These examples illustrate tangible results that an integrated security program can offer, and they are only the tip of the iceberg. It is not solely about how much you invest in security, but rather how you invest. We have a team of security experts who work hand-in-hand with our clients to manage their investment while adapting to the ever-changing security environment.

Regardless of the situation, the added value of our security services, and the return on investment they generate, are at the heart of our business model.

So, are you investing wisely? Contact GardaWorld to find out: garda.com/investwisely