



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Tony Kingham explains how terrorism, corporate security and x-ray technology can help with both security and duty of care

The recent spate of postal bombs sent to food firms in Germany is a reminder, if one were needed, that even the most innocuous of corporations are potential targets for bad actors, whether their motivations are religious, political or financial. Three people were injured when one of the devices sent to Lidl supermarket headquarters exploded, and the other two were defused. One of the targets was a baby food manufacturer.

It has yet to be established what security measures these companies had in place, such as mail room x-ray scanners, but it has to be said there is generally a good deal of complacency when it comes to security in the corporate world. After all, what is the risk?

Most companies will never be victims of a terrorist attack and understandably don't want to turn their corporate headquarters into a fortress and spend large sums on security measures that they will probably never need. But good security, like insurance, should

be treated as a necessity, not unnecessary expense. After all, the damage that a terror attack can cause in terms of loss of life, injury, disruption of business and reputation damage, can far outweigh the cost of reasonable security measures, built into the everyday running of the business.

Then of course, there is the 'duty of care' that all employers have towards employees, which means that employers have a legal obligation to take all reasonable measures to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the employees and visitors in their care.

The Duty of Care Risk Analysis Standard (DoCRA) provides principles and practices for evaluating risk. It considers all parties that could be affected by those risks. DoCRA evaluates safeguards if they are appropriate in protecting others from harm while presenting a reasonable burden by defining what is reasonable risk. It helps establish reasonable security based on an organisation's specific mission, objective, and obligations. Quite apart from the legal and moral imperative, there is a good business case for reasonable security measures.

PROTECTING ASSETS

For most businesses, the staff are the most valuable assets and people that feel they are properly valued and cared for are far more likely to be motivated and retained. And from a purely financial perspective, it can also mean that expensive litigation can be avoided. At some point in the future, the courts may decide what constitutes reasonable measures, but it could be argued that all companies should be taking the risk of a terrorist attack seriously at all times but especially in times of heightened threat. While it is true that in the UK the threat level set by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre and the Security Service (MI5) has been downgraded from severe to substantial, that still means, even at this reduced level, that JTAC and MI5 believe an attack is likely.

Obviously threat levels vary from country to country, but given the current situation in Germany and the UK at least, no company could possibly argue in court that they didn't know that an attack is likely, and therefore should have implemented reasonable security measures. So, what are reasonable security measures?

Well, I think we can all agree that there are some measures that are relatively inexpensive, practical and therefore perfectly reasonable, regardless of the size of the organisation. Firstly, developing a security plan based on a sound risk assessment and establish appropriate staff training. And then there are some obvious technologies we can utilise, such as security and fire alarms, indoor and outdoor CCTV, some sort of access control system and an identity system for both employees and visitors. None of this is especially controversial.

After that, it becomes more problematic to decide what is necessary and reasonable. A lot will depend on the size of the company, the nature of its business and the local threat assessment.

For instance, some companies may face a higher risk, like the medical research laboratories in the north of England, sent nail bombs in the post by animal rights activists in 2001, which left one woman with serious eye injuries, a farmer with facial injuries and a six-year-

old girl with a wounded leg. But what is the next step up in terms of reasonable security technology?

And here is where I make the argument that x-ray technology should be considered as part of any corporate security tool kit. I'm not suggesting that every corporate headquarters should have large airport-style baggage screening x-ray machines in their foyers. That would not be reasonable. But the right modern mobile x-ray technology can be a real game changer, or to use military parlance 'a force multiplier', giving the security director or facilities manager access to high grade security technology, where they want it, when they want it and at reasonable cost.

WHEN BUYING A FLAT PANEL PORTABLE X-RAY SCANNER IT'S BEST TO GET THE LARGEST YOU CAN

Most big corporates will be familiar with postal x-ray scanners, but most of those currently in operation are what you could call, first-generation technology. That is, they can only scan in grey scale and are relatively small, able to handle regular post and small packages only.

X-ray technology has moved on a good deal since these systems were first widely adopted in corporate mail rooms. Most airport scanners now days use colour differentiated scans, which make it possible to determine not just the shape but also the nature of the materials being scanned. So, orange shows organics – explosives, chemicals and drugs, as well as more innocent items such as foodstuffs. Blue shows metals – guns, knives and potential IED components. Green shows inorganic materials like those used in homemade explosives. Grey scale is used for recognition of shapes and the form of objects.

3DX-Ray, better known for the manufacture of flat-panel portable x-ray scanners, used by military and law enforcement EOD units, decided that the mail room scanner needed bringing into the 21st century. So, it developed the AXIS CXi cabinet scanner, which uses the same colour differentiated scans as airport scanners, making it easier and quicker to determine not only if there is a threat, but what type of threat. A further major innovation is in the design itself, it has an altogether more pleasing aesthetic, with an extra-large inspection chamber, while maintaining a small footprint. So not only can it scan mail and parcels, but it can also scan bags up to and including aircraft cabin bags. Finally, it has put it on wheels, so it can be wheeled out into a corporate foyer or hotel lobby in times of raised threat levels. Of course, it has all you would expect from any modern electronic device, such as user-friendly touchscreen controls, high image resolution and image processing software. The AXIS CXi is a leap forward for mail room security, as well as being a real utility tool for reasonable corporate security.

That brings me on to my next candidate for the reasonable corporate security tool kit, and that is flat panel portable x-ray scanners – the Swiss army knife of corporate security. Flat-panel portable x-ray

Differentiated scans make it possible to determine not just the shape, but the nature of the materials being scanned

scanners have been around for some time now. They are well-established, essential equipment for any EOD unit around the world. As the name implies, they consist of a large slim flat panel, an x-ray generator and an operating laptop with image analysing software, and the whole lot can be carried and stored in a back-pack. For operation, the panel is positioned behind the target item and the x-ray generator is placed in front. You can scan almost any normal item you put the panel behind. The value of these systems is their flexibility, capability and portability, which makes them a real utility tool for corporate security.

They can be set up on a desk in a foyer at times of heightened threat, as a temporary security screening station, and used for scanning anything from laptops, briefcases, handbags, back packs, flight bags to courier deliveries. Or in the case of a suspect package or bag left in the lobby, it enables the security staff to make quick decisions to safely evacuate a site, but more usually, to avoid the mass disruption through unnecessary evacuations. They can even be used for scanning vehicles coming and going in the office car park.

The corporate security team or Technical Surveillance Counter Measures sweep contractors, are able to use them in conjunction with specialist TSCM equipment, to locate electronic surveillance devices hidden in secure meeting rooms, board rooms or anywhere else highly sensitive proprietary information is being exchanged. This negates the need to dismantle tables, desks, lamps, ornaments *etc.* to confirm that there is indeed a device.

THE X FACTOR

So, if you are convinced and are considering upgrading your corporate security with x-ray technology, what are the key things you need to consider? Firstly, does it offer three colour differentiated scans: not two or pseudo colours or grey scale but three colours. Many portable x-ray systems on the market use only two-colour scans and leave out the colour blue. This could put your operators at a real disadvantage and anyway, why invest in less capability? Secondly, size really does matter. So, when buying a flat panel portable x-ray scanner, buy the largest you can. This will allow you to scan bigger items in just one scan. Because in the corporate world, time really is money ●

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