

Project – Case Study on Security Protection Service

Each day is different at the Century Park complex. With 24-hour access, seven days a week, Century Park requires its security provider to handle the spontaneity that securing such a large structure entails. Each morning, construction contractors arrive early to continue renovation processes, and deliveries are made for Century Park's restaurants. By nine o'clock, the parking garage is full and the buildings hold more than 6,000 occupants.

Universal Protection Service handles the day-to-day processes of securing Century Park. For Universal Protection Service, it takes a team of five individuals to plan and implement a building's security strategy each day. Located in downtown Los Angeles, Century Park has three buildings, two of which have 44 floors. More than 50 officers are responsible for securing over three million square feet throughout the day, and each officer is prepared to handle the complexities of a variety of situations as well as securing public and private events hosted by Century Park.

Michael Sims, security supervisor for Universal Protection Service, is one of the five individuals overseeing the security for Century Park. None of his job responsibilities fit the typical security officer stereotype. Sims directs his security officers and provides mentoring for not just work-related issues but also personal concerns. He ensures that every officer has the support he needs. "We do the best we can to accommodate our officers to make sure they have all their needs met," Sims says. Sims is also accountable for writing incidence reports as well as daily activity reports on the processes and status of Century Park.

Despite all of the preparation in securing the complex, typical tenants are unaware of the time and energy spent to ensure that their visit to the building is safe. They may see only a vehicle patrolling the parking garage or an officer in the lobby at the main desk. However, the pass of the vehicle has been planned to occur at a certain time and the main desk in the lobby has been strategically placed to not only welcome visitors from outside the building but also to protect the individuals within. The services, strategy, and training necessary to protect a large plaza such as Century Park are highly complex and integrated in nature.

From Protection to Customer Service

As a security provider for Century Park, Universal Protection Service provides monitoring, post and roving, loading dock and delivery management, and access control which includes badge check, verification, and visitor management. In addition, they staff greeters at all entrances and oversee Century Park's parking garage, the largest parking structure west of the Mississippi River. Extensive security measures for this massive parking facility are utilized, and include parking pass checks, vehicle inspections, parking patrol and customer service shuttles that transport employees and visitors to and from their vehicles.

Most importantly, there is a level of service that goes beyond the company's contractual obligations, as providing service to Century Park's "Class A" tenants means more than just protection. Customer service is a strong component to the type of service the buildings' tenants provide to their clients, and it is important that their security provider and its security professionals exhibit that same level of customer service to Century Park's tenants and visitors.

"Visitors and tenants enjoy coming here. When tenants are happy, we know they [Universal Protection Service and its security professionals] are in the right place," says Jan Church, Senior Real Estate Manager of CB Richard Ellis at Century Park. Customer service defines a large part of the responsibilities held by each officer at Century Park; each security professional has direct interaction with Century Park's tenants and clients on a daily basis. "Emphasis is placed on the importance of recognizing and greeting clients entering the building," says Steve Medel, supervisor for Universal Protection Service at Century Park. "Universal Protection Service strives to set personal standards and demonstrate professionalism. Therefore, image and appearance are critical—the first impression of an officer also defines the first impression of the building and companies inside."

Security Strategies Defined

Universal Protection Service has provided security at this location for more than 10 years. Its security professionals were there during the demolition of the ABC Entertainment Center, the construction of the new Avenue of the Stars, and the renovations of the Century Park Towers. With Century Park becoming a popular place for the public by way of its concerts and festivals, more security protection is required, but because Universal Protection Service has such a large staff of security professionals, they are able to provide additional protection services as needed.

"Universal Protection Service's approach is very customer-oriented and they are an organization that has always been proactive versus reactive. They consistently come up with effective and creative solutions and they continually provide a quality service in the most effective manner," says Renee Watkinson, Vice President and Director of CB Richard Ellis of Los Angeles. As a company with an active approach to security topics and trends, Universal Protection Service ensures that steps are taken to enhance the efficiencies of processes and that additional measures are implemented when needed. "They know what our clients' needs are; they can identify that before we have to tell them, and they come to us with ideas and suggestions," says Church.

Establishing a Career

Because Century Park is such a large business complex, it serves as an on-site training center for Universal Protection Service. It creates a convenient training environment for those officers at Century Park, making it easier for security professionals to stay abreast of security topics and issues, according to David Lambert, Universal Protection Service's security director at Century Park.

When it comes to its security professionals, Universal Protection Service's goal is to promote from within the company, and they establish relationships with their employees. "They pay attention to the needs of not only the clients but also their security professionals," says William Yamba, assistant security manager at Century Park. They understand the needs of their employees and they take good care of them to ensure their company is a pleasant and great place to be, resulting in loyal professionals who are encouraged to succeed in life and grow in their careers.

Scott Naso is a prime example of the company's efforts to promote from within the organization. He started as a security guard for Universal Protection Service more than 20 years ago, and has progressed in the company to his current position as Regional Vice President, with a territory

that includes the Century Park Complex. His current responsibilities include working directly with his clients and directing relationships with the managers in his district.

Century Park is not just convenient for training; it provides a great working environment in the security industry. John Cook, supervisor for Universal Protection Service, began as a lobby officer at another location more than five years ago before joining the Century Park team in 2006. He has been offered promotions at other smaller locations, but he has stayed put, saying that he enjoys the excitement there at Century Park.

Every employee is cross-trained, and peer-to-peer training is also encouraged. Each officer is familiar with his partner's position and is able to provide backup when needed. Universal Protection Service places a strong emphasis on promoting from within the organization, and offers programs and services to provide its employees with the knowledge and experience to reach their professional goals. As a result of the organization's commitment to training, Universal Protection Service employees strive to achieve the standards of responsibility, accountability and professionalism in their job performance on a daily basis.

Universal Protection Service encourages its security professionals to participate in its Certified Security Professional program. Many officers have found the program's advanced security and supervision training to be helpful, and Sims believes it is "an invaluable tool for those who don't have [security-related] background." Officers who join the program commit to more than 100 hours of on-line and classroom self-study, take an eight-hour final exam, and receive promotion and salary increase opportunities upon graduation.

The command center for Century Park serves as the security headquarters for the complex, focusing on surveillance, emergency response and fire and life safety. However, the job responsibilities of a security professional extend beyond these duties. From implementing an appropriate security strategy to focusing on customer service and training to reach career goals, the life of a security guard is much more complex and fulfilling. It is a profession that holds a great deal of responsibility and accountability; it requires an individual to be personable and devoted to becoming the best in the industry.

Universal Protection Service provides the high level of service that a complex like Century Park requires. Having high profile clients means the level of security is higher than at many other locations. Because of the quality of service that Universal Protection Service provides, there have been only very minor incidences, and it is very easy to get additional services and staff when needed upon a moment's notice, according to Watkinson. They provide excellent training for both clients and employees, and they are also proactive in creating an emergency preparedness plan. They provide creative solutions in managing a variety of situations that take place at Century Park, and they are always looking at new ways to improve.