

Six Reasons Why Multinationals Globalize Security Practices

As multinationals globalize their security practices, they face a world fragmented with different regulations, cultures and standards. Still, the reasons to do so are compelling. A globalized approach brings greater consistency and simplicity, not to mention improved safety, security and business efficiencies.

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Despite the rapid globalization of business over the past 30 years, the globalization of security operations has lagged far behind. Many multinational corporations have left these responsibilities up to their local domestic companies because a myriad of building compliance codes — both in-country and from country-to-country — along with regional technical solutions have made managing security on a global scale difficult if not nearly impossible.

But that situation is changing fast. Now more and more multinational corporations are taking a global approach for a number of reasons explained below. They are looking for third-party partners with the necessary knowledge, experience and resources. Amidst all the complexities of the task ahead of them, they seek to develop a global service delivery platform with greater consistency and simplicity, both excellent guiding principles for their efforts.

What follows are six reasons multinational corporations are moving toward a more global approach for their security investments and operations:

CONTROL THE GLOBAL RISK PROFILE BETTER

As the old saying goes, “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.” The same holds true for security, of course, but it is even more critical when that chain stretches around the world. As a company’s international business increasingly transcends national boundaries, the result is a greater fragmentation of its risk profile. Local regulations can create not only a tangle of compliance issues but also great variances in securing the safety of people and assets. Local, in-country personnel may



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or may not have the needed competencies to manage these issues. If not, companies increase their exposure to enforcement actions, worker actions, litigation and, in some countries, potential temptations for making illegal payoffs to regulatory authorities. A global approach, on the other hand, requires several disciplined activities: cataloging country-to-country requirements; determining compliance requirements and costs; deciding to what extent the company may want or need to exceed those requirements; and standardizing wherever possible both in terms of compliance and best practices. By having a global view of their safety and security risks, multinational corporations not only gain better control over those risks but they can also work in an informed, focused manner on reducing those risks.

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENTS

Few technology advances over the past decades have changed the world as much as the Internet Protocol

(IP), an extremely cost-effective way to package and transmit data. IP spawned the Internet itself, of course, but it also spurred the development of a wide range of more affordable yet higher-performing technologies for using voice, data and video in security applications. By deploying these applications over the Internet as well as over secure Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), it is possible to centralize security operations like never before. Add to that advances in data gathering, compression, storage and mining and analytics applications, along with devices such as digital video recorders (DVRs). Taken together, today's technologies make possible a globalized "layering" of security protection and monitoring, with control points at the global, regional and local levels. While the resulting transparency provides much greater global visibility, it also enables tremendous operational flexibility at local levels without undermining the increased global control of a company's risk profile.

LOWER CAPITAL AND OPERATIONAL COSTS

One of globalization's driving forces is access to new and emerging markets, while another is lower costs. As is the case with just about any part of a multinational organization's operations, globalization increases the complexities and costs of many processes and systems because of inventory issues, parts availability, skills and competencies — not to mention cultural and language differences. The same applies to security. By taking a globalized approach, multinational corporations can lower their procurement costs of equipment and spare parts through economies of scale. They can reduce their operational costs by using advanced networking technologies to centralize their systems management as much as possible. By having better control of their global risk profile, companies may also reduce insurance costs.

IMPROVE BUSINESS EFFICIENCIES OTHER THAN SECURITY

Another benefit of globalizing security is extending their system capabilities into a multinational's distributed business operations. For example, video surveillance combined with pre-set infrared boundaries can create an "unattended delivery" space within a warehouse where suppliers can unload shipments without supervision, their delivery people knowing better than to cross the visible boundaries. Security capabilities can be integrated with other enterprise applications, too. Human resource

databases can be joined with access control systems to provide employees, vendors and contractors with entry privileges to specific buildings at specific times anywhere in the world, whether via badge access or even biometrics. It also can be used to track the whereabouts of people and assets for operational or forensic purposes. What is more, the same technologies used for monitoring security can be used for controlling facility environments and utilities, optimizing costs across peak and non-peak hours. There are more examples, but the point is, globalizing security has tremendous potential to bring multinationals many benefits beyond the safety of its people and assets: it can save time, costs and efforts across the entire enterprise.

MEET RISING INTERNAL EXPECTATIONS ABOUT GLOBALIZATION

As more of a multinational's corporate functions globalize, pressures build as well for the globalization of its security operations. These expectations come



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CONVERGENCE

from many sources: procurement wants to simplify purchasing of products, systems and services; human resources wants to standardize employee access to property and facilities as well as improve workforce management; information technology wants to establish consistent applications of network and data management resources; and, of course, executive management wants to improve the company's risk profile and optimize its security operations. Security professionals should anticipate these expectations. Even more, they should take them as opportunities to lead proactive discussions with the various functional heads about their own globalization efforts, learn from those discussions, and discover how the globalization of security might leverage what they are already doing.

BOOST VISIBILITY FOR BETTER PREVENTION AND FASTER INTERVENTION

Globalization of a multinational's security operations assumes a more centralized management of the function. After all, while a company's security team can be

distributed worldwide, they cannot be in all places at once. Nor can each person alone have a global, real-time view of the company's people and assets. However, with the right networked technologies, applications and systems, management can gain a more comprehensive and detailed collective view of their security operations than ever before possible. With analysis, possibly aided by data analytics, management can discover hidden risk potentials and either eliminate or mitigate them. If trouble occurs, network and communications technologies can alert management enabling a faster response and possibly limiting damage or injuries.

Anyone in charge of a multinational's security globalization should not be faint of heart. It requires a lot of smarts, assertiveness, determination, flexibility, sensitivity to cultural differences, and understanding of technology's capabilities and applications. Of course, it will require lots of travel while also getting projects done from a distance through virtual teams of colleagues, vendors and contractors.

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