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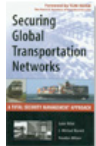integrated media and marketing services media kit   search:

November 2006

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paperworks

the security complex

SECURING
GLOBAL
TRANSPORTATION
NETWORKS: A
TOTAL SECURITY
MANAGEMENT
APPROACH
Luke Ritter, J.
Michael Barrett
and Rosalyn
Wilson. Foreword
by Tom Ridge
McGraw Hill, 2007

From the federal government's point of view, the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) is a success story—a shining example of cooperation between the public and private sectors to protect cargo from terrorist threats. But shippers aren't so sure. A recent survey of shippers (most of them C-TPAT members) conducted by the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs revealed some doubts about the program's efficacy as well as complaints that it was inadequately funded and required overly costly security measures.

It is with an eye on these cost and efficacy concerns that the authors of Securing Global Transportation Networks step into the discussion. They acknowledge that security initiatives can fall prey to the "tragedy of the commons," in which no one is willing to pay for measures that will benefit others.

As an alternative, the authors offer a framework for what they term "Total Security Management" (TSM), an approach to mitigating risk that calls for companies to manage security as a core business function. They contend that by applying TSM principles (which they label the Five Strategic Pillars and Four Operational Enablers), shippers and carriers can cut costs, improve processes and increase customer goodwill, thereby turning security from a net cost into a net benefit.

The authors further argue that security efforts must be embedded in corporate strategy. The phrase Total Security Management, they acknowledge, is a direct descendent of the Total Quality Management movement espoused by the late W. Edwards Deming. They insist that making security as much a part of supply chain management as efforts to eliminate waste can result in measurable return on investment and competitive advantage.

The authors stress that they are talking about more than terrorist attacks, that total security management addresses all sorts of threats, whether man-made like labor stoppages or natural disasters like hurricanes. In other words, they address the very types of disruptions that supply chain managers have had to overcome in recent years. The core of their argument, borrowed from Yossi Sheffi's The Resilient Enterprise, is that while specific disruptions are impossible to predict, some business disruption somewhere is inevitable. The TSM approach concentrates on ways to minimize the damage when a crisis occurs and assure that the company bounces back quickly.

Ritter, Barrett, and Wilson offer a highly structured approach to developing security systems that stretch beyond enterprises to embrace suppliers and carriers as well. Much of the book focuses on applying the TSM precepts to the particulars of securing fixed assets, assets in transit, brand equity, and human capital. The authors also offer five appendices that provide managers with tools for assessing risk, outline possible security procedures, discuss warning signs of potential terrorist activity, offer procedures for handling suspicious packages, and provide a glossary of security terminology.

The authors borrow heavily from some of the vast research on supply chain security that has appeared over the last five years (they provide extensive endnotes at the conclusion of each chapter). Their aim appears to be to incorporate those findings into a systematic approach to developing and implementing a supply chain security program that will resonate with business leadership. Where their argument is least persuasive, it seems to me, is their attempt to make the case that those efforts can pay off in higher market value, at least in the short term. But otherwise, Securing Global Transportation Networks is a useful guide—and a reminder that security goes well beyond strong locks, identity cards and security guards.

—Peter Bradley

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