



FROM REVOLVING DOOR TO RETENTION POWERHOUSE:

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GUARD TRAINING

Turnover doesn't just cost you time—it drains your profits. Discover how top-performing security firms are using training to build stronger teams, improve client satisfaction, and protect the bottom line.

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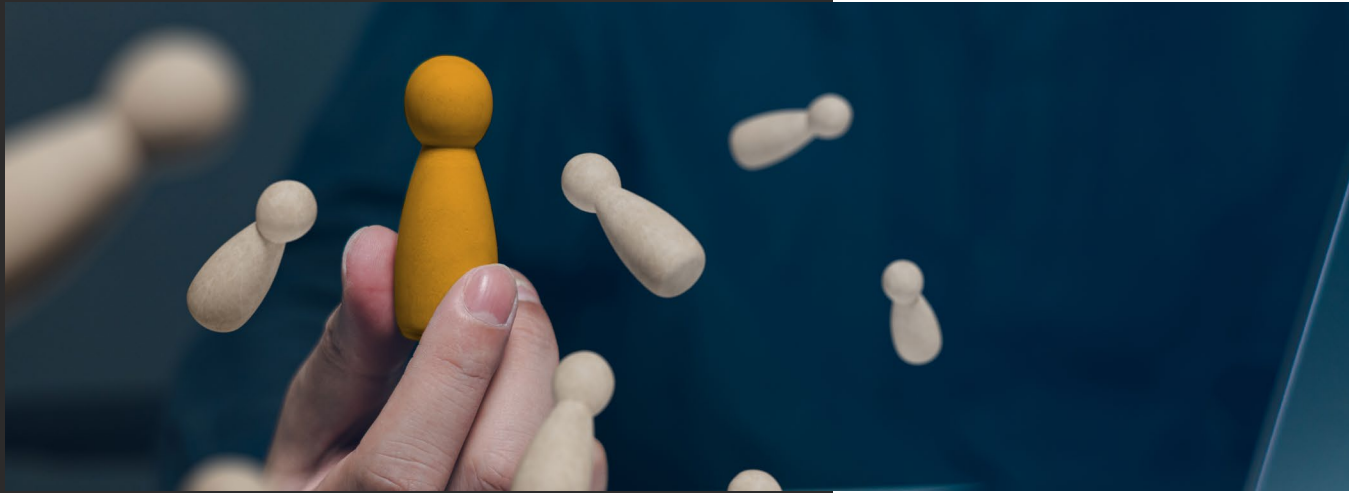
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THE SECURITY GUARD INDUSTRY HAS LONG STRUGGLED WITH POOR RETENTION RATES. **HIGH TURNOVER HAS A RIPPLE EFFECT ON BUSINESS** CONTINUITY AND PROFITABILITY, PUTTING GUARD FIRMS INTO A CONSTANT AND COSTLY RECRUITING LOOP.

Emerging data supports investment in guard training to solve high turnover, reduce security incidents, mitigate lawsuits, improve customer satisfaction, and generally solve many of the pain points guard firm owners experience without a standardized training program.

This paper highlights the link between guard training and retention, underscores the organizational benefits of a training program, and outlines best practices in onboarding, professional development, leadership and mentorship, and the use of technology in training. We support our findings through industry research and real-world case studies and wrap up with some hard numbers supporting the business case for guard training.



INTRODUCTION

Security guards are essential for safety in public and private spaces, but rising demand and high turnover strain the industry. Inconsistent service, legal risks, and high hiring costs hurt firms. Standardized training improves guard performance, boosts retention, and attracts better clients—helping firms stand out and succeed.

Security guards are essential in commercial and residential enterprises, such as shopping malls, banks, offices, condo buildings, gated communities, and industrial operations.

Guards are the first line of defense in an emergency, keeping the public safe and liaising with police and other first responders to ensure a timely and lawful resolution to imminent concerns.

Whether they are stopping crime from happening, keeping sensitive information and valuables safe, or patrolling the community to provide a visible presence, there is no question of the need. Rising crime rates, heightened public tension, and increasingly sophisticated security risks have increased the demand for qualified guards, a demand that most firms can't keep pace with due to high turnover and poor employee retention.

High turnover is a challenge from many standpoints. It creates inconsistency in service quality and can lead to more frequent lawsuits, security incidents, and poor client satisfaction, negatively impacting brand equity and public opinion.

Additionally, and perhaps most significantly, high turnover is costly to the guard firm. Attracting, recruiting, training, and retaining guards is a resource-heavy process with no guarantees new hires will stay.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports relatively low growth in the security guard sector. Despite this, more than 162,000 openings¹ for security guards nationwide remain, indicating a substantial discrepancy between supply and demand.

1. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/security-guards.htm>

Other sources² point to a recent surge in demand, putting North American growth in the range of 38%, primarily driven by heightened security concerns in commercial and industrial sectors and increasing public concern for safety, especially in densely populated urban areas.

While some of these issues are systemic—guards are not often high earners unless they have specialized training or capabilities—others are within the security firm’s control. By implementing standardized guard training, firms improve the caliber of their hires while fostering employee satisfaction, an evergreen value that helps mitigate high recruitment costs and enhances retention.

Lastly, firms that provide highly trained security guards are preferred by clients as their safety records are far superior. Such firms are seen as elite providers and can justify higher rates, allowing them to pay guards a better wage, further driving retention rates, and making it easier for the company to attract and hire.

THE LINK BETWEEN TRAINING AND RETENTION

There is a clear, unbroken line between guard training and retention. Employees tend to stay where they feel valued. Companies that invest in training their guards instill a sense of pride and loyalty, strengthening internal culture and fostering a collaborative environment based on shared values.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT IMPROVES JOB SATISFACTION

Guards with specialized skills have greater flexibility regarding what jobs they can do, making their prospects more diverse and satisfying.

Employers that provide training programs to enhance these skills, such as technology training, advanced conflict resolution, and tactical methodologies, encourage employees to lean into their potential.

Training is directly linked to guard retention, job satisfaction, and workplace safety. When companies invest in skill development—like conflict resolution, tech training, and emergency response—guards feel more confident, less stressed, and more loyal. This leads to better performance, stronger team culture, and fewer legal or safety issues. Guards are more likely to stay when they see career growth, better pay, and purpose in their work. Firms that foster continuous learning attract committed, high-quality talent and build future leaders from within.

² <https://www.cognitivemarketresearch.com/security-guard-market-report?srsItd=AfmBOool8nLJ1gHS05Ft4xJUKllloc3rQ8RtxEVdPBnbPWTIGPvKxesiO>



Trained guards are more confident and experience less stress on the job as they know they are well-equipped with the tools and strategies needed to handle any situation.

When continuous learning is part of the company's cultural DNA, employees have the prospect of better pay and more interesting work. They will tend to stay, knowing their jobs can become satisfying careers with many diverse opportunities.

By associating training with higher pay and career progression, firms encourage a progressive learning culture, building tacit knowledge that can only come from experience and engagement.

Over time, employees who rise through the ranks may become valued members of the firm's management or leadership team, further strengthening the internal culture and mitigating the need to hire high-level executives externally.

IMPROVED WORK CONDITIONS FOR GUARDS AND CLIENTS

Much evidence supports the role of guard training in reducing workplace risks and incidents, resulting in a safer environment for guards and the people and properties they protect.

Guard training improves work conditions for guards as they are less likely to find themselves in situations they aren't equipped to handle. Their presence alone is often enough to deter criminal activity, though training enables them to respond calmly, de-escalating situations before they become bigger issues.

Critical training in a guard's everyday routine can include first aid and CPR, conflict resolution, communication, observational skills, crowd control, emergency preparedness, and procedural knowledge.

Training in these areas ensures the guard can recognize a security risk quickly and respond appropriately, without hesitation.

Faster response times lead to better outcomes, mitigating the risk of the guard overreaching their authority or acting in a way that puts people and property at risk. Ultimately, lawful and timely responses reduce the incidence of legal action against the company, property, or the guards themselves.

Well-trained guards take pride in their work and display respect for others who are similarly skilled. They respect the processes, routines, and protocols at the foundation of their jobs and will support coworkers in upholding the same standards, making it easier to work as a team in complex, high-stress, or challenging environments.

HIGHER EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND LOYALTY

The psychological impact of competency and job mastery can't be understated. People gravitate toward security guard positions for flexible hours, job availability, or more intrinsic reasons, such as a strong desire to serve and protect.

Since many states do not have specific requirements to become a security guard, new hires are often placed in positions with little oversight. All goes well until it doesn't. Without adequate training, the risk is monumental and can lead to loss and injury for the company and all stakeholders. In such cases, guards don't often last as they don't feel sufficiently equipped.

Everybody likes to feel effective. There is a certain satisfaction in resolving a problem quickly and efficiently that often fuels the desire to do more of the same. The proper training supports this need. Firms that provide it report higher engagement, loyalty, and retention. Recent data³ shows that training and development are the leading retention strategy for most businesses and that 74% of employees are eager to participate in up-skilling programs to drive career growth.

Unsurprisingly, companies offering training and skills enhancements attract career-minded candidates ready to commit to long-term employment.

³<https://learning.linkedin.com/resources/workplace-learning-report>



CASE STUDIES & INDUSTRY DATA

The business case for guard training is not just anecdotal. Turnover rates in the security guard industry range from 100% to 400% yearly, which indicates that most firms need to cycle their entire workforce, potentially multiple times annually.

Guard firms with structured training and retention programs have been able to boost retention rates and improve the quality of their hires significantly.

Here are a couple of notable examples.

ARMOROUS

Armorous is a private security and investigations firm that increased employee tenure by 163% and significantly improved employee engagement and customer satisfaction. Recognizing that the industry doesn't typically reward or recognize employees enough, they set out to transform the culture through training, recognition, and a reward system based on their core values as drivers of excellence: going above and beyond, customer satisfaction, attendance, safety, uniform inspection, and proper reporting were among the metrics tracked. They also implemented a rewards system for new employee referrals. In addition to increased retention, they now hire 22% of their workforce through employee referrals, proving that engagement and job satisfaction lead to increased net promoter scores and happier clients.⁴

⁴ <https://www.cashort.com/case-study-armorous>

BRICKWALL SECURITY AGENCY

A study of Brickwall Security Agency⁵ quantified the relationship between job satisfaction and security guard turnover. Unsurprisingly, the study found that happier employees tend to stay longer and that certain factors were at play to support these decisions.

While compensation was one aspect, work conditions were equally, if not more significant. Employees who felt valued, supported, and rewarded were more inclined to stay.

One of the report's key recommendations to reduce turnover and improve employee satisfaction was to provide career advancement commensurate with skills, thus offering pathways to higher pay and better jobs. Integral to this training recommendation was to provide soft skills training in communication, flexibility, and integrity and recognition and rewards for a job well done.

THE CHAMPLAIN TOWERS COLLAPSE: A CAUTIONARY TALE

Though many small security firms forego training in favor of hiring experienced guards, this oversight can be extremely costly. Case in point, the collapse of the Champlain Towers in Miami, Florida, led to 98 deaths and countless injuries, which were in part attributed to a poorly-trained guard who was unable to use the building's emergency systems. This lack of training cost Securitas \$517 million⁶ in damages. In their deposition, a Securitas manager stated that not all their guards had been trained to use the system. It was a multi-million-dollar oversight that could have been easily avoided with minimal investment.

⁵ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374151793_The_Effects_of_Job_Satisfaction_on_Employee_Turnover_Intention_The_Case_of_Brickwall_Security_Agency

⁶ <https://www.securitysales.com/news/securitas-517m-surfside-condo-collapse-settlement/144173/>

BEST PRACTICES FOR

TRAINING SECURITY GUARDS

Implementing a guard training program attracts career-focused candidates and boosts retention, engagement, and satisfaction. Key best practices include:



Comprehensive onboarding to ensure consistency and set clear expectations for all hires.



Ongoing professional development through certifications and tailored training, making growth accessible and aligned with company needs.



Leadership and mentorship programs to support advancement and succession planning, improving loyalty and internal promotion.



Technology-driven training like online modules and VR simulations to streamline learning, track progress, and improve performance with data-backed insights.

Bottom line: train smart, retain longer, and build a stronger team.

Implementing a guard training program is a way to attract career-minded candidates and provide your existing staff with a system that improves retention, engagement, and overall employee happiness.

Here are a few recommended best practices to support guard training program success.

ESTABLISH COMPREHENSIVE ONBOARDING PROGRAMS

Your onboarding process sets the stage for the employee experience. A comprehensive and consistent onboarding process ensures every new hire has the same experience and training and will understand their roles and responsibilities once their training is finished.

Even experienced guards should undergo your basic training program. Once they have completed all modules, you can gauge their readiness for more advanced training or highlight areas that need improvement.

Consistency is key: setting clear expectations and providing role-specific training sets your new hires up for success.



PROVIDE ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing training and continued education are legally mandated in some states. However, not all guard companies offer in-house opportunities to certify or obtain more advanced training to satisfy these requirements.

Providing ongoing professional development via certifications, refresher courses, and scenario-based training is a massive benefit for existing employees as they don't have to invest time and money into the effort outside of work. It also allows you to tailor the training to your firm's needs and client requests.

For new employees, a training program enables career pathing and helps them envision a future with your company.

OFFER LEADERSHIP & MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

For most employees, the opportunity to grow within a company is a strong motivator to stay. Direct coaching and mentoring are excellent ways to nurture extant talent, improve retention rates, and support succession planning.

Lack of advancement potential is a strong motivator⁷ to leave a job. Mentorship solves this issue by providing clear pathways to growth and direct guidance on career progression.

Every company needs strong leadership. Working with people chosen from your in-house team is a great way to develop the skills you need without creating rifts in the existing company culture.

EMPHASIZE THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN TRAINING

Online learning platforms, simulations, and AI-driven training tools accelerate the learning process, providing companies with elite training in a self-paced yet highly trackable environment.

Technology in security training can range from online course modules to VR simulations, putting guards into the heart of the action on their own time and without additional time and labor constraints or undue risk.

Company leaders and training managers can monitor progress on an online dashboard, and results are based on actual responses, removing bias and ensuring scores are accurate. Detailed reports provide insights on areas of improvement or may indicate additional training to implement.

⁷ <https://gogpac.com/knowledge-center/how-mentorship-programs-increase-employee-retention/>

BUSINESS BENEFITS OF RETAINING WELL-TRAINED SECURITY GUARDS

We've detailed the benefits of implementing a guard training program, especially regarding retention. As training cost and ROI are always a concern, we'd like to discuss the benefits from a bottom-line perspective.

COST SAVINGS FROM REDUCED TURNOVER

Hiring and onboarding new guards is a costly endeavor. If you're not investing in a standardized training program, you risk 300% turnover and a never-ending recruitment loop.

To give you a rough idea:



In addition, we must consider the time it takes to review resumes, interview candidates, and get them up to speed.

Every time you lose an employee, it impacts company morale and may lead to further attrition. People want to feel secure at work, and high turnover does not provide good optics for existing or incoming employees.

Comparatively, online training costs under \$200 a year.

By implementing a training program, you can reduce turnover, save thousands of dollars and payroll hours, and be able to focus on what you actually do.

ENHANCED CLIENT TRUST AND SATISFACTION

Trust is everything in the security business. If clients see you as a trusted provider, you won't have to work as hard to win contracts, significantly reducing your customer acquisition costs and other recruitment-related marketing expenses.

Maintaining consistency in security staffing improves customer relationships, as clients will recognize your firm as a trusted provider in the security landscape.

Frequent turnover on job sites erodes confidence and may lead to poor outcomes due to an employee's unfamiliarity with the environment.

Consistency builds trust, confidence, and satisfaction, as clients know they can rely on your firm to protect their interests.

IMPROVED INCIDENT RESPONSE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Well-trained guards reduce liability and improve safety outcomes. With the proper training, guards have enhanced observational skills, enabling fast and appropriate response to any situation.

Additional skills include communication, conflict resolution, crisis response, crowd control, de-escalation, and essential first aid techniques, including CPR. Training in these areas ensures they act decisively and confidently, which may help avoid injurious situations or even save a life.

The ability to stay calm and respond with the right approach will improve the potential for resolving incidents without risk to people or property. In doing so, guards protect not only the client's interests but also their employer as legal repercussions are minimized.

Investing in guard training pays off—big time. It slashes turnover costs, improves client trust, and enhances safety.



Cost Savings: Turnover is expensive, with hiring and onboarding costing up to \$3,000 per guard. In contrast, online training costs under \$200 annually and reduces churn.



Client Trust: Consistent staffing builds stronger relationships and boosts your reputation, lowering marketing and acquisition costs.



Risk Reduction: Trained guards respond faster, de-escalate threats, and reduce liability—protecting people, property, and your company's bottom line.

In short: train more, spend less, and win more business.

FINAL THOUGHTS:



In short: security guard training boosts retention, client satisfaction, safety, and slashes costs. Elite programs cost far less than constant rehiring—especially with turnover rates topping 300%.

Online, self-paced training keeps guards sharp on skills and regulations, while real-time tracking helps leaders spot strengths and gaps. Continued education and mentorship build loyalty, leadership, and long-term value.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING & OPTIMIZING GUARD TRAINING PROGRAMS

In summary, security guard training directly relates to retention, client satisfaction, risk mitigation, and significant cost reduction.

The cost of elite guard training programs amounts to a fraction of the cost of recruiting and onboarding new employees, often at a yearly turnover rate of 300% or more.

Online training offers new and existing employees a simple, self-paced, and frictionless way to get up to speed on the latest trends, skills, and state-specific regulations. Company leaders can monitor training progress in real-time, identifying exceptional talent and highlighting areas of improvement for further development.

Continuing education offers upskilling and skills enhancement for your top talent. By providing these opportunities, you build value and loyalty in the workforce, encouraging guards to lean into their aptitudes and do the best job they can for you.

Beyond standardized training, mentorship and direct coaching help to elevate your top talent, nurturing leadership potential for career pathing and succession planning.

Defency Academy is a three-tier security guard training system designed to achieve extraordinary results. This comprehensive curriculum is aligned with the ASIS Guidelines for Security Officer Training and has been psychologically developed to promote loyalty and commitment to your company as their employer.

Get in touch today to learn how to get started.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT SALES:

sales@defencifytraining.com

or +1 (800) 795-6650

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www.defencifytraining.com