Loss Prevention Team: Innovative Approaches

Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

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The DVBIA (grey area)

- Largest of 22 BIA's in Vancouver
- Annual Budget - $2.4M
Seriousness of the challenges facing Downtown Vancouver

The following ratings are a weighted average with the highest possible rating being a 5.0 and the lowest 1.0 (the zero ratings reflect that these two items were not rated by any respondent). The challenges have been presented in a descending order of rated seriousness. The chart that follows provides additional detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>Aggressive panhandlers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>Property crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>Homeless people on the streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>Drug dealing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>Litter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>Parking rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>Public drug use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>Property tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>Graffiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>Crimes against individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Rental space costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>Vehicular traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>Overflowing dumpsters in downtown alleyways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>Parking availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>Poor or inadequate lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>Rental space availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>Bike lanes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the Beginning:

• Started as a volunteer program in late 1990’s – “eyes and ears”

• Worked with Community Police Officer to spot crime

• Limited by volunteer and police availability

• DVBIA worked with police to create a concept for the Loss Prevention and Downtown Ambassador Programs

• In 1999, the membership approved both programs as well as a 10-year mandate; required a 150% increase in the levy

• Managed by an outside company
In-House or Contract Services:

- The DVBIA considered hiring in-house

- Considerations:
  - Liability
  - Human resources management
  - Cost of contract overhead vs. in-house management
  - Infrastructure
  - Training
  - Private security licensing

- Chose to go with private security contractor

- Unique in private security world: operate in the public & private realms
Contracting the Services:

- The DVBIA has a Director of Crime Prevention Services (now a Security Consultant) to manage the contract.
- Developed an RFP and reviewed bids.
- Had some difficulty finding a security contractor because the idea was very different and there were no companies with any similar experience.
- There have been several successful bidders with the current contractor, Genesis Security Services, in its second three-year contract.
- Only one action filed over some minor scrapes and the contractor’s insurer settled out of court for $2,500 to avoid legal expenses.
Loss Prevention Team

- A team of six full-time specialists, including a supervisor
- Liaise with police, other loss prevention specialists and private security
- Use citizen’s powers of arrest to apprehend persons found committing an indictable (felony type) offence
- Cost $321,000 CDN (13% of DVBA budget)
Primary Roles:

• Provide an effective street presence, monitor and deter criminal activities in parking facilities and other public areas

• Report crime and disorder concerns to appropriate agencies and assist in keeping these from taking root

• Arrest suspects for crimes using citizen’s powers of arrest

• Complete accurate and concise daily incident reports on issues attended to and follow up with other agencies to resolve problems
Training:

• Orientation on the DVBIA, its role and goals
• Role-playing, videos and guest speakers
• Acceptable conduct, attitude, etiquette, rules and regulations
• Community sensitivity and cultural diversity training
• Equipment use (cell phones, radios, computers, bikes, flashlights, video cameras, wireless earpieces and digital cameras)
• Safety and crime prevention monitoring techniques
• Legal parameters of the role: management of incidents
• Conflict resolution and mediation skills
• Incident-reporting procedures and report-writing
• Control tactics regarding the use of restraints
• Human rights
Examples of Typical LPT work:

• Police send a suspect photo in the robbery of an 80 year old man to LPT; 45 minutes later LPT member sees the suspect. He is arrested

• LPT follow a credit card thief to coffee shop; he removes a wallet from a woman’s purse hanging on her chair; takes credit cards and cash. He is arrested

• LPT witness a chronic offender attempting to use credit card with Japanese female name on the card. He is arrested

• LPT track women’s purse thief to women’s washroom in mall. She comes out moments later with a new purse. LPT call into the washroom to confirm theft and arrest her.
The 2005 Team Members

- BC Corrections Officer
- New Westminster Police
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Vancouver Police Jail Guard
- Vancouver Police
- Loss Prevention Supervisor
Isolated Loss Prevention:

There are islands of loss prevention situated in mainly large properties, malls, and sizable retail businesses whose activities are restricted to their properties.
A Loss Prevention Network:

Linking them together and providing protection for small businesses without their own loss prevention units

The DVBA Loss Prevention Team provides a unifying loss prevention blanket in the downtown area
Operation Co-Operation:

- An organization of DVBlA loss prevention members, private security, hotel security, retail security, other loss prevention units and Police

- Goal: to work together and share information to make the downtown safer

- Vancouver Police and Transit Police run joint unit operations targeting chronic offenders and specific crimes patterns.

- Allows exchange of certain types of information in certain circumstances

- The results of these projects are impressive
Vancouver Police Project ‘Static’: 
(Operation Co-Operation, VPD, Transit Police)

- Project “Static” introduced an integrated approach to problem solving and generated 47 arrests for property crimes near Granville and Georgia Streets

- No single negative incident and has opened the door for future integrated initiatives with Police and private security partners

- Statistics show a sharp reduction (38.5%) in reported property crime within 250 m of the Granville City Centre Canada Line Station immediately following

- The DVBIA LPT was instrumental in achieving these numbers
## Loss Prevention Team Data Jan to Dec 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperation Levels</th>
<th>Drug Use</th>
<th>Property Value recovered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P = PASSIVE</td>
<td>Crack</td>
<td>$99,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C = COOPERATIVE</td>
<td>Crack/Heroin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R = RESISTIVE</td>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V = VIOLENT</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F = FLIGHT RISK</td>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>methadone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None Indicated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Target Contact Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operation Co-Operation</td>
<td>Adult Male 493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPD BOLO</td>
<td>Adult Female 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant</td>
<td>Young Offender 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic</td>
<td>Total 606</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Apprehensions | 606          |
A Success:

- In the 12th year of operation with no significant problems
- Provides loss prevention to small business that cannot afford their own
- Provides a blanketing loss prevention network linking isolated LP units and police
- Credibility with police leading to joint unit operations and information sharing
- Makes the DVBIA a true partner in crime prevention and community safety
- Lead to a seat at table with Justice Minister and other important public bodies
- Police data shows the result of joint unit operations with significant crime reductions.
Support for current strategic plan focus areas

The following ratings are a weighted average with the highest possible rating being a 5.0 and the lowest 1.0. The strategic plan focus areas have been presented in a descending order of support. The chart that follows provides additional detail.

4.19 Safety & Security
4.03 Marketing Downtown Vancouver
3.92 Advocacy
3.76 Access & Mobility
3.68 DVBIA Image & Awareness
3.63 DVBIA Well-being (organization functioning)
3.57 Place Making
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