# Security Industry Careers Guide

A guide to common employment roles at security systems integrators and security solutions manufacturers

**SIA Career Mapping Task Force**

Phil Aronson (Aronson Security Group)

Scott Dunn (Axis Communications)

Martin Huddart (ASSA ABLOY)

Geoff Kohl (Security Industry Association)

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# Introduction

Security solutions impact our lives every day, whether it's the door lock and alarm system that secures a local business person's shop or high-tech imaging systems used to keep our country's borders safe. This exciting industry, which is represented by the Security Industry Association (SIA), offers a variety of fulfilling, high-growth career opportunities with steady income opportunities and new challenges for individuals.

From entry-level technician roles that can be learned on the job to engineering positions that require extensive higher education and customer relationship roles related to sales, support and business development, there are opportunities that match your career goals, experience and educational background. Best of all, the security industry has seen steady growth over many decades, and many companies currently indicate there is a shortage of qualified applicants for job opportunities within their businesses.

To help member companies attract future employees like you, SIA has produced the following guide to career opportunities in the security industry, particularly focused on roles at security systems integrators and security solutions manufacturers.

# Table of Contents

# Engineering and Technical Roles

**Technician (also Installer, Lead Technician)**: Employed by a security systems integrator or installing company. Typically responsible for the installation and upkeep of security solutions.

**Service Technician**: Responsible for the repairing and maintaining the physical aspects of a security installation. Depending on the size of the company, this role is usually separate from the installation technician role, and team members are typically chosen from among the best technicians.

**Quality Control Technicians**: Employed by integrators. This team member ensures that subcontractors are doing the installations properly. Position is usually hired from within, often selecting the best installation technician or service technician.

**Applications Engineer (also Start-up Engineer)**: Employed by integrators. Employees in this role are responsible for the programming of software related to start-up or servicing the networking, cyber security and software part of the systems. Role typically required IT work experience. Employers often recruit trained IT staff for this role.

**Security Project Manager (also Project Management, Project Lead, Job Manager)**: Employed by a security systems integrator or installing company. Role is typically responsible for coordination of the delivery of a new commercial security system or upgrade or expansion of an existing system. Often coordinates budget, timelines, project closing, and customer management.

**Technical Project Manager**: Employed by integrators. Role is responsible for the IT portion of the project management that relates to software upgrades, software support, enterprise software deployments, etc. This is a very different skillset then the Security Project Manager; it is an IT skillset.

**Program Manager**: Employed by integrators. Role is responsible for overseeing, managing and care of all aspects of large clients, including proposals, projects, service and support.

**Systems Engineer (also Electronic Security Systems Designer, Security Project Engineer, Development Engineer, Consulting Engineer)**: Employed by integrators (and sometimes within the professional services department of manufacturers), this role is tasked with the design of complex and integrated security systems. Candidate typically will have a deep product knowledge of the product lines carried by the integrator, and often will have a computer science or engineering background.

**Systems Solutions Architect**: Commonly employed by integrators, this role is sometimes required on major projects during the design phase and integration of third-party systems. Typically has extensive programming skills and experience with a variety of electronic systems and software solutions, and is tasked with developing customized software applications to integrate systems.

## Additional Engineering Roles at Manufacturers

Manufacturers hire for a variety of engineering roles, including:

- Electrical/Electronic
- Mechanical
- Firmware
- Software
- Test Engineering
- System Architects
- Designers
- Regulatory Compliance
- Intellectual property managers
- Industrial designers

# Finance

There are many roles in finance, and these are generally not specific to the security industry.

- CFO
- Plant controllers
- Business / Financial Analysts
- Cost accountants
- Finance Managers
- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable

# Human Resources Roles

Depending on the size of the firm, there are many HR roles, most of which are not specific to security including:

- HR Manager, Director, VP
- Benefits administrators
- Specialists in Recruitment, Workers Comp, Compensation, etc.

# Information Technology Roles

The following are often found in manufacturers and some of the larger systems integrators. For large companies, many IT roles may not be specific to security including:

- CIO
- CSO
- ERP Specialists, Managers
- Help Desk Support Specialists, Managers
- Business Information Specialists, Managers

# Operational Roles

**Operations Manager (also General Manager, VP of Operations)**: While this job title is present at many businesses, when this title is employed by an integrator/installing company, this role not only manages billing and expense tracking, but is instrumental in ensuring that technicians, project managers and other staff resources, as well as technical resources and equipment, are coordinated for customer projects.

**Director of Training (also Training Manager)**: Employed by both manufacturers and integrators. For manufacturers: Role is typically responsible for coordination of training programs offered to resellers and end-user customers. For integrators: Role is typically responsible for training of technicians, project managers, support staff and account representatives.

## Additional Operations Roles at Manufacturers

While there are too many security operations roles to list, the following are the most common ones employed by manufacturers. These roles would exist within most manufacturers and are not specific to the security industry. However, many of the roles have specializations to certain products so security companies tend to hire operations people from other security companies.

- General Managers
- Product Line Operations Managers
- Production Supervisors
- Manufacturing Engineers
- Buyer / Planners
- Supply Chain Managers
- Quality Managers
- Lean Managers
- Operators/Assemblers
- Customer Service and Order Entry
- Environmental, Health and Safety Managers

# Sales and Marketing Roles

**Sales Manager (also Account Representative, Account Executive, Client Manager)**: For manufacturers, distributors and integrators, this role is tasked with tactical sales, and skills are universal to sales roles at many other companies. Typically organized as "inside" or "outside" sales depending on how the sales effort occurs for each role.

**Regional Account Manager (also Territory Account Manager)**: Employed by manufacturers. All the same roles as sales manager with added responsibility for managing the territory partner ecosystem, distributors, integrators, and resellers.

**Business Development Manager (also Director or VP of Business Development, Strategic Development Manager)**: For manufacturers and integrators, this role is tasked with uncovering new projects and developing potential new customer relationships. This is a job title where it is common for former security managers to make a career transition from security management to security integration or manufacturing. Such transitions often occur due to a security manager's extensive contacts and knowledge of the security needs of potential customers. Role may cover penetration of new markets, new solutions and vertical markets.

## Additional Sales and Marketing Roles at Manufacturers

Besides the general selling roles included above, in the security industry, there are some other specialized sales roles at manufacturers, including:

- **Specification Writer (also Specification Business Development Manager)**: This role typically calls on architects to offer specification writing services (or be the actual specification writer). When a new facility is being designed, it is very common for architects to outsource the openings to specialists in the doors, frames and hardware. These specialists are either independent operators or work for the hardware and door manufacturers.

- **Account Manager (also Distributor Representative)**: These individuals are responsible for sales to channel members who deliver products to end users or systems integrators or general contractors. Their role is to support the business processes of the channel and communicate products, policies and programs of the manufacturers.

- **Sales Engineer (also Sales Specialist)**: Includes various types of specialist roles focused on individual products or product lines. These sales people have deep product knowledge and help design solutions in a very specific and complex application.

- **Vertical Market Business Development Manager:** It is common for manufacturers to hire business development roles to specialize in vertical markets like K-12, college, healthcare, etc. They learn the "language" of the industry they call on and focus on solving security problems for that vertical.

- **Regional or National Sales Manager/Directors/Vice President**: Manages groups of sales professionals in the previous categories.

- **Marketing Specialists/Marketing Managers**: Responsible to market products of the manufacturers – websites, sales sheets, trade shows, events, price books, brochures, digital marketing, social media, etc.

# Product Management Roles

**Product Manager**: Employed by a security solutions manufacturer. Typically responsible for the product development roadmap as well as the management of engineering for new versions of the project. Typically has a computer science or engineering background depending on product in development. Typically handles not only the technical development of products from concept to manufacturing, but also studies market needs to determine product viability, and often works closely with marketing and sales to take the product to market.

**Product Analyst**: Employed by manufacturers. Role is similar to product manager but particularly focused on performing competitive analysis research for products and solutions.

# Support Roles

**Customer Support Representative (also Customer Care, Client Service Manager)**: This job title is applicable for integrators and manufacturers. Typically handles incoming requests from customers related to their security systems or security products.

**Technical Support Engineer**: Employed by manufacturers. Typically works in a call center environment. Responsible for providing technical support via phone, chat or online cases. Researches and troubleshoots solutions remotely for all security products. Typically has an IT background and certifications or related work in the security industry. This role primarily provides post-sale support but will answer pre-sale questions regarding technology capability.

**Service Manager (also Manager Performance Management)**: Responsible for managing all aspects of the Service Department (aka Performance Management Department). Responsibilities include oversight of service, proactive maintenance, test and inspection, and software support agreements.

**Sales Engineer (also Field Sales Engineer)**: Employed by both manufacturers and integrators. Typically, this engineer role supports sales representatives to handle technical questions and solve engineering requests related to project proposals. May also work as the project designer/engineer.

## Additional Technical Support Roles at Manufacturers and Some Integrators

There are a variety of technical support roles manufacturers may have on staff:

- **Technical Product Support Representative:** Provides phone and online chat support.
- **Field Support Technician:** Provides field support; role has similarities with the technician role at an integrator.
- **Field Support Engineer:** Role has similarities with a field support technician, but typically the field support engineer has a significantly higher level of expertise.
- **Technical Support Manager:** Role is responsible for managing the technical support team

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