Preparing for a Career in the Security Industry

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In a time marked by technological advancements and evolving security challenges, the physical security industry continues to grow exponentially. As the world becomes more interconnected and complex, the need for young professionals skilled in securing physical assets and people is greater than ever. I started in this industry as a young professional with a passion for security and a desire to make a meaningful impact, and just like it has done for me, this field offers a promising and rewarding career path.

This article will cover:

- How to navigate your path to a career in the physical security industry
- How to create a strong resume
- How to identify the right recruiter to achieve your career goals

A security professional's core is built around protecting people, property and information. This industry plays a critical role in protecting organizations, institutions and individuals from security threats and potential harm.

Here are some key attributes of the physical security industry that young professionals should be aware of:

- **Diverse Opportunities:** The physical security industry offers a diverse range of career opportunities. You can work in many areas from risk management to security operations or sales, design and installation. Plus, you can work with a wide range of technologies, including access control, IP video, artificial intelligence, intrusion detection and more.
- **Evolving Technology:** Technology is at the heart of modern physical security. Understanding the latest advancements in security systems, artificial intelligence, biometrics and cybersecurity is crucial.
- **Interdisciplinary Skills:** Effective professionals in this field need a combination of technical knowledge and interpersonal skills. Communication, problem solving and adaptability are as important as technical know-how.

If you are new to the industry, here are a few steps you can take to get started on your career in physical security:

Education and Training:

- **Education:** For most positions in the security industry, no degrees are required. You just need a passion for protecting people and property. If you decide that you want to pursue a degree, however, consider studying fields like security management, criminal justice, information security or cybersecurity. Of course, business and marketing degrees complement paths for product management and sales.
- **Certifications:** Earning industry certifications such as Certified Protection Professional, Certified Information Systems Security Professional and Certified Security Project Manager can enhance your credibility and job prospects.

Networking:

- **Organizations and Associations:** Join professional organizations like the Security Industry Association (SIA), SIA RISE, ASIS International, the International Organization of Black Executives or the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety. Attend conferences like ISC West/East, GSX and local trade show events to build a network of industry contacts.
- **Mentors:** Identify a mentor who can provide insights and advice on building a successful career in physical security.

Gain Practical Experience:

- **Internships:** Look for internships with security installation companies, corporations that provide security/surveillance/cybersecurity products and solutions or government agencies. This hands-on experience will be invaluable in building your skills and resume.
- **Entry-level positions:** Start your career with entry-level roles in sales, marketing, or technician. These positions provide a solid foundation for your career progression.

The physical security industry is an exciting and growing field that offers numerous opportunities for young professionals. With the right education, training and commitment, you can have a rewarding career that makes a significant impact on the safety and security of organizations and individuals.

Creating a strong resume is crucial for anyone, whether you're an established professional or new to the physical security industry. Here are some basic steps to help you create a compelling resume:

- **Contact Information:**
    - Include your full name, phone number, state, email address and LinkedIn profile.
- **Resume Summary or Objective:**
    - Write a concise, well-crafted summary or objective statement that highlights your career goals and what you bring to the table.

- **Professional Experience:**
  - Start with your most recent job and work backward.
  - Include the name of the company, your job title and the dates you worked there.
  - Use bullet points to describe your responsibilities and numbers and percentages to quantify your achievements to show the impact you've had on previous employers.
  - Tailor your experience to highlight relevant skills and accomplishments for the job you're applying for and be prepared to discuss your resume claims.
- **Education:**
  - List your educational background, starting with your most recent degree.
  - Include the name of the institution, degree earned, graduation date and any relevant honors or awards.
- **Certifications and Training:**
  - Mention any certifications or training programs related to physical security, corporate security or the specific job you're seeking.
- **Skills and Awards:**
  - Highlight any specific skill sets such as access control, IP video, AI or vertical expertise like health care, city center or financial.
  - If you have received awards, recognitions or honors, include them to demonstrate your ability to achieve results.
- **Grammar and Format:**
  - Start your bullet points with strong action verbs (e.g., "implemented," "managed," "developed") to convey a sense of achievement and responsibility.
  - Proofread and check for grammatical errors, typos and formatting issues.

The average resume scan is six seconds to determine if you are a candidate of interest. Aim for a one-page resume and a maximum of two pages.

And finally, now that you have road-mapped your career and built your resume, it's time to find the right company and the right job for your long-term career. When working with a recruiter to find a job in the physical security industry, it's essential to choose the right recruiter to ensure a successful job search. Here are some characteristics you should consider:

- **Industry Expertise:** Look for a recruiter who has hands-on industry experience, understands the positions they are recruiting for and specializes in the physical security industry. They should have a deep understanding of the industry's unique requirements, trends and job market dynamics.
- **Network:** A good tenured security recruiter should have an extensive network of contacts within the industry, including relationships with hiring managers and companies. This network can help you access unpublished job opportunities.
- **Experience:** Seek out a recruiter with a proven track record of successfully placing candidates in physical security roles.

- **Communication Skills:** A recruiter should have a strong knowledge of the company they are representing and clearly explain job requirements including skill set, responsibilities and expectations.
- **Personalized Approach:** A recruiter should take the time to understand your career goals, skills and preferences. They should provide tailored job opportunities that align with your objectives. View your recruiter as your advocate in your search.
- **Confidentiality:** A recruiter should keep all conversations and information shared confidential. A reputable recruiter will not send out your resume without your approval.

Remember that finding the right job is a collaborative effort between you and the recruiter. You should maintain open communication, be responsive and provide them with the necessary information to assist in your job search. A good recruiter can significantly simplify the job search process and increase your chances of finding the right role in the physical security industry.