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THE IMPORTANCE OF BODYGUARD ASSOCIATIONS

I have read many blogs on the internet in relation to the question.....
Bodyguard Associations, what are they good for?

by KARL THORNTON

I find the main reasoning for this question is based on the option of being self imposed as opposed to being mandatory. As we know these Associations are not mandatory, you do not have to be a member of a particular Association to work in our industry, and or to gain employment and or further your professional development. So why join an Association and pay out an annual fee to simply receive a certificate with your name on it, and maybe a nice little tie clip or pin. Also why should you join an Association just to chat on an online blog, or be able to communicate with other professionals?

I myself am a member of the BBA (British Bodyguard Association) and of ASIS the largest International organization advancing the security professional worldwide. ASIS International is the pre-eminent organization for security professionals. Now there are two main reasons why I joined these Associations, and it had nothing to do with a mandatory requirement. I am gainfully employed and successful in one of Australia's elite bodyguard companies 538 Pty Ltd, I provide executive protection services to some of Australia's top executives for some of Australia's top companies, as well as other high profile individuals within the entertainment industry and corporate environment. I had achieved this position well before I joined these Associations.

The first reason for joining an Association is simple NETWORKING. The world is closing in, and unlike many years ago before the internet, networking was a painstaking and laborious task of network meetings that you had to physically attend. Not just locally but nationally and sometimes internationally. The expense of networking had to be part of the company's budget, as it was an expense you had to budget for.

These days you can join an Association online and the open doors to networking become overwhelming. You have knowledge, experience, and like minded professionals from all backgrounds and experience to share and evolve with. Not only that these professionals are located all over the world, so sub-contracting, and searching for information in relation to assignment research and or mission critical data, can be assessed and researched via your office computer.

The second reason is simple. As a CPO, I am not trying to promote my professional identity and qualifications in relation to my own self endorsement. By this I mean. I don't pay my own salary, my company does, and where do you think they get their money from, THE CLIENT. The reality is, when talking bodyguard services, the client will undertake due diligence, especially at the elite level where we are talking big dollars for professional services. Your clients will want to see some professional endorsement and or professional Association other than your CV of experience and training qualifications. Yes they will want to make sure you are licensed and qualified, however they will also want to see some industry connection as this builds security in their minds. It doesn't matter if the Association is backed by Government and or mandatory via legislation. It matters that you are proving your personal and or company's commitment to the profession.

The last point I would like to make is that of the; WHAT ASSOCIATION?

Well this is choice. Some Associations will only let you join if you complete a course of theirs whereas others don't. Now personally I don't believe that you should have to necessarily spend hundreds of dollars and complete a training course before you can join an Association. Your membership should be based on professional criteria

such as qualifications, experience, licensing etc. Even with an additional reference approach where you need to be able to submit references in relation to you your personal attributes and professionalism.

I am a member of the BBA as it is a great Association for networking and is a great resource for information and knowledge. It is reasonable cost wise, and is trying to develop awareness of the industry. With services such as the BBA Circuit Magazine, and the online forum, there is plenty of independent information available.

I am also a member of ASIS, once again this is an excellent Association that has many resources and the opportunity once again for professional networking.

Associations are of personal choice. I have just re-signed for another year with the BBA, and can see no reason why my membership will not continue. My advice is to research the Association you wish to join, research online blogs and related information on the different Associations, and above all else, take into consideration why you are joining the Association. Yes it is great to feel you have a professional belonging to a professional organization.

However, at the end of the day, unless you are offering your services free of charge because of the love of bodyguard work, being recognized as being associated (a member) with an Association will help your professional growth and development, as your clients will have the added peace of mind knowing you are a professional.

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