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HOW CPTED STRATEGY CAN LEAD TO BETTER PHYSICAL ENTERPRISE SECURITY

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) has been around since as early as the 1960's or 1970's. It has been adopted around the World to varying degrees and with varying success. CPTED is known by various names in Australia, such as Designing Out Crime, Secure Design or Safer Design. CPTED has gained some good support by Australia's Police and local governments but could achieve further significant results if also supported by other agencies and organisations.

When a building or space is being designed, crime prevention is often not a primary consideration, unless the facility is a prison, bank or military

facility. Security is often not considered until the architectural design has been completed. Whatever security 'vulnerabilities' exist in the design are then usually dealt with later by adding electronic and/or physical security measures to patch problems. In some cases, security vulnerabilities can be created by the design and aren't recognised until the building has been constructed, in which case it is generally too late to correct other than by adding further physical or electronic security measures.

In some cases, these additional security measures can be effective in mitigating a security vulnerability. However, fundamental vulnerabilities associated with design can present on-going problems regardless of the addition of security measures. Adding security measures to support a fundamentally vulnerable design can be an on-going, frustrating and an expensive exercise.

The design and layout of a building or space can contribute greatly to the security of people and assets in and around that space. It can also contribute to the occupant's/user's perception of their own safety, freeing them from fear and encouraging use of the space.

CPTED

CPTED is based on embedding safety/security into the built environment. CPTED suggests that opportunities for crime can be reduced by maximising opportunities for Natural Surveillance, Natural Access Control and Territorial Reinforcement.

Natural Surveillance seeks to maximise opportunities for surveillance by authorised users of the space. This can have several beneficial effects. It contributes towards authorised user's perceived safety, and increases risk perceived by intruders, because intruders feel more likely to be seen, challenged or caught. Maximising Natural Surveillance can reduce the necessity for electronic surveillance (CCTV). Maximising Natural Surveillance can also assist electronic surveillance by providing clear, unobstructed views.

Natural Access Control seeks to limit access to legitimate users only and deter admittance by would-be-offenders. This can be achieved in numerous ways, for example: channelling users of a space into areas (or thoroughfares) with good Natural Surveillance, using elements of the built environment to act as barriers and limiting the number of entry/exit points.

Territorial Reinforcement seeks to encourage ownership of space by legitimate users, ensuring that there are clear indicators of what is public space, semi-private space and private space, and providing indicators of what are acceptable behaviours in each space.

BENEFITS OF BUILT-IN SECURITY

If CPTED is considered early in the design stage, it is possible to identify potential issues that can save a lot of time, money and effort by avoiding on-going security measures to fix problems after a building/facility is established. As a simple example: a door does not require an alarm system, access control card reader, CCTV monitoring, procedural-lock-up by a guard, etc, if there is no door in the first place (i.e. non-essential doors can be identified and omitted from the design). Further, intruders cannot use a door as a point of entry if it does not exist. Non-essential doors or poorly located doors

can create security problems that could be avoided simply by removing or re-locating a door during the design process of a building or facility. Significant savings can be made by removing the necessity for (or reducing the numbers of) CCTV cameras and digital-storage space, electronic access control points and numbers of guards or patrols etc, not to mention on-going costs associated with issues like internal theft, robbery, vandalism, graffiti removal, compensation claims or litigation.


SUPPORT

CPTED is making its way into Australia's cities and communities most notably through support from State Government departments and local councils. Government departments and local councils have developed design guidelines to create awareness of CPTED issues. However, this strategy is targeting the "latter end of the design chain". For example, if a consumer, architect or developer is not aware of CPTED and spends considerable resources creating a design of a home, building or community, they may be disappointed and frustrated if the design is rejected due to a concept (CPTED) they may never have heard of and for reasons they are unaware of. Nobody wants to create a design that will facilitate crime, but if one is unaware of the concept it would not enter one's mind to include it as a consideration. Further awareness of the benefits of CPTED are required throughout industry.

The benefits of CPTED also need to become more widely recognised by those at the "start of the design chain", which includes consumers, architects and developers. This way CPTED will be recognised as an important early consideration in the design process, and not simply a cursory exercise.

The International CPTED Association (ICA) are the leading global authority in CPTED and is a great source for further information and resources.

END NOTE

An early minor investment to ensure CPTED issues are considered during the design stage of a building or space can improve the quality of life for the occupants/users, minimise frustration, minimise loss and provide significant savings in the life-cycle cost involved with the management of a space. Before undertaking any activity related to this article, it is recommended you consult a licensed Security Professional. 

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