

**LEADERSHIP INSIGHT**

# The 5-Ws of Budgeting for security in 2023

Budgeting for 2023 is underway across industries, companies and departments. Summit Off Duty Services has had more conversations, with more companies, weighing more variables than ever before. With a lot of macroeconomic and political unknowns, budgeting for security is more complex than it has historically been.

This blog post includes some of the questions we're working through with our customers. We hope it helps others in their security planning and budgeting.

**UNCERTAINTY ABOUNDS**

Two major factors – the upcoming midterm elections and economic uncertainty are creating complexity and raising questions across all areas of business.

Elections happen every two years and can change the course of business. This year (2022) is particularly consequential with such a narrowly divided Congress subject to change. The changing political landscape will dictate business moves and associated security requirements but it will take time for these changes to unfold.

Inflation has dominated economic news for the last year and now there is talk of recession which will certainly impact security. Businesses may be faced with layoffs, requiring heightened security. Loss of income can lead people to act desperately and commit crimes. Meanwhile, retail, entertainment, and hospitality industries could experience revenue loss and smaller crowds to manage. Lack of economic predictability makes planning exceptionally difficult.

Yet, it is more important than ever to have a plan. A recent survey by the Major Cities Chiefs Association revealed that violent crime has increased by 4.4%, and the rate of violent offenses remains much higher than before the pandemic. There were notable

increases in robberies (13%) and aggravated assaults (2.6%), accounting for the lion's share of the violent crime total — nearly 237,000 — in the first half of 2022.

With those challenges and the need for security in mind, we offer a flexible approach to planning and budgeting for security next year.

### **PRIORITIZING RISK AND REWARD**

Summit is encouraging its customers to prioritize and be prepared to pivot. Here are key factors for consideration when budgeting for security in 2023.

- 1. Where do you invest most?** For nationwide businesses, take a fresh look at your stores and the crime statistics for the surrounding area. Summit advisors use tools like Lexis Nexis's Community Crime Map or CrimeCast reports to assess location risks. Based on this objective data, determine where you will benefit most from a higher level of security coverage and where you can cover your bases and secure assets with less expensive solutions like cameras, alarm systems or guards.
- 2. What areas are most important to protect?** Take inventory of your physical security needs. What are the areas of highest risk? For example, in a hospital, it's the ER and the OR. For an entertainment venue, it might be the bar or parking lot. Take full stock of what your greatest risks are and fill posts accordingly. Invest in those areas that present the risk of loss of life and damage to your company's future ability to operate by staffing them with off-duty officers who have a higher degree of training and authority to act and arrest if needed.
- 3. When is the need for security support greatest?** Be sure and take into account seasonality. Security directors are finding some budget flexibility simply by accounting for fluctuation in seasons. For one example, obviously mall security is in higher demand during the holidays or hot summer months. Make sure to account for fluctuating staffing capacities in budgeting.

Also, account for potential periods of heightened security. Companies typically budget two weeks of heightened security in response to a breach (robbery, workplace violence) but research shows that criminals know this and strike following that period. Look at security as a long-term game rather than an episodic event.

- 4. How will you address risk?** Keep an open mind when addressing how to respond to risks. Are you making the best use of all possible options? Are there opportunities to use technology vs. more expensive personnel? Do you have adequate access to controls, badge readers and cameras...how can these tools be an extension of your staff, placing "eyes" and "ears" where you need them at a lower cost than investing in FTEs?

- 5. Who will you call for flexible security staffing?** Have a partner on standby so that you can dial staffing up or down in response to events, which this season has proven are ever-changing and consequential. Summit has agreements in place with several companies for use as needed. We work as an extension of their team, to make sure no post goes dark. We're able to tap into a variety of different law enforcement agencies, fulfilling staffing needs reliably and keeping security directors free to focus on the big picture. This strategy has paid dividends for clients like Methodist Hospital during security spikes, or unanticipated needs.

In short, prioritizing locations, posts and personnel is the foundation of a flexible security staffing plan. Incorporating technology solutions can help security directors overcome staffing challenges. Having a partner in place – who's cleared all of the many procurement hurdles – to supplement full-time staff pays dividends. With this variable model, security directors can plug and play solutions in response to changing events and needs.

Want to learn more about Summit Off Duty Services?  
**Let's chat.**



summitoffduty.com  
inquiries@summitoffduty.com  
866-960-0159

Built on a commitment to serve and dedication to lead, Summit is revolutionizing off duty staffing by implementing smart technologies and leveraging resourceful partners to deliver a higher caliber of service and security.