

# ADDRESSING THE CCTV SKILLS SHORTAGE

**A** **SWITH MANY** other industry sectors, the CCTV sector of the security industry is facing a shortage of appropriately trained and skilled personnel.

To try and address this shortage and to attract new entrants to the industry, a small working group consisting of industry representatives (including ASIAL, ASIS, MITC, Les Simmonds and Vlado Damjanovski) has been working toward developing possible strategies and approaches.

As part of this process an online CCTV survey was developed and circulated for industry input during August and September. Over 160 respondents participated in the survey. In conjunction with the survey, as part of Security 2008 a forum was held in Sydney involving over 50 practitioners and users of CCTV services.

The findings of the survey makes for very interesting reading. What becomes apparent from the survey responses and the views aired at the CCTV forum, is that there is significant room for improvement and growth in this sector. The majority of those who responded (93.7%) indicated that the quality of services provided by the CCTV sector needed to be improved. An equally conclusive 92% of respondents supported the introduction of nationally recognised qualifications.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

Responses to the survey were received from importers/distributors of equipment, installers, sales/service/support personnel, consultants and systems integrators. Nearly two thirds (63.3%) of those who

responded employed 5 or less employees, 21% employed between 5-20 employees, and 15% employed more than 20 employees. A breakdown of the annual CCTV turnover of respondents is shown below.

### ANNUAL TURNOVER FROM CCTV

Less than \$100,000	15.8%
\$100,000 – \$500,000	29.5%
\$500,000 – \$1 million	19.4%
\$1 million – \$5 million	23.3%
\$5 million +	12.9%

Source: ASIAL CCTV Survey, September 2008

It is evident that the level of training currently available is a major issue for the industry. Of those surveyed, 33.3% indicated that they were happy with their own knowledge and understanding of CCTV; 31.9% thought that their knowledge was good, but could be improved; 27.3% felt that their knowledge was okay, but there were some areas that they were not sure of and 6.3% were not happy with their knowledge and wanted to learn more.

Of those responsible for managing employees working in CCTV, 8% rated the knowledge of their employees as very good; 44.5% thought they were good, but could learn more; 40.9% thought they were satisfactory, but could learn more and 5.1% were not very happy with their knowledge and thought that they could learn more, but didn't know where to source the training.

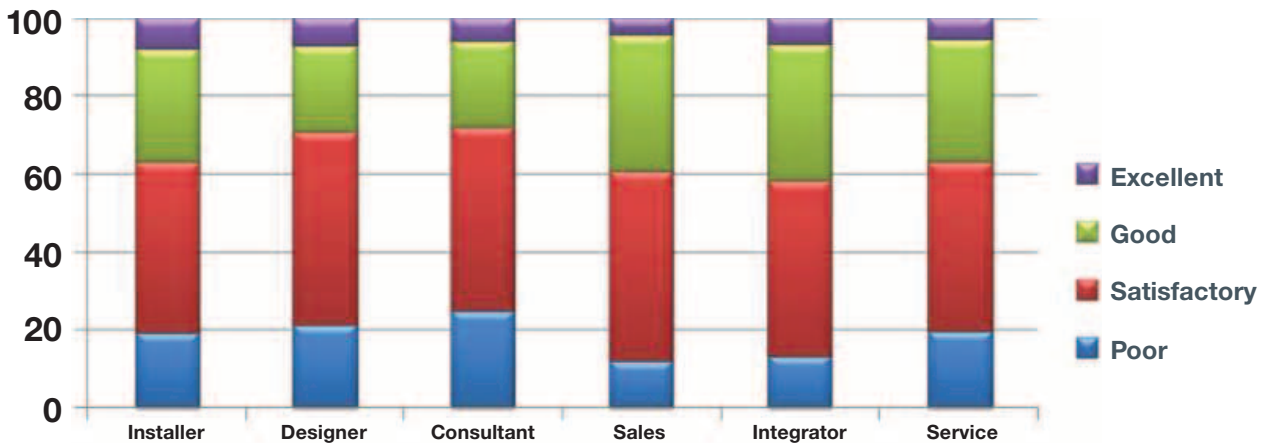
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**“92% of respondents supported the introduction of nationally recognised qualifications”**



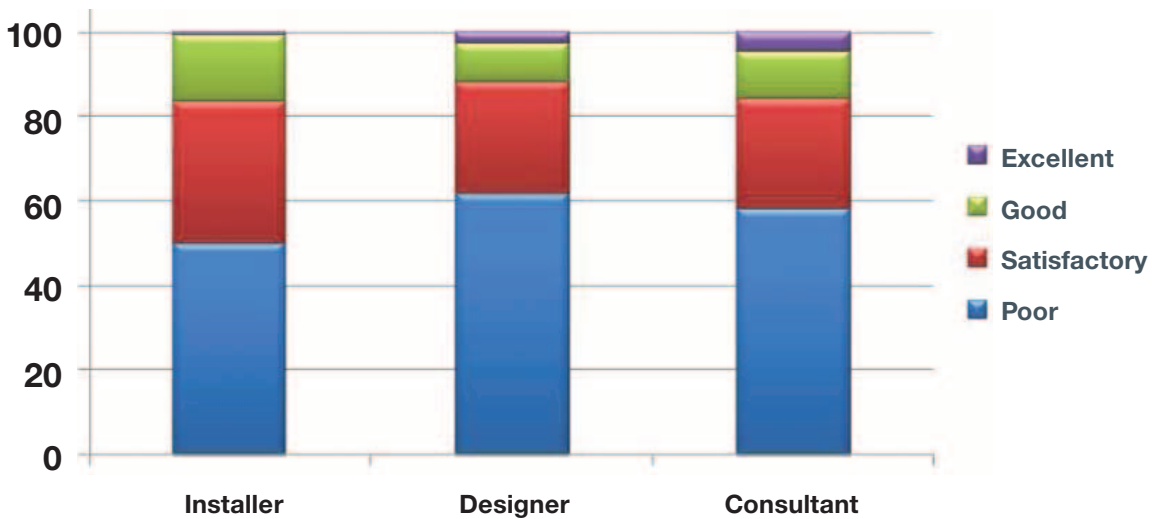
(Left to right: Vlado Damjanovski, John Maizels and Les Simmonds)

**RATING OF INDUSTRY EXPERTISE BY CCTV ROLE**



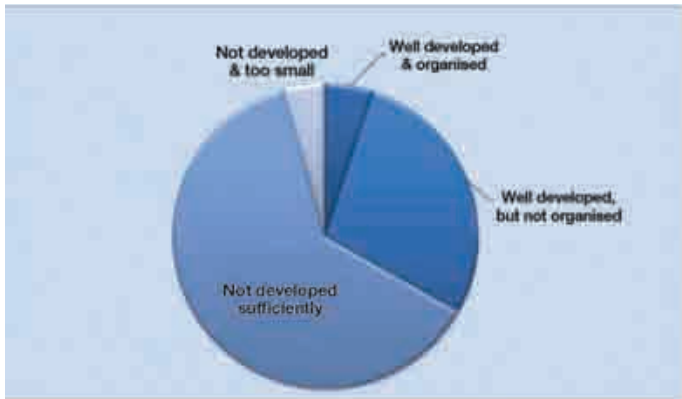
Source: ASIAL CCTV Survey, September 2008

**RATING OF THE LEVEL OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE**



Source: ASIAL CCTV Survey, September 2008

**RATING OF AUSTRALIA'S CCTV INDUSTRY TODAY**



Source: ASIAL CCTV Survey, September 2008

The following charts illustrate quite clearly how respondents view the level of expertise and training currently available in Australia.

As shown, participants in the CCTV sector use a range of channels to advance their own, and their staff's knowledge. Whilst online learning is the most popular individual source of learning, almost 60% of respondents indicated that they used a combination of options.

**PREFERRED SOURCE OF LEARNING**

Reading magazines, books	<b>1.4%</b>
Sourcing material online	<b>3.4%</b>
Attending seminars, trade shows	<b>9.5%</b>
Discussion with colleagues	<b>3.4%</b>
Online learning	<b>10.9%</b>
Educational facility eg. TAFE, University	<b>4.1%</b>
Practical hands on experience	<b>7.5%</b>
Combination of the above	<b>59.8%</b>

Source: ASIAL CCTV Survey, September 2008

When employing or recommending someone to fill a vacancy in CCTV, 38.5% of respondents indicated that they had enough knowledge to assess a candidates ability; 16.6% would only recommend those who they knew had a proven track record in CCTV; 16.5% indicated that they would first

	<b>Standard of CCTV installation work</b>	<b>Standard of CCTV equipment</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>
<b>Good</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>64.6%</b>
<b>Poor</b>	<b>37.1%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>0%</b>

put them on for a trial period to see how they performed and 15.2 would ask to see formal qualifications and assess how much of this related to CCTV.

Only 8.6% of CCTV tenders were rated as very professional and well presented. Of the remainder, 40.7% were rated as

**“The CCTV sector offers strong employment opportunities and growth.”**



not that professional, but given the suppliers CCTV experience they were able to work out what the client wanted and 32.9% were rated as unprofessional and lacking in any clear direction in what was wanted.

Hand in hand with the response to the quality of tender documents, only 2.1% of CCTV consultants were rated as highly professional. The vast majority of respondents (67.1%) rated consultants as some are good, some are bad, 20% rated them as satisfactory and 6.3% as highly unprofessional.

Overall, the standard of CCTV equipment available in Australia was rated very highly, as shown by the following table.

The skills shortage has created an increasingly competitive environment across all sectors for suitably qualified personnel. Of particular interest to the CCTV sector is the fact that 36% of respondents identified that if they were to switch careers to another industry, they would choose the IT and networking

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sector. A further 14.2% identified the access control sector, for 14.2%, 6.4% computer software and hardware and 5.7% television broadcasting.

For those looking to embark on a career in CCTV, some of the advice provided by respondents included:

“Study CCTV and get qualifications.”

CCTV is a complex discipline covering electronics (analogue and digital), optics and mechanics, knowledge of electronics is essential.”

“The CCTV sector offers strong employment opportunities and growth. However, it is extremely important to get a solid understanding of the basics. Learn the basics well and the industry will love you.”

“Go and get the best training you can afford.”

“CCTV offers an exciting career where you will always be learning. If you like to learn and grow, you will do well.”

“The industry is very small. Be honest and act with integrity. Work hard to provide a high level of customer service and don't put down other products or organizations.”

“Learn IT networking, communications/sales skills, be open minded about different types of technologies and methodology.”

“Make sure you understand security and where CCTV fits into the overall security design solution.”

“Try to get as much practical experience possible with someone who knows the industry and its products.”

“Take a wider view of the technology than just the technical aspects. Be aware of the appropriate and inappropriate use of CCTV as a surveillance and evidence capturing tool.”

Of the 8% who were opposed to the introduction of nationally recognised qualifications, the primary reasons provided included that it would introduce additional barriers to

entry, add more red tape and be difficult to enforce unless it was mandatory. The point was also raised, that so long as the Do-It-Yourself market in CCTV

products continues to operate, you will not get any improvement in professional standards.

Whilst a small minority do not support the introduction of nationally recognised qualifications, the vast majority (92%) do. The following comments capture the views of most respondents:

“Yes, the industry definitely needs a certification program. At the moment there are a few hacks out there that aren't really tuned into the customer requirements.”

“I think that keeping the security industry professional is highly important, as is making sure that clients get the best possible service.”

“The best thing to happen to the industry would be the formal recognition of qualifications.”

Building on the feedback received from the survey and forum, a discussion paper will be developed outlining possible options for a national industry certification program for the CCTV sector. The document will be made available soon for comment.

**“The industry is very small.  
Be honest and act with integrity.”**

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