

TARGET National Investigative Team Case Study



The TARGET Corporation, a Fortune 50 company, created a National Investigative Team in the mid-1990s. The specific mission of the NIS Team (now Special Investigations) is to investigate - independently or in partnership with the appropriate federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies – crimes against the Corporation by organized retail criminal rings resulting in significant financial loss or potential grievous harm to employees.

Performance issues were identified in the team by corporate management. As a remediation measure the Manager of Investigations and Training retained us to:

- a) Do a comprehensive evaluation of the team's ability in its core functional areas; and
- b) Based on the results of the evaluation, recommend training and other means to improve team and individual team member performance.

The team was evaluated and assessed in these areas:

- Intra-team dynamics and communication
- Leadership dynamics and communication
- Team capabilities (demonstrated as opposed to assumed/stated)
- Team performance under stress
- Surveillance skills:
 - a) Plan and execute simple and complex surveillances
 - b) Utilize set-up skills
 - c) Utilize mobile surveillance skills

- d) Utilize foot skills
- e) Utilize communication skills
- f) Utilize transition from mounted to dismounted skills
- g) Adjust for rural and urban considerations

The team comprehensively failed an independent scenario-based real-time evaluation of these core functional areas. The team suffered a complete breakdown of unit cohesion and leadership and was unable to complete the evaluation.

Weaknesses in team management, procedures and skills were identified. Specific remediation steps were offered. The Manager then requested a training designed to accelerate learning of core observation and surveillance skills, team-building, leadership development, team cohesion, individual, buddy and whole-team skill sets.

A five-day 60+ hour training program was designed and delivered. These areas were installed and continually assessed under stress:

- Mindset and attitude
- Individual skill sets:
 - a) Situational awareness
 - b) Observation skills
 - c) Individual profile awareness
 - d) Cover and concealment
- Small team skills:
 - a) Foot drills
 - b) Vehicle drills
 - c) Communications
 - d) Reporting
- Full team skills:
 - a) Surveillance management
 - b) Investigation management
 - c) Coordination of complex surveillances

After five intense training days, the NIS Team met and exceeded all their previous training standards, generated a new unit SOP, and refined the selection and assessment procedures for team growth. Within the first 30 days after completing training, the team met and exceeded ALL previous performance indices by 300%.



National Investigative Team with role-players at conclusion of training

Main Points:

- Within thirty days after completing a training utilizing accelerated learning, stress inoculation and compressed curriculum, a national level investigative team improved its performance by 300% as measured by corporate performance standards.
- The Accentus-Ludus training protocol enabled the designer to embed multiple trainings within the context of a larger program -- mindset, psychological factors to improve individual and team performance, verbal and non-verbal communication skills – in addition to the individual, small team and large team surveillance skills.
- In a five-day program, the accelerated learning design provided the equivalent of six weeks training (three 2-week trainings on individual surveillance skills, small team skills and large scale surveillance operations requiring coordination and liaison with outside agencies)
- Merchandise and money recovered by the team during the first year after training totaled over \$2.6 million. This was more than double the start-up and continuing operation cost of the unit. **This was one of the best Return On Investments from training in the corporation history.**



NIS Team on site of major arrests and recovery totaling over \$500,000 on a complex case that ranged from Detroit MI to Queens, New York