

Ratnakar Bade, Senior Director - Security & BCP, Flipkart: Explains the Criticality of Security and how to Mitigate Risks



Interview of Ratnakar Bade, Senior Director - Security & BCP at Flipkart

Flipkart Group has been continuously enhancing capability of Security Program by investing in state of art Security infrastructure, Security talent & next generation Security Technology.

Q. Please give us a brief of your company and your journey so far.

A. About Flipkart:

The Flipkart Group is one of India's leading digital commerce entities and includes group companies Flipkart, Myntra, Flipkart Wholesale, and Cleartrip. The Group is also a majority shareholder in PhonePe, one of the leading Payments Apps in India.

Started in 2007, Flipkart has enabled millions of consumers, sellers, merchants, and small businesses to be a part of India's

digital commerce revolution, with a registered customer base of more than 350 million, offering over 150 million products across 80+ categories. Our efforts to democratize commerce in India, drive access and affordability, delight customers, create lakhs of jobs in the ecosystem, and empower generations of entrepreneurs and MSMEs have inspired us to innovate on many industry firsts. Flipkart is known for pioneering services such as Cash on Delivery, No Cost EMI and easy returns – customer-centric innovations have made

online shopping more accessible and affordable for millions of Indians. Together with its group companies, Flipkart is committed to transforming commerce in India through technology.

The Flipkart Marketplace offers consumers across the country a wide variety of products at attractive prices that can be purchased through various financial constructs. The products on the platform are sold through various sellers, partners and brands including MSMEs and artisans. Today we have more than **300,000 sellers** from across the country and work with more than **1 million Kiranas** through Flipkart Wholesale's Best Price cash-and-carry business Flipkart serves **millions of customers** and delivers to the farthest of places across **20,000 pin codes**.

Ratnakar Bade:

I am a former Indian Military (Infantry) officer with 13 years of Military Service and presently I am working as the Head of Security and BCP for Flipkart Group. Prior to joining Flipkart, I have worked for Reserve Bank of India, Nokia Corporation and Microsoft (Vietnam). Over the years, I gained Corporate Security experience in Banking, Manufacturing, R&D, Logistic & E-commerce Supply Chain sectors across diverse regions, where I have had opportunities to devise Risk Management strategies, structure Security programs and deploy them for diverse business lines. Domain perspective, I have expertise in Security Policy, Awareness, Compliance, Crisis Management, Business Continuity and Fraud Investigations.

I graduated in Humanities and have been qualified for Risk Management Certifications like CPP, CFE, CISM, ISO 22301, OHSAS 18001, TAPA FSR & TSR. I am an alumni of IIM(Bangalore), having completed Executive General Management (EGMP) and Supply Chain Strategy courses.

I am a member of ASIS International's Global councils for Leadership and Management Practices (LMPC), Supply Chain and Transportation Security (SC&TS) and a part of OSAC Bangalore Committee. In the past, I have been a founding Co-Chair for OSAC, Hanoi (Vietnam). I have also served as a member of TAPA Asia-Pacific Board of Directors.

Q. How critical is security in the Smart Retail or E-Commerce industry?

A. Customer is the King. E-commerce business is based on creating a value proposition for customers by providing them selection, variety, affordability, and speed of delivery. Customers should get the right quality product, at an affordable price and at the promised time. This business mission mandates building up a diverse supply chain capability and partner the ecosystem.

- Security program is critical in creating a safe and secure workplace along with a supply chain to build up confidence in employees, leadership, customers, and partners. The capable security program evaluates emerging risks for business i.e., risks to People, Assets, Operations, Brand and implements proactive mitigation plans. In this regard, Security Teams deploy various measures including site security protocols, own and coordinate Emergency Response, Crisis Management structures to build up prevention and response capabilities. Security team also leads and coordinates Business Continuity program - to ensure seamless deliveries to our customers, even in the event of disruptions. This includes disruptions from fire, flood, natural disasters, burglary, theft, vandalism, terrorism, or technology as well as ecosystem disruptions.
- For every business, it is essential to proactively mitigate spillage, losses and frauds to protect the bottom line, through timely investigations and implementing loss prevention controls.



Ratnakar Bade
Senior Director - Security & BCP at Flipkart



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- To enhance Risk Resilience capability for the company, the Security team seamlessly collaborates with internal stakeholders and external partners.
- Security team also manages Employees' life safety threat management protocols, Anti-Counterfeit ground enforcement to protect customers and brands by collaboration with partners and local authorities.
- From the perspective of diverse and evolving risks in E-Commerce and Retail, it is imperative to build and develop a Security function as the Go-To team for protection of People, Assets, Operations and Brand. This team, by design and approach, has a capability to stand up to unforeseen challenges, foster partnerships and collaborations and mitigate emerging risks to the business

Q. What are the recent security measures taken by your company?

- A. Flipkart Group has been continuously enhancing capability of Security Program by investing in state of art **Security infrastructure, Security talent & next generation Security Technology**. All the new sites and business lines have been equipped with state of art security technology and best in India Security talent.
- Pandemic has thrown up multiple challenges and Flipkart has responded splendidly by complying with Covid prevention and response protocols, enhanced safety standards and delivered to customers' needs during lockdowns. Security team collaborated with all stakeholders to implement these prevention and response protocols, social distancing compliances, facilitated many government official visits and ensured continuity of operations, while enhancing trust of authorities.
 - As part of the Crisis Management framework, Security Command center undertook the deciphering of Central and State Government notifications, compliance requirements therein, aligning all business lines through crisis calls and Security Operations teams supported business teams on grounds, with liaison with local authorities - to ensure business continuity in a continuously evolving and stressful atmosphere.
 - As part of the implementation of the Structured Security program, we have invested in the Integrated **Security Command Center**. For employee safety, we have launched the **Flipkart Security SOS APP** and integrated it with the Security Command Center.
 - To standardize security infrastructure and processes, we have benchmarked with global Risk Management standards and got our supply chain businesses certified for **TAPA FSR** (Facility Security Requirements) and **ISO 22301** (Business Continuity Management Systems).

- We have consistently invested in Employee Awareness for enhancing risk sensitization and risk notification triggers. We have enhanced our employee collaboration in Risk Mitigation protocols, by including employees in our Emergency Response Teams (ERT), Crisis Management Teams (CMT) & BCM Execution Teams. This inclusion has greatly helped us during pandemics as many employees became part of **Covid Task Force** and helped other employees across India.
- Through Integrated Security Command Center and Security Team's footprint across India, we have invested in **Predictive Intelligence** capability to identify and mitigate **emerging risks**.

Q. According to you, what are the most important safety and security essentials that should be followed today?

- A. **Employee awareness** on existing and emerging risks is at the top of the list. Businesses have embarked on diversity initiatives and many more women and differently abled are joining the workforce. All the workforce should be aware about risks, safety measures, notification protocols and they should comply with them. Awareness is the enabler of success in this regard.
- Employees of logistics teams, especially in the last mile, have to extensively travel on the road in diverse geographical and environmental conditions. Their adherence to traffic rules and safety protocols is essentially important for life safety and employee wellbeing.
 - Automated **SOS APP** which triggers multiple notification during distress, including to the Centralized 24*7 Security Command Center is a highly desirable capability. To augment notification capability, we also have 24*7 manned **Pan-India Security Helpline** with multiple lines, to enable simultaneous calls.

- **Emergency Response Trainings, Fire safety and evacuation protocols, medical emergency training and Women Self Defense training** are essentially important.
- As part of elevated risk management, **Life Safety Threat Management** protocols need to be implemented to manage specific threats to employees.
- Highly trained and skilled security teams, who can swiftly and proficiently respond to exigencies are essential to ensure safety of employees and protection of assets and brand.
- Diversely talented, passionate and committed security team is the real game changer. Such a team equipped with best in class technology and tools, would be a great enabler of business success.
- Fundamentally, Security teams need to invest in structural capabilities of risks identifications and notifications, integrate them with response protocols on ground for risk mitigations.

Q. In regard to security, what are the long-term goals for your company?

- A. Our mission is to continuously improve on a cost effective, sustainable and scalable Security program, which is recognized as a **BUSINESS ENABLER**, through its consistent **Value Add**.
- We aspire to become the best in class, technology driven, people oriented and collaborative security program. We are working to achieve this by enhancing **Capability Maturity Model of Security program** through investment in **security technology, people capabilities and Process compliance through awareness**.
 - We are also consciously working on enhancing **predictive intelligence capabilities** to map and mitigate **emerging threats/risks**. Along with Continuously evolving the security program to build up capabilities in managing new age risks through **prevention of frauds and losses, counterfeits, brand/reputation and Business Continuity risks**. 