



LIVE MUSIC INTELLIGENCE

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PARK LIVE

On the road with Linkin Park

HIGHLAND OF OPPORTUNITY

Scotland's live scene profiled

TAXSPOTTING

MGR Media at 30

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Swiss sensation AVO Session Basel

EUROPEAN *Festival* REPORT 2010

LIVE IS A BOX OF CHOCOLATES: *Daniel Pugsley*

SAFE & SOUND: *Morten Therkildse*

SUPPORT ACTS: *John Whittingdale*

FANTASY FESTIVAL: *Hillel Wachs & Bryan Steiner*



Safe & Sound

Event safety consultant **Morten Therkildse** of ConCom
Safety suggests the way forward for safer events...



WHILE RESEARCHING THE COMPETENCE, training and reputation of Danish event safety stewards, I spoke to Gerard van Duykeren, author of *The Event Security Officer*, who said, "Event safety stewards need crystal clear goals and objectives in their work at events otherwise their work will always stay as it is, until an accident happens." Unfortunately, accidents happen quite often. Within the last year we have experienced tragic losses at nightclubs, concerts and festivals around the world. So how do we improve the safety and identify the 'crystal clear goals and objectives' for everybody in the industry?

I believe that everything starts at the top. Promoters, crowd safety managers and the authorities must improve their knowledge and their way of working. They must agree on clear goals and objectives. A way forward could be better and more unified documentation. In order to ensure that events are well run and prepared the authorities should ask for proper documentation. But what is proper documentation, and who sets the terms?

There should be a defined way of documenting an event to indicate the risk assessment, the major incident plan and the general methodology of how the phases of the event are planned. It should show operational procedures and a proof of preparation. The way of assessing should be predefined and so should some of the issues that must be determined in the documentation. Proposals from Mick Upton, (former head of The International Centre for Crowd Management and Security Studies at Bucks New University) and Mark Hamilton, (managing director of G4S Events and the present head of the centre) outline a basis for a proper crowd management plan.

A crowd management plan produced in line with Upton and Hamilton's suggestions make it obvious whether the organisers have thought about the challenges they are facing or not. The idea behind the documentation is to show the mindset of the organisers. Do they seem sufficiently competent to organise their event, or should the authorities raise a red flag and assist them? Sadly, the authorities are often not used to organising events, and therefore do not know what to look for. A unit of crowd managers should therefore assist the local authorities with their task.

Documentation costs nothing but time. But by documenting an event properly the organisers will improve their knowledge and awareness, and this is where we should focus. The training of the stewards is certainly not insignificant, but this is not the place to

start. If the organisers are inexperienced or incompetent regarding crowd management, using qualified stewards or security staff won't completely compensate. The management sets the tone and they define the focus for everybody working at an event.

Working with crowd safety managers who provide clear goals and objectives improves the quality of the event's safety stewards. In order to train stewards and keep their skills alive and in use, we need crowd safety managers and promoters who have set clear goals and objectives for their staff. Fortunately, we frequently see excellent promoters and managers. But we also encounter the opposite. And as production manager Chrissy Uerlings asked in the September issue of *IQ Magazine*, "The question then also becomes who has the knowledge to judge whether these plans are correct?" Crowd safety management is international, we face the same issues everywhere and we see the same incidents everywhere. What is needed is an international standard of how to document crowd safety management issues and to ensure that the organisers have thought about their responsibility.

"Sadly, the authorities are often not used to organising events, and therefore do not know what to look for."

If the European Union were willing to work toward a common standard for Europe, things might change. We have very good guides in the field of crowd safety management, and we have skilled and educated professionals. What we need is an international guide or maybe even a law stipulating how to document events. A law supported by a how-to guide, and by an international unit of crowd safety managers willing to assist with improving the industry. Authorities and organisers should be supported by an inspectorate who travels to events in order to assist and ensure the development of safer events by ensuring that the documentation is implemented and dynamically adhered to.

I believe that the way forward for safer events in the future is clear goals and objectives for everybody. It will be difficult to implement, particularly on a European level, but who are we to let difficulties stand in the way of safer events? Are we not supposed to work together toward a higher quality of safety at all events? It is time for the industry to take the next step. ■