



# Security Measured

*The majority of crowd management companies think promoters don't take their business seriously enough. The sector has come a long way since Roskilde, but the recent tragedy in Duisberg raises questions about just how far is still to go, writes **Greg Parmley***

**The day before Denmark's Roskilde Festival kicked off** in June, a group of crowd managers, production experts and academics gathered for a one-day conference entitled Roskilde 10. A decade since the tragedy when nine fans were fatally crushed during a Pearl Jam set, they met to discuss the latest innovations in the sector. Presentations included crowd modelling software and explanations of pressure-suit experiments. Ten years ago, such discussions would have been alien. A month later, when 22 people die at the Love Parade in Germany, they seem more vital than ever. "The industry is further developed, and a lot of research went into crowd control measures, but it is not accessible for everybody," says veteran production manager Chrissy Uerlings. "It's still hard for some countries to follow guidelines because of the financial implications, or a lack of materials, like barriers. Proper security and crowd management now involves having crowd managers involved at an early stage and that has an implication on the cost, so it doesn't always happen."

IQ polled 50 security companies in 22 countries about local legislation, company policy and attitudes towards the industry. An early question we asked was 'How would you rate the standard of crowd management in your market?' and there was a marked difference between developed and less developed markets. In Central and Eastern Europe, only 44% rated the standard of crowd

management as good or above, whereas Western Europe rated itself as 52% (good or above). In Australia and New Zealand, 75% of respondents rated crowd management good or above, and this figure dropped slightly to 67% for South Africa and Japan.

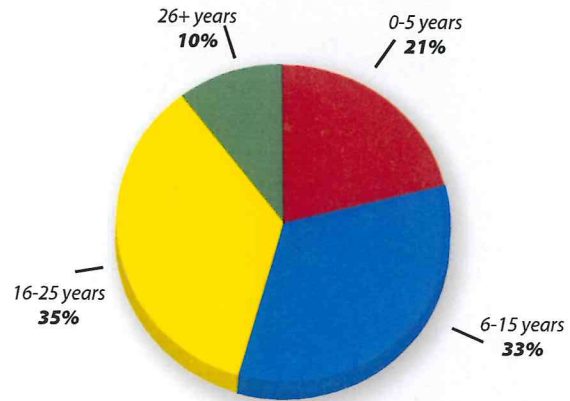
Overall, however, few deny just how far the industry has progressed over the last few years. Chris Kemp heads up the Centre for Crowd Management and Security Studies at Bucks New University in the UK and was one of those presenting at Roskilde 10. "It's been a lot about changes in management," he says. "People have changed the way they manage things, the way a pit boss works, changed the fact that you can now stop a show. Ten years ago, if a crowd manager stopped a show, the tour manager would have been paying for their blood. It's different now." And the nature of crowd management companies has altered too. Of the companies surveyed, slightly more defined themselves as crowd management companies as opposed to security companies, while 79% had been in business for six years or more, suggesting a maturing market populated by experienced companies.

"There's very little scope now for new providers," says Mark Hamilton at G4S Event Security. "There's been a degree of consolidation [in the UK] and you've now got Showsec owned by Live Nation, and RockSteady (which was my company) owned by G4S, which is the world's

largest secure solutions provider. It's recognition that there are high standards in an industry where people's safety is the primary objective." Showsec's operations director Mark Logan agrees, although he admits to having doubts about the quality offered from some quarters: "There's a lot of companies selling crowd management and stewarding and I'm not sure how well tested that credibility is at the lower end of the market," he says. If providers are offering a poor service, it won't be due to a lack of knowledge in the field. Barrier configurations at festivals and big events are now far developed from what they used to be, informed by various formulae and research, while volumes have been published in the academic world on the subject. Kemp's pressure-suit experiments will be measuring crowd density and temperature at Muse's Wembley Stadium show in September, adding to readings taken at Roskilde, and physicist Tobias Kretz can simulate crowd flow through his VISSIM software. "You need to start with experience and intuition but the simulation can add to these two main factors, allowing you to examine entry points and egress routes," he says.

**FAR MORE IS UNDERSTOOD ABOUT** crowd dynamics than ever before, but some companies claim that this understanding is not translating into safer events, and it's often a decision outside of their control. With promoters pulling the purse strings, perhaps the most unexpected response from *IQ*'s survey was that 52% of crowd management companies believe that promoters still do not take crowd safety seriously enough. Top of the reasons for this was financial implication, followed by ignorance or a general lack of awareness about safety.

"Companies like Live Nation show how events should be organised, but most promoters aren't conscious

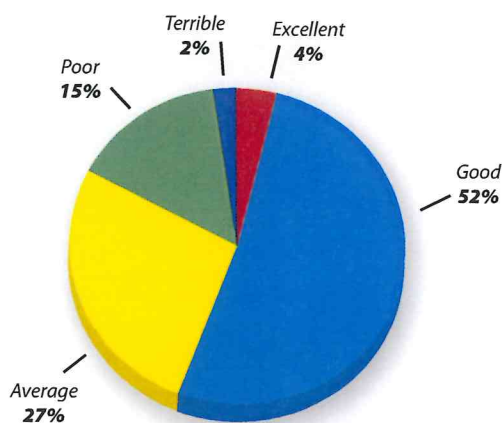


**How long has your company been in business?**

of the consequences," says Cezary Plencier at FOSA in Poland. It's a view shared by Petter Säterhed from Liveside in Sweden who says: "Most of the larger and/or more experienced promoters do take crowd management and security seriously. But the market is, in this respect, very heterogeneous. There are still promoters out there that just don't know enough."

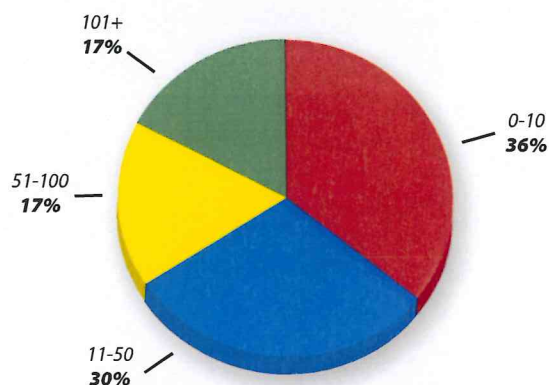
"In Italy, there isn't a safety culture," says Fabio Marsili at ATS Around The Show. "Often, during an event, the cost of security is the first cost cut." Of the surveyed companies, the majority claimed to be able to deliver between 100 and 500 staff for an event (in total, companies claimed to have access to 22,800 staff), with roughly seven freelancers for every full-time member of staff. And it's the labour intensive nature of the industry that makes it such an expensive addition to the bottom line of any show.

"In some countries there are laws stipulating one security guard per 100 people," Uerlings says. "This might be right in a club, but when there are 60,000 people in a stadium, you'll have 600 security guards just standing on their own feet." Indeed, from the companies surveyed, the number of recommended staff per 1,000 averaged out to 13.3, but the figures varied dramatically depending on local laws or recommendations from other markets. One third of respondents stated that staffing numbers depended on a risk assessment and the nature of the crowd. "Who determines what the minimum is, and what's acceptable?" asks Uerlings. "You can have loads of staff, but if they don't do the job properly, it wouldn't help you." Such different rules and recommendations, and the assumption that one size rarely fits all, leave promoters and crowd managers negotiating on services, rather than applying an international standard. And it's in this middle ground that crowd management companies fear being neutered and left short-handed. ▶▶



**How would you rate the standard of crowd management in your market? (all results)**





**How many full-time staff do you employ?**

►► “Some promoters are employing security companies because they are obliged by law, without taking into account the quality of the security services,” says Carol Ungureanu at BGS Divizia de Securitate in Romania, while Byron Towell at Showsafe in South Africa blames elements of the industry for the confusion. “Certain providers are at fault for creating an attitude of security or crowd management being an unskilled job and this has filtered through the market,” he says. “It is seen as a necessary evil and is subject to budget cuts on a frequent basis.”

*“Ten years ago, if a crowd manager stopped a show, the tour manager would have been baying for their blood. It's different now.”*

– Chris Kemp, Bucks New Uni



**WHILE AN INVESTIGATION IS ONGOING**, cost concerns are suspected to have been a contributing factor in the tragedy at the Love Parade in Duisberg, Germany on 24 July when 21 people died and more than 500 were injured after panic broke out in the only access tunnel leading to the event. News of the tragedy was met with incredulity from some corners of the industry, who were surprised that the event was even allowed to go ahead using a single entry and exit point. “People are focusing on the tunnel but it's not the tunnel that's to blame, it's the planning,” says Hamilton at G4S.

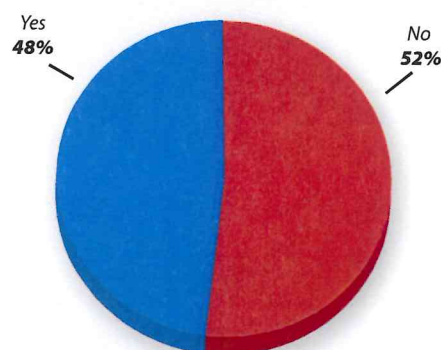
Folkert Koopmans of FKP Scorpio (see page 38) promoted nine outdoor events in August and he reports never having had so many meetings about security as a result. “The accident appears to be a combination of an inexperienced promoter and a city that really wanted the event without looking at the standards,” he says. “You can't push a million people through a tunnel 22-metres wide. It's just that simple.” Other promoters are more outspoken and keen to distance

the concert business from the deaths. “It was a mixture of incompetence and arrogance by the city authorities who were completely overwhelmed and bent the existing pop codes and rules; and an amateurish, part-time organiser who is nothing to do with the professional promoters in this country,” says Marek Lieberberg. “Furthermore, I don't believe we should mix apples and oranges. Parallels between what happened in Duisberg and our industry don't exist, in my opinion.”

While the ticket-selling professionals expect to be tarred with the same brush, many of the problem events in Europe over the last few years have been free, or run by local authorities. Another example occurred in Birmingham, UK in November 2009, when 64 fans were injured at a free JLS show as ticketless crowds stormed police lines and a front-of-stage barrier collapsed. With crowd numbers an unknown quantity at free events, there are now calls from some quarters to ban them entirely. Cees Muurling is MD of Mojo Barriers. He says: “There's an awful lot of 'a' and 'b' companies in a professional industry that are very well aware of the risks that are involved with large crowds, but there's still a lot of 'c' companies and local authorities who organise events once or twice a year who are missing the knowledge. The industry's knowledge is available, but they're not using it.”

One of the fears post-Duisberg is the introduction of knee-jerk, rushed legislation that could penalise legitimate promoters (see page 9). “There are existing rules,” Lieberberg says. “It's not new laws that we need, it's the application of existing laws that is necessary.” Either way, a tightening of existing rules is expected. Uerlings says that there is a requirement for a security plan for shows in Germany, which include evacuation procedure, egress/ingress, methods of communication and risk assessment on site.

But he's adamant that the plans are set to become far more detailed. “You will have to have more knowledge to fill them in,” he says. “But who has the knowledge to judge that ►►



**Is crowd management/security taken sufficiently seriously by the promoters in your market?**



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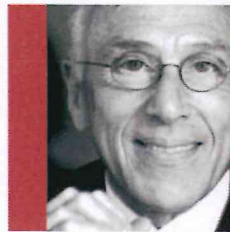
▶▶ they are correct? The industry has to be very careful that the right people are qualified for the right task. It needs to include itself in discussions and make sure it is available with the right information.”

When it comes to pre-existing legislation, across the 22 markets surveyed, the picture changes radically. 70% of companies reported some sort of existing local legislation, while others look to markets such as the UK for advice. “Local legislation exists, but we plan crowd management around UK guides such as the pop code, Green Guide and all the appropriate health & safety guides; and UK fire prevention and management guides, says John Van Stan at Showsafe in South Africa. Vilnis Valbergs at Security Service Art-Ekspo in Latvia reports: “In 2005, Latvian lawmakers drafted a law on public entertainment and safety at mass events. Many of the guidelines, we have learned from working with big foreign artists and big local events.”

Countries without legislation include Norway, Luxembourg, Croatia and Czech Republic, while Sweden, Denmark and Romania don't have specific crowd management legislation. However, some markets report inbound law. New Zealand and Italy are set for new rules later this year, and South Africa is introducing a bill for security at major events within the next 12 months. Both South Africa and Italy are increasing levels of standardised training

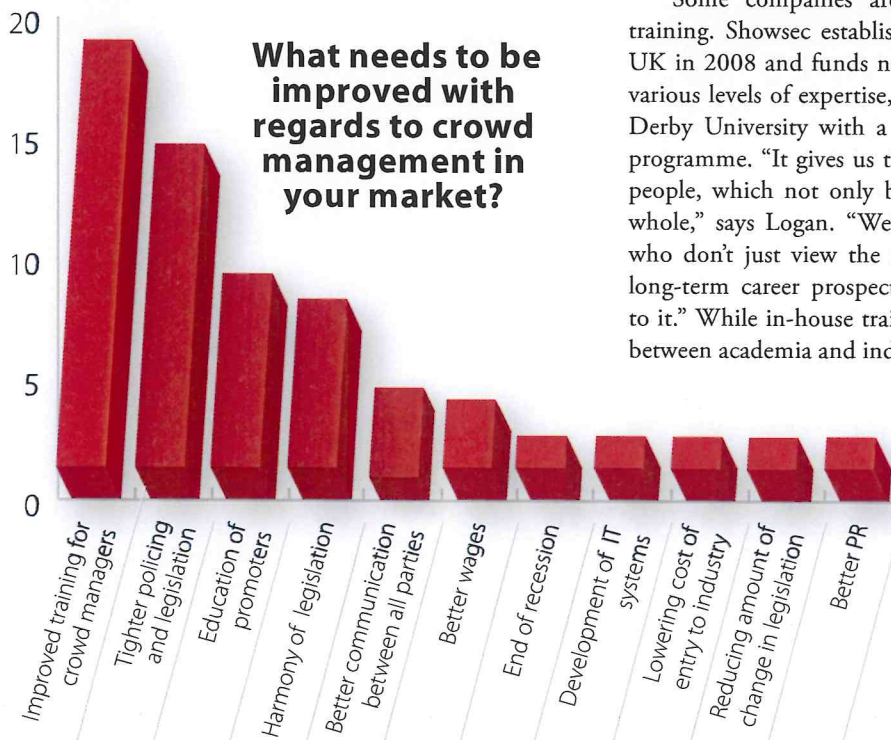
with their laws. In Australia, Jon Corbishley reports that legislation exists, but is not specific to concerts and events. “Training for security is for clubs and pubs and not festivals or events, so it's up to individual companies to provide their own in-house training if they have the experience,” he says.

**WHILE FURTHER LEGISLATION OF THE** security industry might help to eliminate rogue traders and support legitimate players, staff training schemes are key cogs in the wheel of any firm's success. Of the companies surveyed, 42% offered a comprehensive number of courses while 50% offered some training (8% offered none). One third of companies stated that training was compulsory, one third that training was offered, and one third that they ran compulsory training with further courses on offer. However, the level of compulsory staff training looks set to rise. “Before Duisberg, our training was offered to staff,” says Michael Molt of U-Need GmbH in Germany. “We're changing it to be compulsory.”



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– Marek Lieberberg, MLK

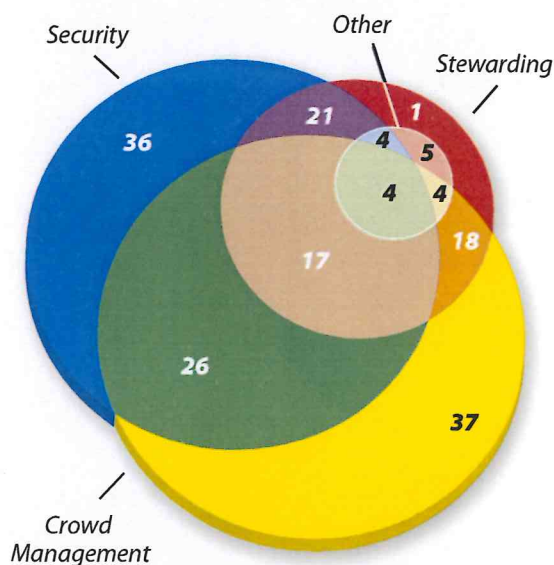


Some companies are already renowned for their training. Showsec established a training academy in the UK in 2008 and funds new recruits and existing staff to various levels of expertise, marrying academic work from Derby University with a structured, vocational training programme. “It gives us the ability to develop careers for people, which not only benefits us but the market as a whole,” says Logan. “We're developing crowd managers who don't just view the industry as a casual job, but a long-term career prospect. It brings a lot more solidity to it.” While in-house training is commonplace, alliances between academia and industry are becoming increasingly

prevalent. The crowd management centre at Bucks New Uni, the first dedicated centre of its kind, has increased the number of courses it offers from three to 30 in the last six months, with a series of one-day programmes for festivals.

“We're also forming an area in crowd science, where we have a few ▶▶





## How do you define your company?

*"If people feel obligated towards the security of the crowd, then things will change. If they see it as a burden and an extra cost, then we can develop as many systems as we like, but it will not help."*

– Chrissy Uerlings, CUP



► major projects with European crowd management companies, and a group of interested universities in Germany, Denmark and Holland," says the centre's head Chris Kemp. Not every market is as proactive, as shown by a 2010 survey of Danish security companies by Morten Therkildsen of crowd management specialists ConCom Safety which found that 14.7% of stewards had never received any training; 46% considered their colleagues unqualified for their job; and 82% felt a need for a training scheme. But on the whole, as Uerlings says, "There's a lot happening. Festival organisers, especially [festival association] YourEurope, are

leading the field, alongside some interested security company leaders in Holland, the UK and Germany." For Uerlings and others, this movement towards industry-backed education and research is a final stage in the sector's development; where communication and the adoption of ideas become vital. "If people feel obligated towards the security of the crowd, then things will change," he says. "If they see it as a burden and an extra cost, then we can develop as many systems as we like, but it will not help."

One of the final questions IQ asked in its survey was "What needs to be improved with regards to crowd management in your market?" By far, the most popular response was improved training for crowd managers, followed by tighter policing and legislation for the industry. The third most popular response was education and awareness for promoters, again highlighting that while the security companies have the expertise, they don't control the budgets.

"We need a European licence system that demands some uniform education," says Ingemar Sveningsson at Show Security Sweden. "Something similar to what PADI do for divers, or what the riggers are trying to do in Europe."

"We must legislate and compel all local promoters and event organisers to comply with requirements defined by industry crowd management professionals for specific events," says Van Stan at Showsafe.

That crowd management professionals across the globe are effectively singing from the same hymn sheet is testament to how far the industry has developed in the last decade. Quite how much the recent

tragedy in Duisberg serves to speed further development, however, remains to be seen. The question is perhaps whether the industry has self-regulated sufficiently well to avoid overbearing legislation, or whether it can be instrumental in influencing law as and when it is introduced. The crowd management industry is still a long way from any pan European agreements, but by promoting best practice at every given turn, and by encouraging less experienced promoters, local authorities and fledgling security companies to use the information it has learned, there is the hope that any new lessons won't have to be paid for so dearly. ■

### PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

A.P. Security (UK), Around The Show (IT), Australian Concert and Entertainment Security (AU), B.E.S.T.Veranstaltungsdienste GmbH (DE), Backstage Security Services (UK), Bank Biztonság Bízalom Zrt. (HU), Business & Entertainment Security (UK), Concert & Eventservice (DE), ConCom Safety (DK), Cosa Nostra Crew Oy (FI), CP Security/Special Events (ZA), eps gmbh (DE), Event Security (HR), Eyethu Events (ZA), Frontline Service & Security ApS (DK), FOSA sp.z o.o (PL), G4S Event Security (BE), Ken & Staff Co.Ltd (JP), Liveside (SE), LOC7000 (UK), Local Crew Security (FI), Mainevent Security Management (NZ), Mr Safe-T Event Safety Specialists (ZA), Music Circus Stuttgart Security (DE),

National Event Services (AU), New Breed Security (AU), Orange Group a.s. (CZ), Pro Sec AS (NO), Rush Security Services (NZ), S.A.F.E. Sicherheits-Service GmbH (DE), S.C. BGS Divizia De Securitate S.R.L (RO), Schmitt-Security S.á.r.l. Luxembourg (DE), Se2solutions Service&Security GmbH (AT), Secure Events and Assets (AU), Security Service Art-Ekspo (LV), Show Security Sweden (SE), ShowRisk Event Management (AU), Showsafe (ZA), Showsec (UK), SHS GmbH (DE), Special Security Services GmbH (DE), Specialized Security (UK), StagePro (RU), SYM-SEC (HU), The Safety Officer (AU), The Security Company (NL), U-Need GmbH (DE), VIP Security (TR).