

# What Keeps You Up At Night?

With Peter Ashwin

## Risk Management and Security for Events

The recent tragic events in Boston, Massachusetts on April 15, 2013 are a stark reminder of the challenges that we face as special event organizers in today's ever changing security environment. Many of the lessons coming out of Boston aren't new within the international context; although it's changed our context for domestic events here in the USA.

The day after the incident, Steve Schmader, CFEE, President and CEO at IFEA World and I started trading emails on what was going to be the impact to the industry, drawing upon best practices I had seen and implemented from my experience over six Olympic Games. Within 24 hours of our initial conversation, the Department of Homeland Security issued "Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Awareness Guidelines and Protective Measures for Mass Gatherings," a pragmatic approach to enhancing security for special events.

The DHS IED guidance was timely and appropriate but I know it will be very challenging to implement many of these measures without considerable support and resources from local Law Enforcement, Public Safety Agencies and Federal Government security agencies. From my discussions with other IFEA members at the 2012 IFEA Annual Convention and Expo in Denver, CO, one of the key questions was "who pays for what" in regards to policing and security? The policy for cost recovery for policing and other public safety agencies varies city by city and state by state; this poses a significant "risk" to event budgets in an already uncertain environment.

Over the past few weeks, I have been reading and responding to blogs on what should be "best practices" after Boston. An issue that I have highlighted is that many of my security colleagues have lost sight of the fact that we are putting on "events with a security overlay (appropriate to risk)" not a "security event with an event overlay." This has always been a challenge for us in the Olympic Games environment. After working with Law Enforcement and Government security agencies in six countries, I have learned that the key to success is ensuring that the security agencies are "part of the journey." Integrating our security

partners throughout the event planning process and sharing our business objectives and critical success factors will help keep us all focused on the desired outcomes. We all know that our long term sustainability is often determined by the attendee / spectator experience.

So where do we go from here? As event organizers we must continue to plan within a dynamic and ever-changing operating environment; we must continue to anticipate and innovate. We must ensure that our operational plans evolve in response to the changing risk environment; be it security related like Boston, severe weather resulting in temporary infrastructure failure (stages and seating) or an increasing financial loss exposure due to the downturn in the economy (loss of sponsors, ticket sales etc.).

What does this mean? It means building a strong foundation for planning and operations through an effective Risk Management Plan. Your Risk Management Plan (which I hope you already have) not only represents a compliance tool, but also a quantitative process which supports prioritization of resources (human and financial capital) during planning and operational delivery.

Most importantly, as event professionals, a robust risk management process ensures that: 1.) the health, safety and wellbeing of employees (staff and volunteers) and the public is not compromised; 2.) financial performance of the event is protected; and 3.) the reputation of the event is strengthened in the eyes of local communities, sponsors and other stakeholders.

On a positive note to wrap up, we should not lose sight that each year thousands of special events are hosted safely and successfully by our global IFEA members - from small community events with hundreds of attendees to "Thunder Over Louisville®" at the Kentucky Derby Festival with 600,000+ attendees. Having said that, it is important that we continue to seek out best practices and other innovative processes, which create safe havens for our events.

**Note:** Peter Ashwin will be speaking at the IFEA's 58th Annual Convention & Expo in Pittsburgh, PA, U.S.A., September 16-18, 2013 on Risk Management and

the lasting impact following the Boston Marathon bombings.

**Peter Ashwin** is the Managing Partner for Exelar Consulting; a small consulting company specializing in master security planning, risk management and operational readiness for major events. Peter is recognized as a leader in major event security planning and implementing integration strategies to "bridge the gap" between Organizing Committees and Public Safety / Security agencies.

Peter's diverse range of skills have been developed through 13 years of major event security planning and operational management including six Olympic Games, the 2010 G8/G20 Summit (Toronto), His Holiness, the Dalai Lama visit to Idaho (2005) and 12 years of military protective security operations.

Peter has led and managed multi-national project teams in seven countries including USA, Russia, Qatar, Greece, Italy, Canada and the UK.

An accomplished technical security writer, Peter has authored the security chapter of "Bid Books" for two successful bids - Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games and the Russia 2018 FIFA World Cup. Other Bids have included the Rome 2020 Olympic Games Bid, the Doha 2016 Olympic Games Bid, and the Hambantota (Sri Lanka) 2018 Commonwealth Games Bid.

As the Head of Integrated Planning (Security & Resilience, London 2012 Olympic Games), Peter was responsible for the delivery of a programme budget of £160 million across six workstreams - C3, Intelligence, Protective Security Systems, Search & Screening, Security Coordination and Logistics Security.

As a former Australian Army Special Forces officer, Peter led highly trained and specialized military personnel in support of Australian national security objectives.

Peter is based out of Boise, Idaho but he still calls Australia "home".