

## Interviews With Planners - Mark Deane

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**Bethesda, Feb 8, 2019 ([IssueWire.com](http://IssueWire.com))** - Mark Deane is the CEO of ETS Risk Management, his experience stems from his career as an Operational Officer for the British Government specializing in counter terrorism and security. During this career, Mark was lucky enough to be involved in some of the largest counter terrorist operations in the past 20 years. Since leaving the service, Mark has developed to become a subject matter expert in special event security and risk management.

As CEO of ETS Mark has planned, managed and implemented numerous major [event security](#) and [travel risk management](#) operations. His clients include Fortune 10, Ultra-High Net Worth individuals, energy companies, multinational organizations including multiple Fortune 500, and scholastic organizations. Mark has planned, implemented and managed security for events ranging from Olympic corporate sponsor programs and sports events, through to VIP dinners and AGMs. He is an experienced project manager who leverages years of counter-terrorism, security and risk management experience to deliver a range of special event project management services precisely adapted to meet client requirements.

Mark's focus on providing intelligence-led security solutions, utilizing tailored risk assessments prepared in-house, and in-depth working knowledge of locations has grown ETS a loyal customer base. This process provides clients the confidence that procedures and personnel requirements will be accurate, commensurate with risk, and therefore the perfect balance between appropriate levels of security and cost. ETS, via the guidance of its Board of Directors strives to remain an innovative risk management company, enabling clients operations, pushing simplification and customer relationship management at every juncture.

## **What is the Best Advice you have ever Received as a Planner?**

A client told me that if I wanted to be successful with their company I should be able to explain and justify why I was planning certain security measures and protocols. They wanted to know why they needed eight people, instead of five, why the flow of guests had to be changed, or why credentialing got amended. This led me to focus on providing in-depth risk assessments and security plans that were easy to understand and tailored to the specific task. I provided the assessments and initial concept to the clients alongside proposals so they could see how we were thinking, what we were thinking about, and why certain things needed to be considered. This piece of advice early on in my commercial career moved me to better understand that security needs to be communicated more efficiently, be more approachable, and have a customer focus.

## **What is the most unique location you have ever planned an event at? What was great, what was challenging?**

The Rio 2016 Olympics was a unique operating environment and also extremely challenging. Thoroughly stunning topography, amazing people, vibrant culture and the world's biggest sporting event all in one city. However, it was logistically complex due to extremely high levels of crime, often violent and interspersed throughout every part of the city. This was compounded with poor operational planning and communication at a government level, major budget issues, the worse recession of modern times in Brazil, civil disturbance related to the impeachment, and an infrastructure that was heavily overstretched. The whole experience was amazing, the locals were supportive for the majority, all corporate sponsors, teams, and volunteers rallied together, worked together and supported each other. The city put on an amazing display and the end result was a thoroughly successful Olympic Games.

## **What Advice Would you Give to Someone Entering Business Today?**

Learn your client's objectives, and work in an enabling manner. Security is there to facilitate operations and support. Offer solutions, rather than just saying no.

What do you see as the most challenging aspect of being a planner, and how do you overcome that challenge?

Persuading clients that security should be brought in at the very earliest stages of event planning to work with all components. This forges the relationships between all stakeholders and security, allows for questions to be asked early that may affect the design and detail of the event, and helps develop a culture and understanding of how security is pervasive throughout every level.

For special event security to be its most effective it must be integrated throughout, be that layout design, access control, asset protection, credentialing, green rooms, transportation, fire safety, VIP & Law enforcement liaison and much more. If event planners can see security as an asset rather than a budgetary concern, it benefits the whole team.

To overcome this challenge, we work with clients to explain what we do and why. We work to gain the trust of the events team, show value at every juncture and identify to them that security is not about standing around ready to react if something goes wrong. That is reactive. In fact, it needs to be the opposite, security pro-actively identifying threats and the risk of those threats to help plan to avoid the danger. This is not just the physical aspect of protecting people and assets from serious threats such as terrorism but involves reputation and brand protection as well as protection from litigation. There are multiple examples of events hitting the media spotlight for all the wrong reasons, including

unprofessional security being aggressive or mishandling situations.

### **How do you think our industry will evolve in the next five years?**

Guests, VIPs, staff, all stakeholders will become more security aware and 'on-side' of sensible security measures. Due to the evolving threat of terrorism and the ever-changing modus operandi of those that wish to inflict harm, and/or gain media attention, there will be an increased level of acceptance towards security protocol.

The changing tide is seeing the requirement for good quality security (not the cheapest), commensurate with risk, cognizant of client image, and working to enable. The modern security team facilitates client logistics, liaises with multiple components, and pro-actively avoids danger.

### **What Makes you Successful as a Planner?**

I think it has been the ability or at the very least the focus on trying to communicate security strategy in plain simple language, not there to scaremonger or shock, nor try to impress with stories of daring exploits but to listen, understand and find solutions to problems. Clearly identifying to clients what should be done and why. This is not reinventing the security 'wheel' - merely doing the basics well to enable and facilitate.

In your opinion, what is the best and worst industry trend of the year?

Best trend of the year that I have noticed at events is the increased use of RFID for credentials.

The worst industry trend is for everyone when leaving to stand in one spot (normally directly outside the exit) and all dial an Uber or Lyft and then wait for the ensuing mess.

### **What is the Best Industry Book that has Helped you as a Planner?**

"How to Have a Good Day: Harness the Power of Behavioral Science to Transform Your Working Life" by Caroline Web. Not sure if this classes as an industry book but anyone in the events world knows that there is never enough time in the day - this book will help.



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