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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

PAUL TURNER, CSSP, CVE
AT&T STADIUM P20
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IAVM is grateful for the support of our Global Partners.
As a grizzled relic who still subscribes to the daily print newspaper and recently posted on Facebook of a misadventure with said paper in which yard men mowed over my precious reading (which elicited some humorous IA VM member comments, by the way), I am qualified to speak of the following exchange that took place in an episode involving those zany knuckleheads, the 3 Stooges (Google it if you don’t know, I’m too lazy to share more).

Seems the boys were serving in the military, or at least thought they might be called to duty. The drill instructor measured up Moe, Larry, and Curly, as the trio stood in a straight line, and asked for one of them to volunteer. Moe and Larry each took one step back, upon which the instructor thanked Curly for his willingness to step up and volunteer.

Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk.

How many of us are like Moe and Larry? Maybe we don’t take a step back but rather just stand in place until someone else actually does step forward.

We are now in a new year and with it comes, of course, resolutions. Why not let one of yours be to step up within the ranks of IAVM and volunteer? What does it offer? Ask those who already give of their time and talents in this capacity and they will tell you a lifetime of friendships and networking opportunities that often lead to other promoted positions within the industry. Oh, and the little matter of making a difference in the industry and the Association.

IAVM and its volunteer leadership remain committed to seeking diverse and inclusive leadership for committee positions. Our chair, Michael Marion, CVE, continues to lead the charge and follows this goal that was set by his predecessors, Mark Mettes, CVE, and Doug Booher, CVE.

As staff liaison to the Diversity & Inclusive Leadership Committee, I can tell you from personal experience that the committee is one group of serious volunteers ready to stand at the forefront to help push the initiative. Behind our committee chair, Julia Slocombe, and vice chair, Robyn Williams, CVE, the committee is engaged to work with IAVM leadership and staff to locate such individuals to take the Association down the road and better represent not just our membership makeup, but that of the diverse range of individuals who come into our member venues from event to event.

Most recently, committee members Troy Thorn, CTA, and Daniel Huerta, met with IAVM staff to discuss how the committee can assist IAVM in finding such individuals and placing them in future board leadership positions.

From a staff perspective, I can also say that IAVM seeks with a steadfast resolve such individuals. As with locating any individual to volunteer for committee service, there are often some legitimate hurdles to overcome, including the targeted individual not having the available time required for service, a simple lack of interest, or not having the resources at the member facility that would allow one to effectively serve.

So, what do we do?

Keep churning the field. Encourage participation.

IAVM has created a Path to Leadership document that spells out exactly what the title implies, how one ascends in volunteer leadership. This document should alleviate many fears and concerns that individuals might have about serving. The IAVM Committee Call for Volunteers opens January 24 and closes on March 11. Visit the web site and get your name on the list!

We often (rightly) hear that our volunteer ranks need to represent a much broader scope of individuals. IAVM wants to do its job in making that happen. It sits very high on the priority list of our president and CEO, Brad Mayne, CVE. We also need for our membership to take ownership in making this happen by stepping forward and volunteering.

You will never find a more enriching opportunity than volunteering to serve. Once people are on a committee, they want to contribute. I have seen people beg off of committees not because they are not interested. No, it is just the opposite. They want to contribute but often find there is not enough for them to do and they feel they can better allocate their time elsewhere.

The ball is actually in both of our courts. IAVM seeks diverse and inclusive representation while at the same time we ask you to consider placing your name into the volunteer pool. Let’s make it happen together. FM
I WISH THIS HAD LESS TOOLS.

SAID NO-ONE EVER.

Managing your venue's workforce is complex. With dozens of traditional tools used for handling many diverse tasks—staff availability, schedules, training, budgets, settlements, credentials, and more—it’s easy to feel overwhelmed. ABI MasterMind® is designed to condense all of your traditional tools into an automated, mobile, and easy-to-use system that is available in real-time. Reduce the complexity of managing your operation with ABI MasterMind®—over 450 venues in North America already have.

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Remember the good old days? When security meant keeping (unwanted) groupies from sneaking in backstage or protecting patrons as they body surfed or stage dived.

Now we live in a new universe, where security means looking out for a crazy with malice in his/her heart and the intent of causing harm to as many as possible. Unfortunately, this phenomenon continues to occur and shows no sign of abating. Preparing for these types of deadly actions has come to the forefront of advancing an event.

In the world of things that keep us venue professionals up at night, this is certainly #1. “See Something, Say Something” is no longer just something we stick on our video monitors and hope nothing happens. Public vigilance is something to be encouraged, with the understanding that everyone is now working security. How many of us now go to a restaurant and check all the available ways for escape? We have all grown closer to our local law enforcement officials, from the local police, first responders, and now to the FBI and DHS. This kind of coordination is more important than ever. Walk through magnetometers are no longer just something that you see at the airport.

Major sports leagues set the standard a couple of years ago, and those of us in secondary markets have been following suit. Our performing arts brothers and sisters haven’t been far behind. I think what surprised me the most was how appreciative our patrons were when we introduced them two years ago. Our audience is willing to give up some convenience for improved deterrence measures. Bomb dogs are now Standard Operating Procedure for large events and are often requested by touring shows. Making our venues hard targets will be an ongoing goal.

Over the years, IAVM has been responsive to these sad changes. It seems we don’t have a meeting without a security session. The Academy for Venue Safety & Security (remember when it was the International Crowd Management Conference?) has become an important offering that sells out each year. AVSS has become our most popular educational enterprise after Venue Management School. Paul Turner, CVE, and his committee put together a great program with real hands-on experiences. Our Venue Safety & Security Committee, led by Russell Dyer, is working to keep us current on the latest advances and practices that will help our venues prepare for the next hazard.

The last couple of years have seen our CEO, in conjunction with other convention center associations, create the Exhibitions and Meetings Safety & Security Initiative, EMSSI. (I learned that convention center folks live in a world of alphabet soup - PCMA, IAEE, CIC, ASAE, DI, MPI, PCMA, WTF, :-)

Working with the U.S. Homeland Security Department, we have created a certification process that will give our convention centers standards that will help protect our patrons. This will roll out as SecureVenues.com, and we expect great participation from our convention center members. Once this is up and running, we can expect to see this developed for the other venue types. As an arena manager, I like that we could have some agreed upon standards to better secure our buildings.

While this is being finalized, we have our Director of Education, Mark Herrera, traveling to cities across the U.S. to give training to venue staff on such topics as Active Shooter, Emergency Procedures, Situational Awareness, and Risk Mitigation. Mark has been a great leader and representative of the association at various security seminars. Because of the staff’s good work, IAVM is seen as an important resource in the world of large public gatherings. IAVM not only has a seat at the table on this topic, but is also one of the leaders.

It’s bad enough that we have crazies to deal with, but Mother Nature also presents us with challenges. Our Severe Weather training gives our members an opportunity to prepare for weather-related emergencies. It seems all of us have some weather hazard to face from tornados to hurricanes to floods to earthquakes, to who knows what. Locusts, maybe?

While we all know that there are no perfect solutions to these potential calamities, if we take advantage of the available resources, we can rest a little easier, knowing we have done all we can. FM
Dan Mendelson
President

When I established Unitex Direct in 1992, I didn’t know how prevalent certain problems were for uniform buyers. Since then, I now focus my company’s efforts on solving those problems.

Just over the last year, companies and organizations using competitors have come to us and we’ve solved their problems including: lack of on-time delivery, incorrect items/quantities shipped, poor quality or lack of communication.

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We outfit venues across the nation.
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Cam, you have been with the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts on the campus of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver since before it opened in 1997. How has your role evolved at the facility throughout your 22-year career? What were you doing before that?

After I finished my M.F.A. in 1985 at the University of Washington (Theatre Design and Technical Production), I went to Edmonton where I was the technical director for The Alberta Ballet Company for two seasons. Following that, I spent 18 months as the head stage carpenter at the Jack Singer Concert Hall in Calgary and then seven years there as the production manager before I left for Vancouver and the Chan Centre for Performing Arts in the spring of 1996.

What do you love most about working in a theatre and specifically that theatre?

Mostly, I like the variety of activity. I am not a person who likes to sit in one place for long periods of time, so working in this kind of environment, and the interaction with the students, speakers, and artists that come through, suits my working style. At the Chan Centre, specifically, I remain excited and challenged by the changing needs of the venue as it ages.

We’re into our 22nd year and have finished the first wave of major “refreshes.” The building looks as good as it did when it opened and, in many ways, better. Mostly, though, I like dialogue, music, and theatre and that environment, both at the Chan Centre and The University of British Columbia, is a rich one.

What or who was the motivator that made you want to pursue your CVE? What would you say about the CVE experience to members considering pursuing theirs?

Initially, it was because it was a way of gaining more knowledge about the industry. As I moved further along my personal IAVM continuum, it became both about the people I met throughout the process and the relationships that developed from those meetings. Starting with conferences, Venue Management School, Senior Executive Symposium, Region 4, and then more conferences and board meetings, it continues for me to be about the people and the respect that is gained through shared industry experiences. The CVE process isn’t easy, but there is a lot of help out there to help our members get through the process.

What was one of your best days on the job?

I am not sure there has been one best day. There have been
Paul,

Thank you for ten years of faith and friendship. You have always set the bar so high for us, and your partnership has been instrumental in our growth and success.

Congratulations!
many that have been very good. I have always loved sitting in sound checks, because it is one of the few times I really get to listen and appreciate the music. During the events, there are usually so many operational concerns that it distracts from the event itself. I also find it incredibly rewarding to work on events that, after a difficult production period for the entire team, go very well.

I understand you love to scuba dive. What are your other favorite ways to relax and enjoy “me” time? Do you have a go-to place to recharge?

Yes, I am a diver and a PADI instructor. It is something that fascinated me as a kid, and about 15 years ago, I pursued becoming a diver. I think some of my favorite ways to relax are reading, skiing, and riding my bicycles. I do long distance bike riding, so I am always training for something or commuting to and from work. It is the one thing I do where I am so totally focused that I don’t think about anything but the bike, the street, and the fabulous views that you get in British Columbia. Mostly, though, I like spending time at home or out with my wife.

Growing up what did you think you wanted to be??

When I was 12-years-old, I wanted to be a chartered accountant. I have no idea why, other than I had worked as a golf caddy at the local private club and also had a paper route where a lot of my customers were accountants. It was probably the golf angle, because I like playing golf (something I now only get to do a few times a year when I play with my son). I was a 12-year-old fanatic about becoming an accountant and studied the stock market every day. When I turned 14, we moved to Seattle, and I never thought about it again. That was when I drifted into theatre at school, and that essentially led to the rest of my life.

What is the one thing that most people would be surprised to learn about you?

I am not sure about that one. One could be from the fall of 1973 when I was the field goal kicker on my high school football team (Mercer Island, Washington), and I kicked a 40-yard field goal on my first, and only attempt, during the entire season. Another could be in the late 1970’s, when I graduated from the National Theatre School of Canada (Montreal). A current one is perhaps that I spend a lot of my time training in first aid, am currently rated as an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), and am a Canadian Ski Patrol Member who patrols at one of the local mountains during the winter.

Many CVE and CVP test questions are written based on U.S. governing regulations or laws. What type of challenge do non-U.S. members face when preparing for the test?

I think the biggest differences lay in three areas. One, ADA legislation doesn’t exist in Canada in the same way that it does in the U.S. For me, it only came up when I did my oral exam. I answered by stating what I knew about ADA and then related that to how it fit into Canadian laws, which on this subject, tend to be focused more on building codes rather than specific legislation. Any area of difference is questions about amphitheatres. There are very few of them in Canada, but are much more prevalent in the U.S. The last area would be about the laws surrounding gun rights. Open carry, as an example, doesn’t exist here, so we never have to deal with the concept of how to manage an event in a venue, city, or state that embraces the idea.

Who are the mentors that you have relied on through your career?

This kind of ties back to the question about what made me want to pursue a CVE. I’ve never had a single person who was a specific motivator or mentor regarding my career. What I have had is a series of people I have met and encouraged me along the way. Seeing the people I respect and call friends being successful, empowered, and inclusive has set a very high bar. That is essentially what has been my mentor by trying to emulate the work, ethics, and high standards of a group of people rather than just one individual.

Is there anything else you would like to share or add so people will get to know you better?

Just that I believe in honour, high ethical standards, hard work, and being reasonable in all my decisions. Those have been some basic tenants of how I try and conduct myself in both business and friendships. I think if you go through your day, week, month, etc., with those basic beliefs then you will end up being successful. FM

Beth Wade, CVE, is director of the Berry Center in Houston, Texas.
One of the most discussed topics across all verticals of business of late is the elusive subject of work-life balance. Everyone wants to achieve their optimal balance of success and productivity at work paired with a fulfilling life outside the office. If you were to type the term into your favorite search engine, you would find no shortage of definitions, studies, and reading material on the subject. Millennials, in particular, have brought this issue to the forefront, as a result of their collective set of values. As a young professional in the field of venue management, I’d like to share some of my views on the topic and how it pertains to us within IAVM.

I’ve been involved in stadium and arena operations since my freshman year on the campus of Syracuse University. In the fall of 2010, I began working changeovers at the University’s iconic football/basketball/lacrosse venue, the Carrier Dome. From very early on, I gained exposure to the grueling nature of this work.

As my career aspirations began to take shape in college, the atypical conditions of working in sports and entertainment became clear to me. In addition to my firsthand experience working throughout college, my sport management professors deserve credit for emphasizing the time commitment necessary to embark on this career. They made it clear that if we were serious about this as our path, we needed to be prepared to work longer hours and make less money than many of our peers.

We all make choices in life, and therefore we all must weigh the consequences. The decision to enter this field came with ramifications, of which I was well aware. In the end, we must all decide if the reward is worth the commitment. Nobody is trapped or forced to work in venue management. We do so because we love the excitement and rush of live events. Although increasingly difficult to fathom with age, we could all step away at any given moment, but what else could provide us the fulfillment and purpose we currently achieve in our ever-evolving occupations?

As a 26-year-old in a manager role within arena operations, I’m in an especially demanding position when it comes to work-life balance. My department blows past the 40-hour work week on a routine basis and is expected to oversee a staff routinely requiring 24/7 support and attention. There are a few specific ways I combat the draining effect this can have on our personal lives. I strive to create an environment amongst my fellow managers in which we are equally knowledgeable and capable of serving as MOD. We prioritize planning and proactively updating calendars to anticipate our most strenuous periods of work. Additionally, I nurture the development of our part-time supervisors to empower them to take responsibility and pride in the department.

Work-life balance contributes toward, and is ultimately an extension of, the happiness we’ve all set out to find as human beings. Thus, it cannot be measured on a single uniform scale or a “one-size-fits-all” model. Each one of us needs to discover how we achieve happiness and where our jobs fit into the equation. Like most things, this will change over time. We cannot predict the twists and turns which lie ahead for us personally or professionally.

IAVM is made up of individuals from all ages and backgrounds. All of our membership could speak to their ideas when it comes to achieving work-life balance. I’m sure there’d be unique perspectives from those of us with and without spouses and children.

My ability and willingness to relocate allowed me to secure my first full-time opportunity in the field, only four months after graduating from SU. Soon thereafter, it allowed me to step into roles at Spectra and, most recently, the NBA’s Atlanta Hawks. Although my current mobile (and single) status may contribute to the next step forward in my career, I don’t have a crystal ball telling me when and where the next opportunity will present itself or how my status will evolve in the future. While some may view it as a daunting or scary proposition, I choose to view the uncertainty as fun and exciting.

On a day-to-day level, many of us feel the effects of a stressful work environment. We are inundated with emails and time-sensitive projects which coincide with our ever-present event schedule. On a weekly basis, it’s important for us to make time for activities outside of work which will help us relax. A couple hobbies I have chosen to pursue are golf and running. Both allow me to partake individually when in a time crunch, as well as socially when I’m able to align with friends’ schedules. Both are challenging yet calming in their peaceful, quiet settings. They’re particularly well juxtaposed against the often loud and stimulating environment of an arena.

As my career progresses to new facilities, roles, and responsibilities, I expect my personal life to evolve right alongside it. As unique challenges arise, I plan to lean on my loved ones and mentors for advice on how to navigate them. While the enormity of achieving health, happiness, and balance can feel like a lot for one person to manage, it’s important to remember we’re not alone!

Jack Wentzell is Conversion Operations Manager for the Atlanta Hawks & State Farm Arena in Atlanta, Georgia.
The venue management industry has a history of relying on and supporting the next generation of professionals. That said, creating a formal relationship with an institution of higher education can provide a variety of mutually beneficial outcomes that are easy to set up and operate. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average 20-24-year-old stays at one job an average of 1.3 years. Turnover, employee retention, and the time it takes to manage a selection process, can be a big drain on managers within any business. If you and your organization are feeling the strains of such a situation, we have a solution for you. By developing a strategic partnership with local colleges and universities, your organization can develop a talent pipeline, create innovative and engaging training programs, and spend more time where it matters, developing and operating exciting and profitable events.

A university is a powerful resource for your organization that may include opportunities for faculty and students to perform research and provide feedback on case studies, solve business problems, and fill a training need. In order to build a stronger relationship with any college or university you might consider:

- Developing an academic partnership...
- Developing a stronger internship or mentoring program; and/or...
- Connecting with the university’s alumni association.

Kimberly Mahoney, Ph.D., CVP, is assistant professor in the College of Business Sport Management Department, and Gil Fried, J.D., is professor - chair in the College of Business Sport Management Department, both at the University of New Haven.
ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

To begin developing an academic partnership with a local college or university, you might start by considering if they offer curriculum in an area that is complimentary to your area of need or business function. Many institutions offer programs in hospitality, food service management, venue management, event management, entertainment management, performing arts management, and many others. Currently, Johnson & Wales University and Delaware North (Boston Bruins and TD Bank Arena) have a partnership that, among other things, provides their employees with discounted educational opportunities, while providing students with internships and faculty with research opportunities to help them solve business-related problems.

Initiating conversations related to an academic partnership can begin with a visit to campus that includes a meeting with faculty and career services staff. Attending a career fair, serving on an employee panel, or volunteering to mentor a student will give you a true sense of the student experience and the connection between industry and academics. If your organization utilizes part-time or seasonal employees, consider engaging with students by offering part-time work, shadowing during an event, or hosting a student for a day to see all the aspects of the operation. When both organizations have goals related to research, innovation/development, and helping students/graduates get internships and jobs, a partnership can be a mutually beneficial and cost-effective option. A good starting point for creating an academic partnership might be to simply invite senior venue leadership and university faculty to meet, tour the venue, and open a dialogue regarding respective needs and opportunities to collaborate.

MENTORING PROGRAMS

Developing a partnership with any local college or university requires thoughtful strategy and consideration regarding what this investment for your company and the university should look like. Students who have participated in a mentoring program in a specific industry retain at a rate of 10% higher than those who do not participate (Poor & Brown, 2013). This shows us that developing a relationship with a university, like a mentoring program, would help both the university and industry partner develop and guide students into future careers in venue and event management. Mentor programs help students connect with your organization, while further developing your staff member’s communication, development, and leadership skills.

When developing a mentor program, there should be a focus on two-way dialogue that allows for both the mentor and mentee to develop and grow professionally and interpersonally (Farell & Van de Braam, 2014). Successful mentoring programs with universities would pair seasoned industry veterans with students who are close to graduation and are making decisions about which industry and organization to apply to for their internship or entry-level position. Best practices in developing mentorship programs include: developing commonly agreed upon measurable goals (vocational and life), pair students with an engaging and caring professional who is also a good communicator, develop a consistent and regular meeting schedule (in person, phone, or virtual), and often involve alumni from the university.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

We often see graduates come back to connect with and hire current students. Furthermore, alumni are regularly profiled in university admissions and marketing materials, which also benefits the organizations where they work. Developing a talent feeder system through an alumni network can reduce hiring costs, increase onboarding efficiencies, and improve employee retention rates. With these efficiencies in place, you can spend more time working on the key priorities in your venue. According to Gen-Z Raising (a multi-country report on university graduates), recent graduates are 3x more likely to stay if their skills are fully utilized. Furthermore, the report explains that recent graduates want to work for larger firms, but only if they understand how that organization plans to provide development opportunities they can use to leverage their education and advance their careers. Starting a strategic and meaningful relationship with a university will help you solve business problems, while fostering the development of a happy and engaged staff.

Developing a formal partnership with a college or university can provide a valuable return on investment for the both the university and the organization. Developing a mentor program or educational partnership can help your organization develop and retain young talent, utilize the intellectual property and value of upper level managers and executives, and can serve as valuable marketing materials to attract new students to the university or employees to your organization. All organizations look for a way to attract the best talent, and programs like the ones mentioned above can be just that for you. If you have questions about how your organization can identify and develop a stronger relationship with a local college or university, please feel free to contact us.  

FM
As one of your IAVM Foundation trustees, I am honored to serve a foundation that does so much for our amazing association. I am challenging my fellow IAVM members to make it a mission to help our foundation thrive and flourish over the next several years. I encourage you to ask your venue, local governments and/or foundations to follow our facility in gifting $1,000 per year on behalf of your venue to the foundation that supports our entire industry. We all give to our local community, including sponsorships of all kinds and various ads to promote our facilities. By giving to this campaign, you will be providing funds to research and develop important safety and recovery initiatives that can help us better manage the issues of today and tomorrow. Every day we are seeing more and more active shooter or crowd management issues in the news. Keeping our entire industry current, developing our people, and investing in your foundation today are the best ways to keep our facilities professionally running and safe for our public to enjoy.

Historically, we have only asked the individual members to contribute to the foundation. Today, we are asking the facility itself to contribute. We are a small building in Athens, Georgia. We have a convention center, performing arts theatre, and small arena. IAVM training has been the key to our facility’s success, which is flourishing today due to the professional training and development our team has received from IAVM and our foundation. Asking our board to contribute to the foundation may have been the easiest ask of any fundraising initiative I have ever done. They see the difference our foundation has made and swiftly invested.

The Foundation has worked over the past year to develop a five-step strategic plan, which includes the following:

- Continue to encourage all members to give directly to the Foundation that gives back so much to our association;
- Ask the facilities themselves to provide funding for continued research, education and training in order to keep our facilities up-to-date on professional development
- Ask for strategic alliance partnerships with major league sports
- Reach out to our allied associates to find partnerships that work and help fund the foundation
- Ask building managers to solicit support from local vendors not in our allied member program that see the value in investing in the strengthening of our industry - as we prosper so too will those vendors

We are also growing the future of IAVM by supporting programs that are vital to the future of our workforce through our 30|Under|30 program. We are providing the resources that make scholarship programs possible to bring over 50 students to our annual conference. We helped fund and pioneer programs like Venue Management School and - the all-important – Senior Executive Symposium. We headed up our diversity initiative and have really reinforced our organization by strengthening, educating, and protecting those individuals in our industry.

Various facilities have various restrictions; some cannot contribute gifts, others can only provide training, or some may only be able to support through sponsorship giving. Whatever you can do to help is greatly appreciated. I would encourage you to think of what your venue can do to support this outstanding foundation, so it can continue to be there for you in the future.

Join me in investing in our industry initiatives by supporting the Foundation with a personal gift and a contribution from your venue. Together we can build a stronger Foundation and an amazing future for our industry. I promise you will see the benefits! FM

Paul Cramer, CVE, IAVM Foundation Trustee

YOUR FOUNDATION.
YOUR FUTURE.
IAVM FOUNDATION

YOUR FOUNDATION. YOUR FUTURE!

DONATE TODAY!
IF I WASN’T DOING THIS, I’D BE:
Sitting on a beach with a tropical drink. But seriously, I would be a teacher.

MOST IMPRESSIVE PERSON I’VE EVER MET:
Dr. Maya Angelou. Not just impressive, but an amazing woman! This industry has afforded me so many opportunities, but when I met Dr. Angelou at an event, I melted in her presence. She was engaging, graceful, and kind. Her book, “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,” remains one of my favorites.

I UNWIND BY:
Cooking, because it allows me to relax and focus, especially if I am preparing a new recipe. But I also like to watch old movies and vintage sitcoms such as The Andy Griffith Show.

ON MY DESK RIGHT NOW IS:
Two monitors, iPad, phones, a handful of red grapes (trying to eat healthy snacks), work/project related documents, my notebook (I carry it everywhere), and a greeting card with words of inspiration sent from a client.

MY FAVORITE IAVM PROGRAM/CONFERENCE/ EVENT/SESSION I EVER ATTENDED WAS:
So many come to mind, but a turning point for me was the 2017 VenueConnect in Nashville and the Diversity Reception led by Robyn Williams. What an amazing fundraising event! I made new industry friends that day and came away with a renewed sense of commitment to IAVM.

IF I WERE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SEATS, I’D BE:
Door greeter or usher. This is an awesome way to meet new people. I would get to smile all day.

ONE TRAIT AN UP-AND-COMING VENUE MANAGER SHOULD HAVE IS:
Be humble.

ONE UP-AND-COMING VENUE STAR IN THE INDUSTRY IS:
Shawn Brown at the Verizon Arena. I am just growing my relationship with Shawn, but I find him to be responsive and ready to jump in and lend a helping hand at a moment’s notice.

ONE OF MY GOALS FOR THIS YEAR IS TO:
Continue to provide excellence to my clients, direct reports, and company in every way; to grow our business, and to have a positive impact.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO HELP ELEVATE THE PROFESSION?
By remaining enthusiastic, supportive, committed, and engaged with IAVM and the industry as a whole. I will join others to ensure that all are represented as we tackle Diversity and Inclusiveness as an organization and our conference programming is reflected as such.

WHERE DO YOU SEE NEW GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PROFESSION?
There are two areas that I believe will continue to impact our industry and our venues: technology (infrastructure) and security. I think there will be a growing need to personalize the attendee experience all the way up to securing our venues.

HOW DO YOU STAY CURRENT WITH INDUSTRY TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS?
I read industry publications, staying in touch with other industry friends, attending conferences such as IAVM and IAEE. I also enjoy reading the daily digest from PCMA. Lastly, I follow some industry organizations on LinkedIn and Twitter.

WHO ARE THREE PEOPLE YOU’D INVITE TO A DINNER PARTY AND WHY?
Oprah Winfrey, Stephen Covey, and Martha Stewart. There is so much to learn from all of them, and this dinner would likely go on for hours. I selected Oprah, simply because she is a phenomenal woman, inspirational, and transformative; Stephen Covey wrote a book that helped to shape me as an upcoming leader; lastly, Martha Stewart because she has so much to offer, especially as a business leader.
A friend and colleague of mine recently got curious about the term “mansplaining.” I don’t know what sparked his curiosity, and frankly, at the time, I failed to ask. He reached out to me for an explanation—perhaps because of The Gender Gap sessions I have spearheaded at VenueConnect recently. Whatever his reason, feeling a bit insecure about my ability to give what felt like a delicate inquiry its due, I sent him a link to the 2008 Rebecca Solnit article, “Men Explain Things To Me,” that gave rise to the now commonplace term. Our brief text message exchange over the course of the following days was illuminating:

**Tue, Oct 23, 10:44 PM**
**Him:** Afraid to read it.

**Me:** I think you’re going to be ok. And, actually, I think you’ll like this essay. Don’t be afraid. She (not I) will laugh.

Solnit did not originate the term “mansplaining.” It was first spotted in the comments section of a LiveJournal blog post shortly after the essay’s publication. According to the Oxford English Dictionary’s most recent online edition (2018), “mansplain” is defined as “Of a man: to explain (something) needlessly, overbearingly, or condescendingly, esp. (typically when addressing a woman) in a manner thought to reveal a patronizing or chauvinistic attitude.”

A quick Google search turns up related terms such as “cave-mansplaining,” which might give you some sense of how long we’ve perceived the behavior to be part of our culture, and culture is a central part of this discussion. We have been acculturated to accept the experiences of ‘splaining and being ‘splained to as children and throughout adulthood. Starting with parents and teachers, we learn to negotiate power dynamics in all of our relationships. Power comes with a number of entitlements—including knowledge. This is precisely why a power imbalance, as found between underrepresented identities and privileged classes, can be uncomfortable to acknowledge and understand for ourselves and with each other. But, it can also be seductive. Knowledge is, by nature, irresistible.

**Thu, Oct 25, 1:09 AM**
**Him:** Couldn’t help it: read it.

**Sat, Oct 27, 4:13 PM**
**Me:** I think she’s very smart—hard to resist.

We live in a unique time in history when we are primed for self-examination and to, when needed, modify our behavior. We are asking ourselves what impact this might have in the workplace and how we might take responsibility for changing it. Revisiting power dynamics is an important place to start. Consider the differences between feeling ‘splained to by your supervisor, a peer, and a subordinate. Seriously . . . think about it. (I’ll wait.) It feels different, because there is a power differential between the people involved in two of the three scenarios. So, what can you do if you feel someone is ‘splaining you or someone else? You can intervene. Call it as you see it . . . gently. I know, this requires vulnerability. Will it be uncomfortable? Probably. Awkward? Maybe. Worth it? Definitely.

Mansplaining has been easy to do and hard to resist since long before the origin of the word and often exemplified in popular culture. Lucy, of the CBS television sitcom I Love Lucy (1951-1957), was regularly and humorously called upon to explain her antics. The subtext of constantly explaining herself is that she must justify her presence in a patriarchal space. Conversely, so-called mansplainers do this on behalf of the listener (typically, though not exclusively women) by interrupting, speaking over, repeating, or explaining something that the listener may already be knowledgeable about—and in some cases better informed about than the ‘splainer. The fact of the matter is, nobody likes to be ‘splained, and no one should have to ‘splain themselves—fictional television character or not.

Let me be clear. Men are not the only ones guilty of this practice. Women do it, too. Further, while mansplaining illustrates a man’s perceived power, it’s not only the occasional cultural icon who is blame-worthy, and ‘splaining isn’t simply gendered. Have you ever been white-splained? Straight-splained? Mom-splained? Disrupting one social norm can inadvertently cause instability of other norms, and sometimes, that disruption is exactly what is needed.

In her recent article *Diversity is the New Denim Jacket*, Kletra Newton reveals,

> I’ve lost count of the number of times that I have been spoken over or completely disregarded in diverse settings, irrespective of my experience on the subject matter and still receive the inquisitive look from those trying to understand my presence at all (2018, 20).

From her words alone, we don’t know if she is referencing mansplaining, racesplaining, or otherwise. However, even without the full context, we sense the normalization of disrespect and dismissal of who she is ‘splained. Like Newton’s colleagues, we all need to work on setting aside assumptions. The experience of recognizing our embodied behaviors is complicated, slow, and often painful. These sensations, however, are the learning pains of teaching ourselves how to do the thing we learn to do when our spouse, co-worker, or employee intervenes and points out our ‘splaining.

In the words of social science researcher Brené Brown, vulnerability is a paradox, explaining that, “It’s the first thing I look for in you and the last thing I want you to see in me.” This paradox works in tandem with social changes which lead culture shifts. With a single action, my friend instigated one such shift that is likely to permeate his personal and professional relationships—not despite, but because of, the discomfort it caused him. Neither he, nor any of us, will ever have enough perspective to identify all of our biases. Sometimes, we will have to accept that the really good stuff comes when someone else calls us out (hopefully gently) . . . even if it makes us feel like we want to “crawl under a rock.”

**Acknowledgements:** Lauren Hill, Margaret McGladrey, PhD, Jenn Fishman, PhD, R.V. Baugus, and the IAVM Diversity & Inclusive Leadership Committee

**Jill Schinberg, MFA, is assistant professor in the Department of Arts Administration at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.**
In the 21st Century, many of our facilities are built around and are reliant upon team sports - they are a critical foundation of our business. The teams are the pride of our communities and economic drivers of our venues. Considering how vital they are, do you know what is the oldest known team sport in the world? A sport more significant than today’s soccer (football), to its nations?

It turns out, the Mesoamerican ball game known broadly today as Ulama, is recognized as the planet’s oldest known team sport. It was believed to have been played from Arizona all the way south to Paraguay (Mesoamerica includes a cultural area from central Mexico to northern Costa Rica), and it was played almost 1,000 years before the introduction of the first Greek Olympic Games.

The Mayans called the sport Pok a Tok. The Aztecs called it Tlachtli, while presently it is most commonly known as Ulama. It was a game not for the weak. It was connected to war, religion, and sport, and contestants could lose their lives, both during, and after, the game.

The game was most popular with the Olmec, Aztec, and Mayan civilizations, but it was played across the region. Using radiocarbon dating, the court in Paso de la Amada, Mexico, is the oldest known ball court at approximately 3,600 years old.

Around 1,300 ball courts have been discovered. The Aztecs called the courts tlachtli or tlaacho. Typically, they were in the shape of a capital I - with two perpendicular end zones at each end of the court. The largest concentration of ball courts is found in the Mayan area of the Yucatan Peninsula, and there were often several courts in a city. For example, the city of Cantona has 24 courts, and El Tajin has at least 11 courts.

The typical sized court ranged around 196 feet (in comparison, a basketball court is 94 feet long), but courts did vary in size. To illustrate, the Ceremonial Court in Tikal was smaller than a tennis court – 50 feet by 16 feet, whereas the Great Ballcourt in the Mayan city of Chichen Itza was 315 feet by 98 feet – nearly as big as an NFL football field.

Generally, each side of the court was bordered by parallel stone walls. These walls might be perpendicular (straight up & down), or they might slope upwards from the flat court. Surrounding the court were locations for judges, spectators, plus the nobles and elite of society.

In comparison to the advertisements ringing today’s courts of play, the ball court’s walls were often plastered and brightly painted. Rather than beer ads, these courts had art of jaguars, serpents, and raptors, plus representations of human sacrifice connecting the games to the divine.

The precise game rules were lost after the Spanish colonized the region and banned the sport in the 16th Century, but by deciphering art, sculptures, and glyphs, historians have tried to decipher the game’s rules. It is believed teams of two to six male-only players had to hit a solid rubber ball across a line etched across the court. The ball was not allowed to touch the ground. Players were not able to use their hands.
but used their padded hips, elbows, knees, and shoulders. Players constantly threw themselves to the court’s surface to prevent the ball from hitting the ground. Injuries were common.

On each side of the court, players used the stone walls to bounce the balls off. The game was similar to volleyball, but there was no net. Fouls were given when a team could not get the ball over the centre line.

As the game evolved, the Maya added a stone hoop at the centre of either wall that the ball could pass through. This stone ring was set above the players’ height, and it was difficult to put the ball through the hoop. In various versions of the game, target markers were also along the court, or players could gain points for talented plays.

The rubber balls were not soft. They weighed between 1 to 8 pounds, and were 3 to 11 inches in diameter. Since they were solid rubber, they were hard enough to break bones, and definitely caused bruising. Players wore deerskin guards on their hips, thighs, chin, check, and hands. In fact, seven rubber balls were discovered preserved in the bogs of El Manati – a testament to their firmness. Spanish conquistadors reported that ulama players were incessantly bruised, with some bruised so severely that their skin had to be lanced open.

Hernando Cortes, the conquistador of the Aztec empire, was so impressed with the ball players, that he took some back to Spain to meet King Carlos V. Wearing only the mantlal – the loincloth – these muscular athletic men likely thrilled the Europeans with their skill in hitting the rubber ball with their hips.

Today’s pro sports illicit fervent emotion, but these ball games had a graver, more powerful level of social significance. In Mayan mythology, the game is tied to the story of the gods Vucub Hunahpu and Hun Hunahpu. These two brothers annoyed the gods of the underworld with their loud playing, so they were tricked into descending into Xibalba. Here, they were challenged to a ball game. Alas, they lost, and Hun Hunahpu had his head cut off; forfoiling a custom that would continue for earthbound players who lost a game.

It is also believed the religious nature of the sport helped divine the sun’s destiny – guaranteeing the continued cosmic and universal order. The games were perceived as a contest between the sun against the moon and stars – expressing the implications of light versus dark – and potentially the struggle between good and evil. Furthermore, the spin and movement of the ball represented the sun traveling across the sky.

With religious connotations tied to the games, the losing team’s captain, or perhaps even the entire losing team, were sacrificed to the gods following the matches. Descriptions of these sacrifices were carved into the stonework surrounding the courts. At the South ball court at El Tajin and at Chichen Itza – a relief panel illustrates two opposing teams of seven players, with one player being decapitated by the other captain, (or by a priest). At other courts, tzompantlis were installed (tzompantlis featured bars connected to wooden posts, and these bars were adorned with the skulls of severed heads). The Mayans even created a ball game, where captives on the opposing team, once vanquished in a game, were tied, used as “balls,” and callously rolled down flights of stairs.

For nearly 3000 years, Ulama was likely the most significant team sport on the planet. Its significance in some of the most powerful cities in the world cannot be overstated. It was believed to help foretell the future. It was a game of chance, of life, and of sacrifice, and it influenced religions, kings, and religions, for generations of dynasties.

Interestingly, some historians dispute the decapitation happening to the losing team. Sacrificial death was not an uncommon aspect of Mesoamerican life, and they believe it was an honour to be sacrificed. So, some historians contest that it was the winning team who lost lives. For the champions, this was considered the supreme honour.

Indeed, in 2017, in Mexico City, archaeologists unearthed 32 severed male neck vertebrae in a pile just off a ball court. Archaeologist Raul Barrera said, “It was an offering associated with the ball game, just off the stairway. The vertebrae, or necks, surely came from victims who were sacrificed or decapitated.”

Yet the game could also be played for peace. Reportedly, during the time of the Aztec emperor Axayacatl, rather than go to war, the game was played to resolve a conflict with his neighbouring ruler in the city of Xochimilco.

Similar to today, gambling was a common activity amongst the fans. In the Aztec empire, bets were wagered with anything from ornate feathers, to land, and even to children. Losers sometimes needed to sell themselves into voluntary slavery to pay off their gambling debts. Even rival kings wagered on the games. One story tells of two kings: one bet his market, the other bet his garden. The king betting his market lost, but the winning king was murdered when the losing side’s contingency gathered with him. They presented the winning king with a flower garland; with a leather strangling cord concealed inside.

For nearly 3000 years, Ulama was likely the most significant team sport on the planet. Its significance in some of the most powerful cities in the world cannot be overstated. It was believed to help foretell the future. It was a game of chance, of life, and of sacrifice, and it influenced religions, kings, and religions, for generations of dynasties.

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Did You Know?

Ulama is being reintroduced to Central America. Organizers in Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and Mexico, have all been working to revive this ancient game. In April 2017, at the ancient Mayan city of Teotihuacan, 10 teams from Mexico competed. Here teams of seven players used a solid rubber ball, and used only their hips to propel the ball.

Organizer Armando Osorio said, “What I want is for us Mexicans to realize that we have much richness (in our culture), as much as in arts, crafts, and sports, and we ought to be proud because we are the first country in the world to have a ballgame.”

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Glen Mikkelsen, CVE, is general manager of the CN Centre in Prince George, British Columbia, Canada.
Safety (and Security) First

AT&T STADIUM’S Paul Turner, CSSP, CVE, LEADS BY SHINING EXAMPLE

Paul Turner, CSSP, CVE, surveyed the landscape from an empty suite at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, onto the football playing field below.

On this particular November weekday, the field had hundreds of kids running around and shouting with glee as they played catch and, otherwise, just enjoyed getting to be on the same turf as the venue’s local and iconic residents, the Dallas Cowboys.

Turner has called AT&T Stadium home now since June 2008, one year before the mammoth venue opened, as the senior director of event operations. Over the joyous noise below, Turner takes a moment to reflect on where he is in his storied career, a place that not even he could have foreseen as a youngster growing up in the Los Angeles area.

“I was not a big fan of pro football when I was a kid,” Turner said. “But, the Super Bowl was always a good excuse to have my buddies over to the house and eat a lot of junk food and watch the football game. A number of those at the time were obviously Cowboys’ Super Bowls. If you had told me back when I was in the 7th or 8th grade that some day you’re going to end up working for the Dallas Cowboys and, oh, by the way, it’ll be the second NFL team you work for and third pro sports team you work for and you’ll be helping run one of the finest venues in the world and for a landmark team, I would have asked, how the hell is that ever going to happen?”

Happen it has, and not only is AT&T Stadium a better venue for having someone with the industry chops of Turner, but so is IAVM, for which Turner serves as chair of the Academy for Venue Safety & Security Faculty and is on the faculty of the Venue Management School.

“My career is not one that was based off of a love of sports or desire to work in a sports industry,” Turner said. “But I found the right match for my skill set and the role that I do for what I really care about. I don’t mean to minimize it, but to me it doesn’t really matter what’s happening on the field or on the stage or whatever, it’s about the experience and creating an operation. It’s about creating a very special experience, not only for our guests, but for the staff that have to bring the building to life and create those experiences. It’s about safety, it’s about security, it’s about the chance to really create something that is very special. That’s really shaped my philosophy.”

Indeed, it is a career that has taken some remarkable twists for a guy from SoCal whose most early association was to nothing less than a euphonium. A what?

BEATING THE DRUM

Think of Paul Turner, and if you have any years of experience in the public assembly venue profession, you likely check him as a stadium guy. Prior to coming to Dallas, Turner had started working in 2004 at Lincoln Financial Field for the Philadelphia Eagles, one year after that stadium had opened. However, go back to the formative years, and you find a youngsters who graduated from Torrance (CA) High School and went on to earn a degree in speech communication at California State University, Long Beach. That degree came only after Turner switched from a music education major.

Music was always a part of Turner’s life growing up. He was in his high school marching band and became its drum major, a position he would also gain with the college band. As for the instrument he played, “Well, I played baritone horn. I usually tell people trombone because they give me a look when I tell them I played a euphonium (note: I just gave him that look). It’s pitched like a trombone, but looks like a small tuba.”

Despite switching majors, the music and performance side stayed with Turner, and he became introduced to what would eventually become his career profession when he landed a position running the recital hall on campus.

“I thought, you work on campus, you get paid. It isn’t a very hard job. So, my sophomore year, I got the job and started running the recital hall,” he said.

From there, Turner stayed involved in the music department, and after serving as a technician for the recital hall, landed other positions on campus including front-of-house manager work at the theater, as well as the ticket office.

“So, I was kind of a jack-of-all-trades, and that’s what really got me interested in facility management,” Turner said.
SAFETY (AND SECURITY) FIRST  continued

That undergraduate experience paid off handsomely for Turner following graduation in 1989, when he joined the ticket operations for the new Cerritos (CA) Center for the Performing Arts. The building had not even opened when Turner and others set up shop in a trailer selling tickets while the venue completed construction. Some six months later, Turner was named house manager and stayed in the role for some five years.

Turner loved building his operation from scratch and credits that entree into the profession for much of the success and knowledge he now harbors and imparts to others.

“I didn’t know it would turn into a career,” Turner admits. “I just needed to get a job and start making some money. I answered a classified ad for the job and was one of 300 applicants. I got the job offer and was ecstatic. It was great.”

So great, in fact, that Turner could not at the time envision himself in any other facet of the industry.

“I always thought I would stay in performing arts,” he said. “I’m not a sports guy. The joke I like to tell people is you look at me and you wouldn’t know that I played in dozens of football games in high school and college. That was at halftime, and I was leading a marching band.”

Following his time in Cerritos, Turner moved across the country to join Theatre Projects Consultants in Connecticut, where he got to do plenty of performing arts and venue related research and project work, mostly in feasibility studies.

If the old-school method of gaining his first job through the newspaper classified ads seems arcane, consider that for the next career move nothing less than the LVM newsletter posted a position in Portland seeking a director of house services for the Moda Center, home to the NBA Portland Trail Blazers, as well as the Memorial Coliseum. New to the arena world, Turner saw a different pace than the position he left in Connecticut.

“Arena life is so busy, but you learn a lot,” he said. “It was a different pace and a different structure than what I had done on the performing arts side. Plus, when I got to Portland, I inherited a bunch of systems that were informative to me as opposed to building them. I got to learn how that side of the business worked.”

While in Portland, Turner married Jackie and became father to a daughter, Riley. The family decided that another adventure just might be a good thing, so the Turners did one more zigzag across the country in 2004 to Philadelphia and a position as guest services manager at Lincoln Financial Field.

“It was another great opportunity to learn about this industry and utilize my skills,” Turner said of a resume that now included sector stops in performing arts, arenas, and new stadiums. “Like any first-year venue, they were scrambling, trying to figure out how to get things to work and all that. I came in to help build their staffing operations and take a lot of things they had started to the next level.”

Turner also saw his profile raise within the ranks of his NFL stadium peers. During his four years in Philadelphia, he became involved in some league meetings and got to know people from other teams as well as showcase some of the work the Eagles were doing involving
guest experience, staff training, and operations.

During one of the meetings in April 2008, a conversation arose with Chad Estis, then vice president of sales, for a new $1.3 billion stadium due to soon open in Arlington, Texas, as the shiny home for the Dallas Cowboys.

“He and I had a conversation that they were going to sell this new stadium, but had no idea how they were going to do it,” Turner said. “They really needed to get somebody, which led to a conversation that led to a job offer. I came on board in June 2008, with one year left to go on the construction of the new stadium. I set up the stadium operations department and event operations, and we got things going. I have been here 10 years now.”

NOW THAT HE’S HERE

One tour group leaves the field below and another arrives with hundreds more young, screeching voices of kids having a time as carefree as an unleashed dog romping through a park.

“You know, what I have learned and what I get to do in the venue and event industry is really something very special that ties directly into the things I think I am good at, interested in, and once again helps me get out of bed every day and try to make today better than it was yesterday,” Turner said. “It’s the hearts and minds thing.

“When you work at a place that is a destination for others, such as Disney, we share this common bond because, No. 1, we’re in the experience business. Yes, we’re selling programs, food, merchandise. Those are tangible things that people purchase, but the organizing thing around us is an intangible. It’s watching something happen. It’s having that emotional connection to a sports contest, to a team, to a performer, whatever. These people have saved their money. They’ve made plans. They are looking forward to it and emotionally invested. We get to be the caretakers of that. We get to be the ones that help set the stage for them to have that experience.”

Along the way, Turner’s profile within the ranks of prominent IAVM volunteers has likewise grown. Just as many in the industry know him as a “stadiums” guy, most think of Turner within IAVM as the “safety and security” guy, which is more than fine by him, given Turner’s passion for protecting his guests as well as the assets of his venue.

Turner came to know IAVM, while working in Portland, when he approached his boss and made two requests: first, to make Turner a member of IAVM and, second, to attend Venue Management School (VMS) to learn more about the industry.

“That introduction of, oh wow, this is an industry, these people do this, there’s a growing body of knowledge around this as a profession, really struck me as a new IAVM member,” he said. “This is a business with so many different components. I am now a faculty member at VMS and second vice chair. It goes back to my seeing this as a growing profession and having an opportunity to have an impact on that.”

When IAVM’s Academy for Venue Safety & Security takes place in San Diego from March 10-14, Turner will once again welcome attendees that come from a number of safety and security disciplines. Just as Turner sought out IAVM membership and the opportunity to attend VMS while in Portland, upon arriving in Dallas, one of his first requests was to attend AVSS in 2008.

“The AVSS program was originally envisioned to provide a baseline and level of competency and training for people around safety and security for venues,” Turner said. “Back in 2001 after 9/11 there was this thought that, hey, we’ve got to get our act together. We’ve got to train people and develop a body of knowledge around the unique application of safety and security responsibilities to venues and events.

“The program we have today is very similar to the one we had back then. We’re continuing to identify areas of competency and to define industry best practices and standards, and really embed those in the curriculum. The mission of AVSS is to take people responsible for safety and security at venues and events and to provide them with a two-year educational foundation that will help them be able to better manage their operations, to train their people, to develop safety and security plans, and to make sure their operating protocols are meeting the requirements of their venue and their marketplace.”

Turner said that the safety and security aspects of the public assembly venue industry are unique because for years “we tended to develop our own internal expertise.”

“The other thing we found early on in response to 9/11 was that everybody started doing their own thing. They were doing it in isolation. There was a lot of duplication and a lot of people going down dead ends or just no being very efficient. It’s like cancer research. A lot of people are doing it and I have no idea how they are coordinating it but if they truly coordinate it together, they are probably going to find a cure a lot faster.”

The above really states why Turner took a greater interest in IAVM’s educational offerings wrapped around safety and security.

“We’ve got all these different groups doing different things be-
cause safety and security is very important,” he said. “How do we make sure we are aware of what we’re doing, and when somebody engineers something that’s a really good standard or practice or a best practice, how are we making sure that information gets out to others?”

Turner has an upcoming meeting rapidly approaching at the stadium, but he is in his element now and continues talking safety in the areas of escalators, venue perimeters, alcohol, and much, much more. He eventually circles back to the critical role of AVSS.

“The catchphrase I use when trying to convince people to understand AVSS is you would not construct a building without putting fire sprinklers in it,” he said. “Don’t run your venue without putting an AVSS graduate on your staff. You need that capability just like you need a fire pressure system like fire sprinklers. You need the capability of a knowledgeable person on your staff in that safety and security role who can be an advocate, can be a guide and somebody who can help write those plans, develop those protocols, help train the staff, and make sure that safety and security has its right place within your total operation.

“What’s ahead? I don’t know. I’ve spent a lot of time developing tools and practices and been so lucky to be involved with AVSS and now VMS. I want to continue to contribute to the profession. There’s nothing more that I want than to hand this off when I’m done to people who are smarter, more capable, and better informed than I ever was. If that happens, then all this time and investment has really paid off.”

One final glance around the jewel that is AT&T Stadium says that will be coming later than sooner down the path for the guy who started as a drum major but now beats a major drum for the place he calls home. FM

R.V. Baugus is senior editor for Facility Manager magazine.
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A single-use ticket is no longer simply a blind date between the consumer and a team or venue. Thanks to modern ticketing systems, it is now an invitation to a long-term relationship that benefits both parties. Teams and venues know more about each purchaser than ever before, while fans can receive greater value through unique experiences and targeted offers.

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In return, venues and teams have gained access to data that generates loyalty as well as additional revenue.

“It’s all about taking advantage of the moment,” says Maureen Andersen, president and CEO of INTIX. “Innovations to ticketing systems have allowed us to develop relationships in deeper and in more profound ways.”

CUSTOMER RELATION MANAGEMENT

Previously, the goal of selling a ticket was to move fans efficiently through the box office or phone system. While it was a live person-to-person transaction, it was rarely personal and little information about the customer was gathered. No true relationship was born. More recently, that human interaction was replaced with technology as online ticketing began to boom, again with the goal of faster service. Still, little was known about the customer beyond what events they attended. However, today’s savvy consumer and the desire to tailor experiences to deepen the connection and value requires a new level of marketing. Much of that is learned through the online or mobile purchase of a ticket, especially when paired with consumer analytics.

“All operators have data at their fingertips,” says Eric Petrusic, president of ticketing for accesso. “However, without leveraging what you know about patrons to predict what they want – perhaps before they even know themselves – data alone does not carry any value.”

Once a consumer purchases a ticket, venues and teams have the opportunity to learn their preferences by way of various platforms. Users can opt-in to programs that allow venues and teams to create personalized offers and experiences.

For example, by simply knowing what time of day or how often the patron attends an event in a specific building, an organization can market and communicate directly with them. Once in a building, information can be gathered as to the patron’s preferences for concessions. Facility managers can also learn transportation habits of patrons. The purchase of a parking pass, for example, would allow venues to send messages to help the patron find the best route to the facility, avoiding traffic congestion. And if the patron doesn’t actually attend the event, venue officials can send a personalized message to see if there was a problem. Geo-fencing, specifically, grants venues and teams the ability to make real-time offers and to push information directly to the patrons who are using their apps. Many venues will send a “welcome” message to patrons once they enter the building and send a “thank you” message after the event with a survey or a promotion for an upcoming event similar to what they had just attended.

“It’s a smart way to customize one-to-one relationships with customers,” says Gene Carr, chief innovation officer for Patron Technology. “The more you can tailor the experience, the more that buyer will feel...
like a valued patron of the organization.’

While some people may view this type of marketing as a little invasive – after all, it does appear that the venue is stalking its patron – the reality is that it has become a part of everyday life thanks to online services such as Amazon, Google, and other platforms. Anyone who shops or searches online has grown accustomed to various pop-up ads promoting products or services that were recently searched.

“The majority of consumers not only appreciate personalization, they expect it,” Petrusic says. “With the right technology in place, operators can cater directly to their patrons’ wants, needs, and expectations.”

Dan Archabal, director of sales for Paciolan, agrees. “It is seen as being more thoughtful,” he says. “Why wouldn’t you spice up your menu offerings if you knew the habits of your customers? If you know that that 70 percent of the people attending your event are women, you may want to reconfigure your bathroom situation.

“You have to be more thoughtful than simply providing a good show in order to get people off their couch and into your building.”

In some ways, venues and event organizers have performed these duties for decades through patron cultivation. For example, teams held data on season ticket holders and could create specific opportunities for them that may encourage them to upgrade their seat choices by way of inviting them to batting practice or a special team luncheon. A moderate donor to the opera may be contacted via personalized letter to attend a backstage wine and cheese reception in an effort to entice them to increase their giving level.

The biggest difference now is that instead of having staff pour over spreadsheets, information can be gathered on all patrons in seconds via tailored applications.

“In five minutes you can run a report then send a personalized email invitation,” Carr says.

Promoters and venue owners want to know every fan and guest entering their venue. Venue managers invest a great deal in resources to marketing shows and events, and until now they only knew the ticket purchaser. The ability to grow a relationship with that purchaser’s guests was not an option until now. With new social functions, where the purchaser can transfer tickets to their guests via mobile device, officials are able to capture the information of the friends and families of ticket purchasers, giving them an even broader audience.

GENERATING REVENUE

Until recently, ticketing was a cost center for events that did little more than allow access to the building. Companies can now leverage ticketing to provide an end-to-end user experience to the patron. Tools like these allow for better user experiences as well as the opportunity to increase revenue. Mobile ticketing applications can offer merchandise so fans can purchase their team jersey in advance of a game, for example. They can also integrate information such as parking and concessions, so that users can book an entire experience in advance.

According to Petrusic, more than half of bookings and related purchases are made within a week of a planned activity, while only 19 percent were booked more than a month in advance. By offering patrons simple, personalized recommendations for items they will likely want to purchase in addition to their ticket, teams and venue managers can take the guess work out of the planning process.

“A single-platform system allows venue operators hassle-free access to a wealth of comprehensive data and reporting on purchase patterns, ticket availability and other insightful user behavior,” Petrusic says. “Once venue managers have access to that data, they can leverage it to drive revenue and ensure an enjoyable ticket-purchasing experience for patrons.”

Through advanced consumer analytics services, teams and venues can even offer targeted ancillary services from their marketing partners, such as car rentals, hotels, restaurants, and other entertainment. If a patron is attending a concert from out of town, why not encourage them to spend the weekend? Those types of experiences often lead to lasting relationships with patrons.

THE NEXT GENERATION

As patrons and event managers become more and more accustomed to online and mobile ticketing, the need for security increases. Not only do patrons need to know that their data is safe, but facility operators want to know who is entering their buildings.

The future, Andersen says, lies in making sure event managers know who has the ticket in hand, finding ways to integrate Bitcoin and other crypto-currency, as well as identifying patrons who can skip long security lines similar to what airlines provide for frequent travelers.

Ticketing will continue to be the forefront of establishing a higher touch point with fans who increasingly are looking for the easiest, quickest, and most mobile-friendly way to purchase a ticket.

“The industry is going to see a move toward guest empowerment,” Petrusic says. “Ticketing technology shouldn’t be a barrier between the guest and the experience. It should empower patrons to connect with the experience from the get-go.”

Kelly Pedone is a freelance writer based in Charlottesville, Virginia.
Traditional theater rigging systems developed primarily during the Renaissance as sailors, who needed work when not out-to-sea, found employment in theatres. During this period, many new large theatres were built with formalized stages. As the use of curtains and large painted drops or scenery became more prevalent, sailing technology was adapted to serve the stage. Theatrical rigging has continued to utilize manufacturing, equipment, and practices from other industries. Although the mechanisms used for manual and counter-weight theatrical rigging equipment and the engineering involved has improved over the last century, the systems largely remain the same and their operational practices little changed from the basics employed by those sailors in Renaissance theatres.

The developments in motorized rigging, however, have seen a marked improvement in the last decade and a significant increase in the use of motorized rigging in performance venues. There has been a regulatory trend, most prominent in Western Europe, away from manual rigging. These regulatory changes were based on worker safety and injury prevention from the handling of counterweights. The North American markets have not been subjected to this sort of regulatory direction, but the potential safety and labor benefits of motorized rigging may lead them in a similar direction and would be applicable for any performance venue.

Motorized rigging systems have historically been highly customized and purpose-built machinery for theatrical rigging. They were significantly over-built, complex, and difficult to maintain. Controls were custom and may have required unique wiring. Recent trends have shifted towards a more standardized equipment model based around the concept of a “packaged hoist.” The result is equipment that is engineered to high standards, easy to operate and maintain, and simple to control for basic and complex production needs.

Packaged hoists are built as a single package or unit, with all elements housed within a single device. They can be installed easily (in comparison to custom units) and are designed to augment or replace manual rigging systems. In some ways, the packaged hoist is the theatrical rigging equivalent of the automobile. You have a standardized machine, with a limited set of options, that can be specified, purchased, and put into use. Granted, these are still specialized pieces of equipment, but in comparison to the custom rigging machines built in the past, packaged hoists are a major advancement in the development of motorizing rigging.

It is relatively common to see a combination of packaged hoists and manual counterweight rigging on stages. The manual counterweight rigging is used for lighter loads that require less counterweight and are easier to operate by manual labor. Manual systems can be upgraded with a counter-weight assist style packaged hoist that works with existing counterweight linesets. Multi-line packaged hoists are frequently utilized for larger loads on stages, such as theatrical lighting battens or acoustic shells or production elements that require high-speed production operation. This allows the loads, especially for theatrical lighting, to be changed without the need to moving large amounts of counterweight. Precise trim height settings can be programmed and repeated for theatrical lighting, acoustic shells, or production loads.

Newer packaged hoists are not limited to static or heavy loads moving at fixed slow speeds. Options include a range of load capacities and speed options. Typical capacities range from 500 lbs. to 3,000 lbs. and cover everything from the lightest of scrims to large scenic elements or speaker stacks. Speed options range from 20 fpm (feet per minute) up to 600 fpm or more. With these options, it is entirely possible to design a full automated motorized rigging system capable of production level scene changes. They are not limited to moving the big fixed elements. These hoists are not solely for prosenium stage configurations. While many of the above examples are based on multi-line hoists, single line point hoist options have also been developed. These may be of use in a traditional proscenium stage but could be equally of use in more free form venues such as black boxes, event centers, and arenas. The standardized mounting, connectors, and improvements in controls allow for hoist units to be repositioned as needed, easily and quickly, based on the production needs in a venue.

Modern control systems for motorized rigging have also seen significant development in the last decade. In the past, rigging control systems were complex custom builds. Newer rigging controls operate more like a lighting console. They can provide a range of functions, from basic controls for simple up/down moves, to the ability to write “cues” for pre-programmed scenery changes, to complex timed sequences of movement. Controls can be reconfigured if hoists are re-
Many of the newer controllers include 3-Dimensional modeling and pre-visualization of programmed moves of scenery or curtains.

Controls are now able to provide a greater level of informational feedback. Faults in the system are readily displayed and pinpointed for the operator. An improved level of safety is possible by this monitoring and robust E-Stop systems located at critical points throughout a facility. A common option with many of the newer packaged hoists is “load monitoring.” The hoist will actively monitor the value of the load applied to it and report this back to the controls for display to the operator. Limits on the load may be set at the controls, a valuable option for controlling who may be able to hang what from a given hoist.

The development of the packaged hoist and associated controls is marked by several key features:

• Standardized components across devices
• Limited options to meet the most common needs of stages
• Standardized controls and wiring within a manufacturer’s ecosystem.
• Engineered around common power available in most facilities
• Engineered to accommodate to a wide range of structural supports.
• Improved manufacturer support for maintenance and repair by standardization
• Flexibility to reconfigure systems as production needs change
• Greater safety features including load monitoring, multiple levels of operator access, and flexibility of control locations

NEW CHOICES AND NEW CONSIDERATIONS

Rigging systems are complex systems that are an integral part of any performance venue. Adding or including motorized rigging is a critical decision. A thorough review of a facility’s needs can help to determine the right blend of systems to support the venue’s performance program, whether that be packaged hoists, control systems, or any manual equipment. When selecting motorized rigging, there are several important considerations:

• Initial Cost – The cost to purchase and install rigging can be significant in both new construction and renovation. The right choices of system and components can result in an economical and sustainable system.
• Ongoing Costs – Manual rigging systems tend towards a “set-it-and-forget-it” mentality. The addition of motorized rigging requires a more systematic approach to ongoing maintenance and annual inspection of motorized systems. This is something that is often omitted when planning around manual rigging only.
• Future Costs – It is not uncommon to see manual rigging systems operating for 30 years with little to no maintenance or component replacement. Motorized rigging requires a planned approach to the upgrade and replacement of system components. Choosing the right system and manufacturer can go a long way to minimizing these future costs and ensuring that these needs can be met.

There are many valuable benefits to including motorized rigging in a facility. These include:

• Increased safety through system fault monitoring, load monitoring, and operator access.
• Flexibility of control locations for improved operator awareness.
• Reduced labor costs.
• Reduced set-up or load-out times.
• Greater flexibility with rigging and potential for reconfiguration of rigging.

The development of the packaged hoist and associated advanced controls has changed rigging, as much the electronic dimmer and networked control console did for theatrical lighting. Venues are no longer limited to highly customized devices for advanced motorized theatrical rigging solutions. Custom rigging will remain a viable option for specific needs, but the majority of theatrical rigging motorization can be served by the modern packaged hoist. FM

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The SAFETY Act is rapidly becoming a household name among venue security operators across multiple industries. Nothing better illustrates this than the growing number of companies — such as the World Trade Center, St. Louis Cardinals, San Francisco 49ers, Madison Square Garden, LaGuardia Airport, George Washington Bridge, The Southern Company, and Bloomberg — who have already made obtaining SAFETY Act coverage a primary element of their approach to risk management.

SAFETY Act, which stands for Support Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies, was created by the U.S. Congress in 2002, following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Their main objective: create a risk management tool that promotes the fight against terrorism by incentivizing the private sector to take preventative measures to deter and/or mitigate acts of terrorism. Recipients of SAFETY Act coverage receive powerful legal protections that limit or shield companies from third-party liability arising from acts of terrorism.

In part, the SAFETY Act was created to address the extraordinarily large third-party liability companies can face following an act of terrorism. An unfortunate circumstance that has occurred (all too frequently) after a terrorist act is the inability of those who are wrongfully injured to recover from the perpetrators responsible for the injury. Terrorists, by the sheer nature of their modus operandi, make for bad defendants: they are either dead; they have no money/assets by which to pay for damages; or their money/assets are inaccessible. Therefore, companies who are likewise victims of an attack can often find themselves subject to litigation following a terrorist act. Given the destructive nature of terrorist attacks, the third-party liability associated with those lawsuits can be extraordinarily large.

Companies can find themselves named as defendants in lawsuits, even if they put forth a good faith effort to thwart the terrorist attack from occurring in the first place. Thus, the U.S. Congress set out to identify those companies who are truly taking effective steps to combat terrorism and provide them with third-party liability protections to encourage them and others to make investments to advance the fight against terrorism.

The SAFETY Act offers two main levels of coverage: Designation and Certification. Designation is likened to an “A” grade, providing recipients a numerical cap on third-party liability arising out of an act of terrorism. Certification is likened to an “A+” grade, including all of the Designation benefits plus providing recipients immunity from the same type of third-party claims.

To make their case for qualifying for the SAFETY Act, companies must submit a SAFETY Act application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Office of SAFETY Act Implementation (OSAI, or SAFETY Act Office). The SAFETY Act Office, which resides in the Science and Technology Directorate of DHS, is responsible for administering this powerful program. The SAFETY Act Office reviews SAFETY Act applications and makes recommendations to the Undersecretary for the Science and Technology Directorate, who has the ultimate responsibility for awarding SAFETY Act protections.

Since both awards (Designation and Certification) provide powerful liability protections, it stands to reason that to earn either award, a company must demonstrate to the SAFETY Act Office that it has taken proven steps to thwart terrorist threats. If you are a venue operator and want to seek SAFETY Act protection, there are several security measures you must deploy, but one of the most critical elements is perimeter hardening.

Given the rise of terrorist attacks incorporating vehicles, DHS has placed an increasing emphasis on understanding what steps venue operators have taken to eliminate and/or mitigate such threats. Terrorist use of vehicles materializes in multiple ways, including vehicle-as-a-weapon/vehicle-ramming and vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attacks.

Each threat type brings unique challenges that must be met with a thoughtful and analytical approach. Although DHS understands that private sector companies do not have a limitless security budget, the do expect companies to take measured, yet effective steps to implement a hardened perimeter. To effectively do this, an entity must first demonstrate understanding of their vulnerabilities and the associated risk those vulnerabilities present.

As a venue owner or operator pursuing SAFETY Act, how do you understand your facility’s vulnerabilities? A sound approach is to involve consultants who specialize in physical security and Anti-Terrorism Force Protection (AT/FP) assessments of facilities, which can include:

- Establishing Design Basis Threats (DBT) for vehicle-ramming and VBIED threats
• Vehicle vector analysis for vehicle-ramming threats (further detailed below)
• Blast analysis for VBIED threats (further detailed below)

Next steps can include:

• Crash-rated perimeter plans (further detailed below)
• Present mitigation strategies to venue operator (further detailed below)
• Additional hardening methods specific to the venue

ESTABLISHING DBT FOR VEHICLE-RAMMING & VBIED THREATS

The selection of appropriate Design Basis Threats (DBT) for vehicle-ramming and vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) threats consider

• Aggressor capabilities
• Past history
• Available means and methods
• Target attractiveness, and
• Likelihood of an event to occur.

Vehicle barriers are an effective tool for protecting pedestrians and critical structural elements or infrastructure from malicious DBT vehicle-ramming attacks or accidental vehicle impacts. They also create a defined perimeter for exclusion of VBIED. To determine appropriate locations and ratings for new vehicle barriers, a vehicle vector analysis is performed. This analysis includes a review of adjacent roadway layout to determine potential approaches for attacking vehicle acceleration, roadway restrictions to identify potential vehicle threat parameters and magnitudes (type of vehicle, acceleration capabilities, mass), and operational procedures used to further restrict access and control vehicle movement.

BLAST ANALYSIS FOR VBIED THREATS

Understanding the vulnerabilities from an explosive threat is critical for managing risk for the venue. Significant injuries and death can occur from flying debris, glass, structural failure, and the shockwave of the blast itself. By understanding how the explosive threat size, threat location, and building characteristics affect the blast loading, the client/consultant team can determine the most effective combination of mitigation options to implement.

CRASH-RATED PERIMETER PLAN

Common vehicle barrier impact rating standards include the Department of State (DoS) “K rating” system and the analogous American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) “M rating” system. Each of these systems includes a designation to indicate the impact condition (vehicle weight and velocity). Additionally, another designation is typically provided referring to the allowable penetration that a ramming vehicle may achieve when impacting a barrier. Each of these rating systems uses a 15,000-pound vehicle traveling at various velocities as shown in Table 1.

CRASH-RATED PERIMETER PLAN

After establishing the types, locations, and impacts from vehicle-ramming threats and VBIED, the venue owner and consultants can evaluate various recommendations to mitigate the various DBTs. In designing and applying measures to mitigate against the risk of vehicle ramming attacks, it is important to balance the security requirements with the operational and functional needs associated with the typical user of the facility or venue. As a result, a mitigation strategy cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach, and instead must be tailored to the specific physical constraints and functional demands of a given location.

RESOURCES


Akmal Ali is the former Deputy Director of the SAFETY Act Office. He is currently a Principal at Catalyst Partners, a homeland security consulting firm located in Washington, D.C. where he assists companies in their pursuit of obtaining SAFETY Act coverage from DHS.

Matt Nebel is an Associate and Senior Engineer in Walter P Moore’s Washington, D.C. office. Matt is a leader within Walter P Moore’s secure design group and assists clients in physical security and structural protection against threats from natural disasters and terrorism. Walter P Moore is an international company of engineers, architects, innovators, and creative people who solve some of the world’s most complex structural and infrastructure challenges.

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<th>Table 1 - Vehicle Barrier Rating Definitions</th>
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Threat and vulnerability risk assessment (TVRA) is, and has always been a very subjective process. Over the years within the security sector, there has been very little done to change the way the process is conducted and the product that results. Simply stated, in order to keep up with the pace of change, the approach to TVRA work needs to focus on solid security foundations, creativity, innovation, and an infusion of technological advances.

Venues and companies at the forefront of this movement use very precise scientific software and models. For example, Thornton Tomasetti is conducting security planning, client collaboration, and advance visualization in a myriad of security scenarios to proactively provide accurate risk mitigation solutions, business continuity planning, crisis management planning, training, and design before clients invest in an implementation strategy.

Through the use of 3-D visualization, bomb blast and small arms ammunition modeling, escape and evacuation modeling and virtual reality, business owners are benefiting from a clear advantage in security preparation that is not only detailed but customized to specific needs. These innovations are cost effective and provide a clear return on investment.

Pairing traditional threat and vulnerability assessment techniques with technological innovation is a natural evolution in the process. One technique is the use of blast analysis software that provides air blast environment predications, fragmentation flight, and causality estimation. Using historical event data, this model establishes explosive event criteria which are input into the software and applied to the client’s existing floor plans. The models aid the team in predicting the air blast load impact on the structure and direct output of air blast on humans including zones that designate and predict the likelihood for survival. Furthermore, the technique provides fragment flight impact velocities and causality estimations. The results inform risk mitigation recommendations and display facility vulnerabilities in a way that gives the customer the visualization needed to understand the risk.

By running the model, we compare existing conditions with recommended security solution implementations displaying how the solution can reduce the risk in the same explosive scenario. The comparative representation is one way that clients are able to envision security protection planning and train against realistic scenarios that could take place in their facilities.

Through approaching security planning in a comprehensive, layered, and integrated manner, it is possible to use the latest escape and evacuation modeling techniques to model human responses to specific threats. Each simulation can be run thousands of times in order to accurately account for every building occupant. By using the model's algorithm, interactions are tracked within the structure simulating fire, smoke, toxic products, and other hazards. This model is used to validate existing evacuation plans and procedures and gives the client another way to see themselves. The results of this type of modeling directly contribute to the mitigation recommendations that help to improve escape and evacuation processes, training, and written procedures. The model test assumptions in a scientific manner, adding valuable information that helps with informed security recommendations.

Additionally, the use of Virtual Reality (VR) as a security planning tool is a must. VR provides the client with a realistic way to visualize security enhancements before installation and implementation. In addition to a traditional TVRA report, VR modeling products demonstrate the recommended mitigation measures displaying how security equipment can be integrated into their space with desired changes that are only a click away.

Recommendations like bollards, turnstiles, or even glass partitions can alarm clients into thinking that all of these features will transform their spaces into aesthetically unpleasing and unwelcoming environments. In VR, the client has the opportunity to see what the report details and provides the client with the ability to translate what was normally provided as a list of mitigation options into a 3-D virtual reality world that is easily changed when design recommendations are not exactly what was envisioned. This added technique is customized to client needs and budget as a myriad of scenarios are created at a reasonable cost. With a simple click of a button, the client is in their space and immediately sees how their facility can be positively transformed and secured. Furthermore, security technologies are live in the model.

For example, security camera specification and capabilities are loaded in the model in order to simplify implementation and show fields of view before valuable time and resources are invested in a particular location in the facility or on the structure. This added feature helps the client understand the need for the amount of hardware recommended by the assessment expert and clearly lends to the better investment of funds. Not only are clients able to see a camera on the ceiling of their facility, but they see what the camera will see. The models clearly show the camera coverage as the client moves through their space, driving home the importance of the design.

Furthermore, when clients see their space modeled additional questions are generated and ultimately valuable discussions result from the TVRA.
VR provides security directors a way to present security enhancements to C-suite executives by giving them a true perspective of any changes necessary for the facility. Presenting the proposed changes to executives in this manner helps to demonstrate the minimal impact on facility aesthetics, allowing for a smoother approval process and more importantly, a return on investment.

Another benefit of these innovative tools to the TVRA process is an end product that can also be used in crisis response training. Venues, schools, hospitals, and malls often run exercises with local or state law enforcement personnel. These models can be shared with first responders to help prepare the team for a crisis situation. The tactical team uses mock-ups or floorplans for training and preparing for hostage rescues or other crisis events. The models we employ can be used to add a 3D element that can help to provide for more realistic options in crisis response scenarios.

As the security environment continues to transform, so does the need to evolve traditional security analysis and evaluation processes. By taking this subjective process based on subject matter expertise and experience, and combining it with the use of precise scientific software modeling tools, we can garner better results in TVRA work. Layering 3-D visualization, bomb blast, and small arms ammunition modeling, escape and evacuation modeling and virtual reality, the security expert can and will change the way that they provide this service to the security conscious client.

A focus on customization and innovative technology integration result in accurate risk mitigation solutions, improved business continuity, crisis management planning, and security training and design. There has been a long-time need to evolve the TVRA process, and by combining art and science, we have a chance to change security planning for the better and become more precise in mitigation solutions. FM

Bill Edwards is Vice President of Operational/Technical Security Services at Thornton Tomasetti. He is responsible for planning, coordinating, resourcing and building operational/technical security services for the world-renowned structural engineering company with a long history of successful protective design and physical security projects.

Autumn Krill is Technology Integration Director for Thornton Tomasetti’s Operational & Technical Security Services.
Managing a facility is difficult. There are countless maintenance and operations activities that must be completed daily—tasks that increase on event days. Preventative practices, though necessary, are often difficult to keep up with during the everyday schedule of these spaces. By not engaging in proactive maintenance, a facility can often face increased energy usage, to keep up with during the everyday schedule of these spaces. By not engaging in proactive maintenance, a facility can often face increased energy usage and ultimately operational costs. The field team at Henderson Building Solutions has compiled some unique ways to improve the operational efficiency and functionality of your facility:

First, take a quick assessment of your current challenges.

Has your energy consumption increased without a clear reason? A slow increase in energy use day-to-day doesn’t seem like much, but over time this can create a big impact on the bottom line. Although this is typically a slow drift, it is certainly something to pay close attention to and take necessary precautions to avoid.

Have there been noticeable changes in your equipment usage levels? If you haven’t made modifications to your facility that would explain the increased load, you may be able to recover “lost” capacity by employing some simple practices.

Have you noticed an increase in comfort complaints? This doesn’t mean you need a new system or equipment, but it does show that your current infrastructure can operate more efficiently while improving comfort to your occupants.

CO₂ (carbon dioxide), RH (relative humidity), and airflow sensors are three of the biggest culprits when examining these issues. They go out of calibration the quickest and can have major impacts.

CO₂ Sensors

- Facility staff should review CO₂ data trends every six months to identify drift or calibration loss of sensors. Failure to monitor this data leads to under- and more critically, overventilation, which can have a significant impact on both occupant comfort and energy use.
- CO₂ sensors should be calibrated using a calibrated device and calibration gas at least every five years. If the sensors are exposed to airstreams that contain chemicals, significant dust, or other debris sources, more frequent calibration may be required to maintain optimal performance.
- If a CO₂ sensor cannot be calibrated, then it should be replaced. If the sensor is “self-calibrated,” they are actually self-correcting—not self-calibrating—and are often not accurate. Even these devices need to be verified regularly.

- When out of calibration, these sensors will often start reading more CO₂ than what actually exists. With this information, the controls system opens the outdoor air damper to decrease the amount of CO₂. The increase in outdoor air flow requires more energy to heat and cool properly. In this scenario, you are wasting money and equipment capacity to condition outdoor air you don’t require for ventilation.

RH Sensors

- Due to the type and sensitivity of the sensing element, calibration of RH sensors should be checked no less than every two years. If the sensors are exposed to chemicals, including spaces that are sterilized often, or frequent condensation, more frequent calibration checks may be required.
- Due to the nature of RH sensor operation, if a sensor is found to be out of calibration, it needs to be replaced. Failure to do so can have a significant impact on space conditions, especially where accurate RH control is necessary.
- When out of calibration, RH sensors can cause equipment to go into unnecessary dehumidification cycles, and as a result, the system will increase cooling or reheating operations. Temperature sensors can do the same thing. When they start to drift, they’re not providing accurate data to the rest of your system and your costs will begin to rise.

Airflow Sensors

- In all venues—especially those that hold dirt events—dirt and dust can get past air filters and into the air streams. Dirt and dust get into the supply ductwork and can clog the airflow sensing devices in VAV (variable air volume) boxes and air handling units. When they get too dirty, the sensors can’t read properly and supply additional unnecessary air.
- By cleaning these sensors properly, you will save fan horsepower and prevent wasted heating and cooling simply by making sure that the airflow measurements are accurate. This can also reduce hot and cold complaints from the occupants.

The bottom line: Maintaining and replacing sensors at the correct intervals is crucial to avoiding substantial costs in operating your facility. Most buildings do not replace their sensors quick enough, even those that utilize service contracts for controls and equipment.

With modern controls systems, sensors are crucial to the successful operation of a building. By planning these routine maintenance activities, a facility manager will not only create an environment that enhances the guest experience but will also provide increased value to their company through energy cost avoidance. Becoming educated and staying on top of these procedures can sometimes be the difference in hundreds of thousands of dollars.

With a seemingly never-ending list of things to do while managing a facility, checking the CO₂, RH, and airflow sensors can often get overlooked, but their potential impact cannot be overstated. In giving them the correct attention in the proper timeframes, your facility and bottom line will be in much better shape.

Zach Kremer is an associate, mechanical engineer, and commissioning agent for Henderson Building Solutions, a construction management and commissioning company that is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Henderson Engineers. Kremer has been in the field working with building systems for more than a decade. His experience includes retro-commissioning at the AT&T Center in San Antonio, Texas, where he served as a resource to facility staff to help improve operations and energy costs.
LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS

“Booking” Joe Giordano Makes Events Happen at SMG Tulsa’s BOK Center | By John Bolton, CVE

“You never work a day in your life, if you like what you do,” says “Booking”. Joe Giordano as he is affectionately called within his circle of friends in the venue management business. Joe currently serves as the director of booking at the SMG-managed BOK Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. 

Joe has been a student of event planning and booking since he was six years old. His mom was the one who ran every school fundraiser or event, when he was growing up, pulling off some of the most elaborate and complex events in his community. When Joe was in high school, he was in band, choir, theater, and absolutely loved going to see live shows with his many friends. Music and performing quickly became the center of his universe, and soon, he found himself in a rock band of his own, but without any gigs to play. A few members of his band started a promotion company called Past the Joneses Productions and started booking themselves in local VFW halls and bars in Northern New Jersey, giving Joe a taste of booking.

After college, working as an event staffer for a major festival in Pennsylvania, Joe made a connection through his future wife’s family to Zane Colling, general manager of the Sovereign Center in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Zane was gracious enough to hop on a call and give Joe some tips on how to break into the industry. Two weeks later, Zane called him for an interview after suddenly losing his booking coordinator. Like that, Joe was hired and quickly became Booking Joe.

Joe was a quick study to booking and was promoted to a regional booking manager with SMG for their Theatre Division. Those two positions taught him how to hustle and really go after shows in smaller markets saturated with venues and touring content. Most importantly, these first gigs required him to become a leader in finding creative solutions to any issues in booking shows or challenges that popped up on show days.

In 2016, Joe left Reading to become the director of booking at the BOK Center in Tulsa. Since moving to Tulsa, Joe has been an integral part of one of the most successful arenas in the country. Joe has put his skills to use training other booking managers throughout the Midwest, and artists. There is a very strong “YES” culture here in Tulsa, as we want to take any situation and turn it into a positive. Joe’s tried to incorporate the same attitude toward booking, as well.

For those looking to find a way to get into venue booking, Joe recommends finding a mentor who will take the time to train you properly, introduce you to the right people, and let you learn on the job as well. The financial side of the job certainly takes some time to learn, but that can be taught. The relationship development side takes years, so he recommends getting your name out there sooner rather than later.

Outside the office, Joe really loves to keep active in his spare time and completed his first half marathon this past November. He and his wife also love to travel when they can, play golf, snowboard, and of course he loves being the star shortstop for the BOK Center softball team.

“It sounds cheesy, but I love what I do because of the people our industry impacts,” Joe says. “We have the opportunity to create memories that last a lifetime, and I can’t get enough of it. Music and entertainment bring happiness in a world that needs more smiles. I love contributing towards that bright spot or moment in someone’s life. I tell every intern or employee who works for me to take five minutes at every show, watch the show if you want, but to really pay attention to the crowd. The people in the very last row singing their lungs out and jumping up and down is what it is all about for me.”

7. Make everything a win: An ethos I’ve developed over the past few years at BOK Center, I’ve noticed that all we do is create winning opportunities for our promoters, agents, managers, and artists. There is a very strong “YES” culture here in Tulsa, as we want to take any situation and turn it into a positive. I’ve tried to incorporate the same attitude toward booking, as well.

8. Adaptability: As so many facets of the industry change, I need to as well.

9. Industry Knowledge: I try to listen to one new artist per day (yet another list I have).

10. Creativity & Marketing: Knowing what sort of creative deal points you can come up with to add value to a show is immensely helpful.

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John Bolton, CVE, is vice president of SMG – Sports and Entertainment Division. He also serves on the Editorial Advisory Committee for Facility Manager magazine.

“Leaders at All Levels” is a monthly blog written by leaders at all levels, focusing on the key values that make up a leader. This blog is a collection of the best ideas and values from the IAVM leadership community. You can find the latest blog posts on the IAVM website.”
PERFORMING ARTS:
A Holistic Approach to Customer Service:
Employee Engagement | By Virginia “V” Fairchild

I know the word holistic can conjure some pretty specific images for some readers, so let’s get something out of the way right at the beginning: you will not have to align your chakras, consult your crystals, or burn sage throughout your entire venue to start giving everyone involved with your organization better customer service. All you have to do is care.

I know you do. You are all good people. You are all charming, kind, personable, funny, and intelligent. How do I know this? You’re reading this article, which means you are also probably tired, overworked, stressed about the constantly changing dynamics surrounding live events, worried about finances, and/or really concerned about how to keep your organization’s reputation and brand loyalty strong. How do you do this?

All you have to do is care. About everyone. All the time.

I’m sure you already care about the audience walking through the doors. You’ve walked the paths they will take through your venue. You’ve looked for safety concerns, signage, and wayfinding. You’ve trained your staff to within an inch of their lives. I’m sure you are fully invested in the experiences of the client signing the check to rent your venue for a three-day weekend of Something-palooza and fried foods. But to really give them your best customer service, you have to also care about Mary in Housekeeping who’s singing Uptown Funk while she hangs grease-covered popcorn kernels out of the trashcan. You are caring about Davis, sitting in the backstage hallway for the third straight night from midnight to 6 am, trying not to fall asleep while he guards the costumes of the show in the house. You are caring about Niko, scanning tickets and worrying about the homework assignment due at 11 pm. You are caring about Julie in Finance, Carlos in Development, and Adam in Programming. You have to care about all of them more than I know you already do.

If that sounds like a lot of work, it is. Customer Service has never been for the faint of heart. However, when you are making sure your staff is engaged and taken care of, engaged clients and audiences fall right into place. Lucky for you, there are a lot of easy, small ways you can do this.

One great way to start is by taking a little extra time on each shift to walk around and talk to the different levels of staff working the events. Your aim should be authentic conversation and active listening. You probably won’t get to everyone every event, but if you do this for a few events, not only will you soon see all the faces, and word will spread among your staff of what an amiable leader you are. Before long, you will find that the staff is constantly looking for ways to make sure they aren’t letting you down and finding ways to make you proud. If you are like me, this is exactly what you want: a staff that is independent and motivated. You will also be teaching them a soft skill: customer service isn’t about “being on stage” all the time. It’s about actually caring about other human beings. THAT is good customer service, not an act.

If you are truly listening and being open and authentic yourself, you’re going to learn a lot, too. You’ll learn faces and names of course (great for increased security of the building), but you’ll also start learning what motivates them. Why are they working here? What do they wish were different? Not all great ideas come from the top. Is your next brilliant customer service idea right there in front of you, only hiding because no one asked? Is your next promotable employee only a few steps away? You might also find out about some negative aspects of your organization. Maybe things aren’t as smooth as you thought or hoped. Embrace that aspect too. The challenges they present to you are a chance for the organization to grow!

Another easy way to engage with your employees is to create oppor-
tunities for bonding, both inside and outside of work. In my experience, the easiest way to do this is to create a social committee that comes up with various ideas and outings throughout the year. Live in a picturesque part of the country? A Saturday morning hiking trip may resonate with a cross section of your staff. Just as easily, a Monday night meet up for pizza will help build the sort of camaraderie that carries over to the work day. A potluck during the day will catch those team members that have a hard time participating in non-work hour events. The point is to create opportunities for all members of your staff to interact and get friendly. A team that likes each other will take care of each other. Further, that family atmosphere will turn into a personal investment in your organization. Your clients and audiences will feel that friendly atmosphere and that desire for every event to be a successful event.

If you are looking for a way to reward the staff members that are going above and beyond, there are a number of growth opportunities to be found in an incentive program. These programs are budget-friendly and easily adaptable to your specific needs. You can decide if you want to issue points that can be saved up for bigger prizes and experiences or stick with instant gratification prizes, such as a voucher to the concession stands. You can also decide how much of your organization’s leadership is involved in this process, whether through nominating or being able to provide the immediate prize. There is even room for team building through peer-to-peer nominations. The greatest accolade of all, though, comes from the customers who reach out, either at the event or through a note later, to compliment a particular staff member. Save your biggest rewards for that.

An additional touch point of engagement with your staff can be through professional development. IAVM offers amazing opportunities at every level and price point, but for many reasons, you may not feel those are viable for full staff engagement. Instead, think about areas you wish your staff were stronger. Wish you had a multilingual staff? Create language learning groups that utilize a free app or website like Duolingo or Lifeprint (for ASL). Feel like you don’t see staff buy-in on new initiatives? Make sure you’re giving them a place at the table with representation from the staff that actually have to carry out new policies. In other words, don’t make decisions for Housekeeping without input from members of Housekeeping. An added bonus: a much higher success rate for these new policies since a lot of bugs are worked out before ever leaving the conference room. Want staff to be more well-rounded in general? Good for you! Invest in industry books and create a staff library that is available for check out to all. Create a Dropbox everyone can access to upload notes from conferences and pertinent articles. Find members of your staff who are willing to act as mentors, or at least be willing to offer cross training or a day of shadowing. I can’t emphasize enough how helpful staff members find it to see the world from another employee’s perspective. Collaboration, solutions, and success are in that nexus.

As you can see, there are so many free or inexpensive solutions that will keep your staff excited to work with your organization. You’ll see increased teamwork, higher retention rates, and a savvier, happier staff. All of these equal better customer service.

Virginia “V” Fairchild recently accepted the position of Senior Patron Experience Manager for Children’s Theatre Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is now the proud owner of a snow shovel.
Over the course of my career, I have come to read many how-to books on the subjects of leadership, motivating employees, and showing them the path towards realizing their greatness. While I can always browse the shelves of my favourite bookstore for a new bestseller or a popular fantasy fiction series, I tend to gravitate in the direction of books on leadership, basically because I thrive on leading teams of people to try harder and do better.

I have titled myself an “empathetic badass,” which is my way of owning my greatest strength and fulfilling my duty to recognize the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of others around me. Before I came full circle in identifying with this title, I had to spend a bit of time trying to understand if I could be successful at practicing it in my professional life. I think I can say that the moment I decided to fully embrace was when a long-time friend and mentor spoke to me about empathy and kindness as leadership qualities.

Kindness Leadership, as it’s been appropriately named, is a kind of style that fits so instinctively with the type of person I am. I believe that for the majority of people kindness is already innately within them, waiting to come out but often suppressed due to fears of looking soft or weak. So instead of fighting against ourselves and the kindness we want to show, embrace it like I did by bringing the following items into play.

**MR. GRUMPY PANTS**

The people who are usually the hardest to be nice to, like Mr. Grumpy Pants, need it the most. A little kindness towards these people can go a long way in turning their negative attitude around, even when your kindness might be met with resistance at first. When we are faced with a person who is constantly unhappy, especially an antagonistic colleague, it’s only natural for us to follow their lead and respond accordingly. Try instead to gently nudge at the reason for their hostility by showing him or her a little empathy, because it’s possible there is something happening in that person’s life which may be deeply affecting them. The hidden struggle he or she is living with could have to do with a sick family member, financial stress, or some bad news that has turned their whole world upside down. You have nothing to lose by lending an ear, and if a change in them doesn’t immediately show, know that you’ve still done a good thing. Never underestimate how meaningful the offer of listening can be to a person who just wants someone to hear them out. I have recommended this approach to my staff when they deal with difficult people, suggesting they don’t get sucked in and escalate the situation unnecessarily. I advise they listen carefully for emotion in the person’s voice, find compassion in what he or she is saying, and lastly offer kind words that demonstrate understanding.

**“Be kind to unkind people, they need it the most” – Unknown**

**KINDNESS IS CONTAGIOUS**

One small act of kindness can inspire someone to follow the example you’ve set. Think about the wave at a baseball game. It usually starts with one or two people, and before you know it the whole stadium has joined in. Kindness can work that way too, with a contagiousness that spreads like wildfire. Even something simple like smiling at someone, giving a genuine compliment, or asking about his or her day can completely change that person’s mood and lift them up to higher spirits. I’m a big fan of Random Act of Kindness Day, one day a year. When I see the way in which people randomly give something of themselves on this one particular day, without asking for anything in return, I’m reminded of the difference kindness can make in the lives of others. Don’t wait for a special day that comes once a year to spread the pay-it-forward effect throughout your venue. Have it start with you, move on to your staff and colleagues, and watch with glee as it trickles down to your clients and guests. Who doesn’t want happy clients and guests, am I right?

**“Remember there’s no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end.” – Scott Adams**
KINDNESS STARTS WITH YOU
Kindness has to start somewhere, and it should be with you. An important quality that leaders possess is their ability to take initiative when nothing has been asked of them. If you feel your venue’s culture can benefit from more kindness, then you have to step up and be the role model that your venue needs. The good news is that, once you’ve set the example, the wave will eventually hit everyone and take on a life of its own. While this all might sound relatively simple, in reality, expect there to be a few people who frankly don’t care to keep the momentum going. Believe it or not, it happens at baseball games too, where Mr. Grumpy Pants will just sit there in his seat refusing to raise his arms as the wave passes through his section. Still, resist pointing fingers at him and others who are not following suit. Be patient. Rome wasn’t built in a day, and seeing acts of kindness spread across your company won’t happen that fast either. Kindness will circulate in time, and when it does, appreciate what you’ve started.

“A warm smile is the universal language of kindness.” – William Arthur Ward

KINDNESS DOESN’T HAVE AN EGO
Kindness cannot and must not be fake. For it to have the desired effect, it has to come across as genuine. When an act of kindness looks like it’s coming from a good place, the recipient will usually react with surprise and gratitude. If that same person reacts instead with a look of suspicion, it typically means he or she does not completely trust the sincerity of your words or actions. I would guess we’ve all had this happen to us, where someone says something you think to be either a white lie or just lip service. I like to believe that in all my years of experience I’ve proven to be pretty decent at sniffing out a fake compliment. Nonetheless, find the strength to withstand calling out that person’s insincerity, since it is likely their intentions were good. Practicing kindness can be a lot like taking criticism, some personalities find it harder to swallow than others. The last thing you want to do as a kindness leader is to stop encouraging those in your professional circle from being kind because their first few experiences didn’t go exactly as planned. With that being said, leaders and participants who set these acts in motion shouldn’t expect to see them paid back right away. To me there’s something morally amiss about keeping score, or even hinting to a colleague that he or she reciprocate your kind deed. I would also avoid the temptation to make a spectacle out of your kindness, wherein you’re doing it as a way to be seen and acknowledged. The pleasure you derive from carrying out the act is the true source of satisfaction, not the possibility that you might get a high five from your staff for making a kind gesture. Kindness needs to be performed for its own sake, as if it came naturally to you. If it doesn’t, let it be a reminder it’s time to get your ego in check.

“Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you.” – Princess Diana

These days, my growth as a leader has been dedicated less to what I can learn and more to what I can develop. I’ve found that learning has and will always be present in my life, regardless of whether or not I’m ready to acquire a new skill or information. A growth mindset on the other hand requires developing more of a mental playbook, something that has been planned, practiced, and accepted by your team. Fortunately, my venue’s team has taken kindly to playing by my game plan, trusting me as their leader to show them that kindness can triumph over all.

Carrie Paolone, CMP, CEM, CVP, is director of events for the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario.
I am often asked, in my position as CEO of Arena Stadium Management, what I do with my day. I go into the ramble about driving the strategic direction of our business and ensuring every staff member is supported to be able to achieve their goals and creating a culture and an environment where people can prosper. I do all that, but in reality, I also do a lot of thinking. I study the data, analyzing the budget, and trends in the business to create a clear and compelling vision which will excite the “employee family” to follow. Much of my job is about thinking. In order to be successful, one needs to be able to challenge the norm, be creative and find your point of difference, to think with clarity, imagination and vision, but have you ever thought about thinking?

Have you ever thought why you think the way you do? What drives you to accept one opinion over another? What kind of thinker are you? What drives your thought process? Are you making some fundamental errors along the way?

I am a great fan of Julia Galef, who is an expert on thinking, and her book The Soldier and the Scout has certainly taught me a great deal about it.

She describes what it is like to be a soldier. Your adrenaline is always flowing, you are in a mindset to protect yourself and your side (team), your actions stem from your training, which are deep seated reflexes on what to do in a situation. I remember we did three months of basic training, during my time in the army, and then a further three months of intense battle-ready training. We had to be able to respond to situations under huge amounts of stress. We had a saying when we went into battle that when the first shots were fired all plans went out the window, but your training kicked in, and it did.

A scout however, has a different mindset and duty. He is not there to attack or defend. A scout’s duty is to understand, to map the territory, identify obstacles, and know what is really there. In an army, both types of people are essential. If we think of them as a mindset and a metaphor for how we collect and process information in our daily lives, we can understand the importance that each a scout and a soldier play in any organisation or team. How we process information and ideas, good judgement, and making accurate predications depends on your mindset.

These two types of mindsets are illustrated by the Dreyfus Affair. Alfred Dreyfus was a major in the French Army. The French found that they had a spy within their ranks sharing secrets with the Germans when a torn piece of paper was discovered in a waste paper bin. They settled on Dreyfus being the culprit, mainly based on the fact that he was Jewish, and there was a great deal of anti-Semitism in the French army at that stage. They compared the hand writing to the note and decided that it matched, although handwriting experts said it didn’t. They interviewed Dreyfus’ teachers who said he studied foreign languages, which they found convenient that he could speak German, that he had a good memory, which was excellent for spying, and on searching his apartment and finding nothing, they concluded that he was both clever and sneaky. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment on the aptly named island, Devils Rock. Galef argues that this type of thinking, which led to Dreyfus being imprisoned, is a soldier mindset or motivated reasoning, where the investigators were motivated to get a result regardless of the evidence. She likens it to a sports ref making a call against your team, and your resultant motivation to conclude that it was a bad call, or why, if you read a research paper, that is a certain pro stance that you do not agree with, your motivation is to shoot down the findings.

Fortunately for Dreyfus, a Colonel called Picquant, who was also causally anti-Semitic, noticed that even after Dreyfus was jailed, the spying continued. He found a soldier whose handwriting matched the evidence. Despite all his efforts, he struggled to get the army and his superiors to take his concerns seriously. He even spent time in jail due to disloyalty trying to prove Dreyfus innocent, which after 10 years he finally succeeded. Galef argues that Picquant is a perfect example of scout mindset; despite his prejudices and beliefs, the facts and the truth were more important than his own opinions. She says the scout mindset is what is required for good judgement. The problem is our mindset is based on an emotional response rather than logic. The scout mindset is curious, open and grounded. The scout wants to see what is real rather than what is convenient or pleasant or fits our agenda and beliefs. The scout mindset is not about our intelligence or IQ, it’s about how you feel.

Galef quotes the author Saint Exupéry where he says, “If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up your men to collect wood and give orders and distribute the work. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.” Improving our judgment as individuals or societies requires us to change the way we feel. We need to be proud of the evidence. She asks a simple but profound question, “What do you yearn for?”

Do you yearn for seeking to uphold your own beliefs or do you yearn to see the world as clearly as you possibly can?

I invite you to think about thinking.

Guy Hedderwick, AEVP, is CEO of Arena Stadium Management Pty Ltd., Titanium Security Arena in Findon, Australia.
It is the start of a new calendar year. We are all in the middle of our season in our respective venues or in higher education institutions, and we are afforded the opportunity to take a step back to analyze our current operations. As I was listening to Earl Nightingale, who speaks about human character development and motivation, during my commute to work, he mentioned a strong point that resonated with me that, “sometimes success is right in front of you.”

We all believe we have a very efficient operation, but have we actually dug deep into our own operations to see if we are missing lost revenue or opportunities? Are there relationships that could be cultivated? Are you maximizing the potential value within your partner contracts? Are you creating new opportunities through existing services and recurring events?

I was hired 2 1/2 years ago by Winthrop University to lead a restructured Office of University Events to increase both the revenue through an external events program and the University’s brand within the community. Many times, we get caught in the fast pace of our industry and actually miss the low hanging fruit that equates to quick value. While this will not work for everyone, here are some points that enabled us to triple our annual net revenue position within two years.

1) **COMPLETING A FACILITY ASSESSMENT AND BENCHMARK COST ANALYSIS** – Are you covering your costs and are the rates competitive within the market? Facilities are evolving at a faster pace than ever before with new technology, increased focus on the fan experience, as well as the safety and security of everyone in and around the venue. Through our own facility assessment of defining our actual daily operating cost, we discovered that at the signing of every contract, we were in the negative between $50-$2,000 because we were not recouping our facility cost. With this in mind, we were having to make up the deficit with additional event expenses including catering, administrative, or technology. Our most reserved venue is McBryde Hall, a multi-purpose space. We hold approximately 50 events annually within the walls. Prior to us adjusting the rental rate, we were losing approximately $180 per event, which was equivalent to $9,000 annually.

2) **MAXIMIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES OF YOUR BRAND** – Sometimes revenue is not the only value to consider when evaluating events. Being a higher education institution, our first strategic plan initiative is to “Support inclusive excellence by expanding our impact on students and our communities through enrollment growth.” Keeping in mind our strategic plan and operating budgets, we have agreements with 12 different high schools that span four counties. In this agreement, we supplement the potential increase in rental revenue within our Coliseum in exchange for advertising within the high schools. This is a win-win for both the institution and high schools as we are cognizant of their budget concerns. We increase brand recognition through these advertising opportunities, and the students, parents, and friends experience our campus during the graduation events.

3) **Thoroughly reviewing the associated Request for Proposals (RFP)** – Analyze the contracts that your venue has with your event partners to ensure you are maximizing the value. Are there areas within the RFP that you have determined are not a priority due to the evolving customer experience or event industry? Can you negotiate the current RFP to increase the value? We did this at Winthrop University within our food service contract. We were able to develop a business case to negotiate a commission on newly acquired revenue through the catering for external events, in exchange for a lesser commission on concessions revenue. At the time, this was the correct decision, as the catered external events doubled the amount of concessions-only events. One key factor that went into the decision was that the contract did not allow for the sale of alcohol at the concession area. The contract value increased approximately $45K compared to the year prior, by successfully renegotiating the food service contract.

These are some examples that have helped us maximize our revenue and brand potential, and that may help you. By making these changes, we are able to focus on expanding the external events program, such as increasing the event usage of the coliseum, renovating the 3,000 seat Byrnes Auditorium to improve the customer experience and event usability, and increasing the fan experience through offering higher quality concessions and alcohol at specific events.

In the new year, I challenge each of you to examine your current services, analyze the recurring events, and focus on building closer relationships with your partners. You never know, you may be missing opportunities that can add value, build your brand or increase your revenue. Sometimes the low hanging fruit are ripe and ready to be collected. The question remains have you looked at the bottom of the tree or are you still only focusing on the sky?

Neal Miller is executive director of university events at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina.
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