

VENUE

PROFESSIONAL





SEVERAL ROADS LEAD TO EVENT SECURITY

CAREER PATHWAYS

» CORY MEREDITH

The event security sector attracts the best and brightest of today's diverse workforce. There is no doubt that event security is a unique business. A career in event security includes access to every conceivable type of event such as red-carpet award shows to major sporting events, concerts, conventions, and more. Event security employees are dedicated to creating a safe and enjoyable atmosphere for their guests.

Hands-down, employees are the most valuable assets of any event security company. It is vitally important for an event security firm to adhere to strict guidelines for hiring and training. Experienced, well-trained security professionals who are licensed and who have undergone background checks and drug testing are the foundation of professional event security. However, event security welcomes talented professionals that have strong customer service skills who come to our sector from other industries who then go through security training and licensing. Employees who have outstanding customer service skills are highly coveted in the event security sector, and these professionals are the people who rise in the ranks most rapidly.

CONTINUAL TRAINING IS KEY

Detailed, comprehensive training is extremely important for event security personnel. Training methods include classroom training, field training, hands-on simulation training, table top exercises, workshops, E-learning, certification courses, government-mandat-

ed courses, and annual refresher classes.

Event security is a dynamic sector that demands that the security professional engage in extensive training which includes understanding the signs and symptoms of heat stress, handling attendee slips, trips and falls, workplace fire safety, workplace violence and active shooter, emergency response and disaster planning, hazardous materials, and best practices for arenas, stadiums, and amphitheaters. In addition, there is venue specific training including crowd management that includes technical and guest services skills, line control, front of stage, ushers, response teams, and overall venue security and safety.

Training on how to effectively communicate is of paramount importance. This is referred to as "verbal judo," which is learning how to stay calm in the midst of conflict, deflecting verbal abuse, and offering empathy.

PROMOTE FROM WITHIN CULTURE

There are countless stories of people who join the event security world at entry level who have risen through the ranks. Meet Thushan Rajapaksa, who is a Senior Vice President, Allied Universal® Event Services. Thushan loves live entertainment and live music and says that he believes he has the best job in the world because he gets to create magical moments and memorable experiences for live audiences.

Thushan started when he was 18-years-old as a ticket taker for concerts and sporting events making \$5.25 per hour at the L.A. Forum working Lakers games in 1996. He held every position from guest services, security guard, cashier, box office, parking, access control, bike patrol, ID checking, red carpet staff, usher, talent escort, supervisor, recruiter, scheduler, event manager, account manager, director, executive director, general manager, VP to SVP.

“Event security is fluid and ever changing with crowd movement and dynamics,” he says. “In my 25-plus years, I have never worked a concert that has the same crowd management plan. During these turbulent times, ensuring the safety and security of event participants at NAMM or other high-profile events demands the use of cutting-edge technology paired with the best security professionals in the business. My event security team plays a multi-faceted role that includes alcohol enforcement, audience management, bike patrol, crowd control, ID checkers, 24-hour event security, access control, parking services, red carpet staff, ticket takers, ushers, and VIP/talent escort. We assist from pre-planning stages through post-show wrap-up; working with the client from start to finish.”

Event security professionals should have an open line of communication to their supervisors. A 10-to-1 ratio of security professionals to supervisor is an industry standard to ensure that there’s continual communication and that expectations are exceeded. It is important to ensure that every event has the appropriate level of experienced supervisory management.

DETAILS, DETAILS & MORE DETAILS

Event security entails far more than staffing the venue with security personnel. The process is complex and requires extensive coordination, communication, and advance planning. Every venue requires its own specific strategy and road-map which includes extensive facility orientation.

Advance planning requires teamwork with the venue’s facility management and local law enforcement to put together a “best practices” methodology that can be used to address a myriad of emergency scenarios.

EVER-EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY

As standard practice, security supervisors implement a plan that includes a network of people, processes, and technology to deter and mitigate threats. Law enforcement is a partner with physical security and may ask to access video footage. Today’s access control includes biometrics with video analytics with facial recognition. Video analytics is also able to measure and gauge crowd behavior, social distancing, detect suspicious packages, and instantly alert security and law enforcement so that preemptive action can be deployed. Social media platforms are monitored using specific key word analytics to assess if there are any potential issues that are happening.

Security professionals together with local, state, and federal law enforcement are able to work together to leverage multiple technologies and share information to mitigate potential threats. Ultimately, it is important to determine the policies and procedures that are in place that allow security personnel, law enforcement, and other entities to effectively work together as a blended team. **VP**

Cory Meredith, who has over four decades of experience in event security, is Senior Vice President, Client & Industry Relations, Allied Universal® Events Services, which is nationally recognized as an industry leading crowd management, event security, consulting, and security management company. He can be reached at cory.meredith@aus.com. Allied Universal, a leading global security and facility services company, employs more than 800,000 people with \$20 billion in revenues. Additional information is available at www.aus.com.



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