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Practical anti-terrorism awareness tips

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Expect the unexpected



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In our industry, we are passionate for people, enjoy large events in public venues, draw participants from all over the world, and our security is unarmed. Terrorists see all these aspects and more as vulnerabilities, and can use them against us to cause fear and destruction.

A conference consultant and event planner for 15 years, Steff moved into crisis management after experiencing 20,000 conference attendees stranded in Vienna after the Icelandic volcano eruption, and eventually became an anti-terrorism officer.

By understanding how terrorists select their targets, we can gain a good estimate of their actions and use their ideas against them. Which venues are easily accessible, and will be busy on particular dates? What venue information is freely available on our websites? Will terrorists

test response times and reactions with a dummy run?

In any crisis situation, the police reaction time will be 7-15 minutes. What can we do in this short period to delay the terrorists' actions?

Steff showed how simple measures like locking doors, switching off screens and barricading entrances causes them to use extra time. Meanwhile, staff should remove attendees through alternative exits, or keep people inside concrete structures.

An event organisation's crisis management strategy should include an exclusion zone/standoff distance, emergency management plans, personal awareness training, and emergency communication systems.

Steff stresses the importance of discussing this topic openly, not to encourage fear, but awareness. In this way we can inform our staff, deter terrorists, and protect our delegates and visitors from harm.

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