

On the eve of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, **Chris Plimley** shares lessons learned on securing high-profile events over the past two years and says collaboration, communication and consistency are key

THE THREE Cs OF SECURITY



Mess up on security at a major global event and you're never going to live it down. Just ask Nick Buckles and G4S about the fall-out from their role at the London 2012 Olympics. Buckles was chief executive of the world's largest security company, whose share price soared as it expanded into 125 countries under his leadership. But its slating by the media began, and his public humiliation with it, when G4S became the official security services provider to London 2012.

Any mistake was magnified by the fact that world events like the Olympics are broadcast by hundreds of thousands of journalists and media to hundreds of millions across the globe – and cost many billions to stage, often funded by a single nation's taxpayers. So when things go wrong, the proverbial brown stuff is really going to hit the fan!

As a result, we heard from the media – which makes most people presume this is fact – all about how G4S “admitted just a fortnight before the Games began that they were 3,500 shy of their recruitment target” – a shortfall which was plugged “at the 11th hour” by the UK military. The media glee at the “G4S fiasco” was fuelled by the rise in their management fee, reportedly, from £7.3m to £60m.

Buckles himself announced that the firm stood to lose £50m on the contract, a further £10m to £20m in “penalty payments”, a subject I'll return to shortly, and ruled out bidding for contracts at the Rio 2016 Olympics. In September 2012, between the Olympics and Paralympics, he accepted the resignations of UK boss David Taylor-Smith and Ian Horseman Sewell, the managing director of global events, over the failure. And finally, in May 2013, he announced that he would step down as chief executive.

But I hold a very different view to the one played out in front of the British Parliament and under scrutiny from the world's media – and it highlights the key lessons I've learned over the past five years on securing major events. Perhaps Buckles' key mistake was actually agreeing to the government's call for an extra several thousand security staff only a few months' prior to the Games.

London 2012 did so many things right. The crucial engagement of everyone involved in planning and delivery was started early. It was comprehensive and embraced all parties. And they maintained that collaboration right through the project. LOCOG and the ODA also built and maintained excellent communications throughout with all of the stakeholders – from athletes to volunteers, spectators to taxpayers,

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and contractors to media.

But this late and significant change in the plans smacked of inconsistency and, if my experience of delivering major events has taught me anything, changing things last minute will scupper the best laid plans. It causes rework, waste, extra cost and delay, and introduces friction between a tight-knit team that is under collective pressure to deliver to an immovable deadline in the full beam of both media and political headlights. You're working as a team and have together devised a sound security strategy, agreed personnel numbers and a definitive layout for overlay. So don't go changing this unilaterally late in the day without expecting painful consequences.

Good collaborative planning ensures all security equipment can be manufactured in plenty of time, meaning there is perfect availability of product when the build for the event starts. It also allows for the development of completely new products to meet previously unforeseen security needs, as we ourselves witnessed with the London 2012 Olympics. It means new technologies can be considered and applied to provide new solutions.

A good example that was trialed at last autumn's Conservative party conference for the first time was to incorporate the latest video content analysis cameras and monitoring into perimeter protection systems. Gone are the days when PIDs were simply mounted on a fence. Now threats can be monitored, analysed and recorded in real time so that, for instance, the same person approaching the perimeter at three different points on three separate occasions can be identified, marked as a threat and potentially apprehended without ever even touching the fence line. Early collaboration ensures logistics and planning can be co-ordinated to maximum effect and efficiency. It allows for the identification of the right personnel in the right numbers (think G4S again) and gives time for them to be properly vetted, accredited and trained.

With fore-planning, installers can devise detailed build schedules to ensure the safest working practices can be maintained even under the most exacting timelines, with work often having to be carried out in the tightest window in the small hours of morning darkness when public transport isn't running and roads can be briefly closed and diverted. And it means a fair share of risk can be agreed between the teams, all with differing political, social, commercial and cultural mandates, who come together to pull off a major event, including appropriate penalties or liquidated damages (LDs).

Our LDs for failure to deliver the security cordon for the G8 Summit last year ran to many tens of thousands per day of delay, aside from any consequential losses businesses or organisers may have claimed in addition.



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Because you can rest assured that people will complain given any excuse – and that's where the importance of good communication from the earliest opportunity comes in.

Major events, both while they are taking place and in the build-up to them, are always going to disrupt life for some. Whether it's diversions and road closures, potentially affecting trade and workers' commute, or the cost of staging an event – just look at the riots in Brazil before the Football World Cup at the "misuse" of public funds as the protesters saw it – some will feel they've been negatively affected, abused or their rights have been infringed. So security contractors need to work closely with governments, the police, local councils, residents and the media to ensure potential clash points are known about well in advance, mitigation plans are well understood and the overall greater good is wherever possible an aspiration shared by all.

Then, if you've got your collaboration and communication right, the third C you've got to ensure is consistency. Stick to your plans – and if you have to change them, do it early, with comprehensive collaboration and complete communication. And, fingers crossed, by the time you read this, all of those lessons will be proven to have been learned with a cracking Commonwealth Games. Go Glasgow!

Collaboration, co-ordination and consistency are essential if major even security is to be achieved effectively and on time



THE THREE Cs OF MAJOR EVENT SECURITY



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Case Study: securing international nuclear summit

In 2013, UK-based high security perimeter protection system manufacturer Zaun, working with Hardstaff and Highway Care, secured the G8 Summit in Northern Ireland and the influential meeting of world leaders and the world's commercial, political and financial powers at the Bilderberg conference at The Grove in Watford. Their growing international reputation as the go-to companies when world leaders assemble extended to Holland in March 2014 when 53 world leaders gathered in The Hague for the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS). The city is home to Europe's largest security cluster, major international courts, Europol, the Nato Communications and Information Agency and the continent's most important logistics hub in the port of Rotterdam.

This third NSS was held on the site of the war crimes tribunal and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which plays a key role in Syria and which is seeing The Hague rival Geneva as a global centre for peace and justice. The United States and Russia set aside their differences over Crimea to endorse the summit's final statement aimed at enhancing nuclear security around the world, together

with other big powers including China, France, Germany and Britain.

Zaun, Hardstaff and Highway Care designed, manufactured, installed and decommissioned the temporary high-security cordon around the summit, which included 13 gates and almost 3km of fencing, much of it designed to mitigate attack by hostile vehicles or protesting mobs. To drive home the importance of being prepared, the hosts sprang a surprise by organising a simulation game for the leaders in which they were asked to react to a fictitious nuclear attack or accident in a made-up state. Analysts say that radical groups could theoretically build a crude but deadly nuclear bomb if they had the money, technical knowledge and fissile substances needed.

Zaun earned high praise and an expression of thanks for its "outstanding job" on the security measures for the NSS from the commanding officer responsible for security at the summit. Chief Superintendent EN Mooy of The Hague Police said they "did an outstanding job in realising the fences and barriers".

And, at the Public Security Exhibition in June back in The Hague, the British Ambassador to the Netherlands, Sir Geoffrey Adams – there to energise the export efforts of UK public security equipment suppliers – confirmed Zaun had made "rather a name for itself in the city".

Security was successfully achieved at the Nuclear Security Summit

Chris Plimley is sales manager for high security products at Zaun Limited, a British manufacturer of high-security event overlay and perimeter protection systems with regional offices in France and Dubai.