

Russ Simons

Chief Listening Officer
and
Managing Partner

For more than 35 years, Russ Simons has been involved in nearly every facet of the sports and entertainment facility industry including design, construction and management. At Venue Solutions Group (VSG), Russ directs the firm's safety, security, risk and crowd management operations. He works with operators at every level from college to every major professional league.

Russ is a member of the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM), and has served on the Board of Directors and Life Safety Council. He is a founder and instructor of the IAAM's Academy for Venue Safety and Security and is an Instructor and former Chairman of the Board of Regents of IAAM's Venue Management School at Oglebay. Russ continues to work on industry Safety and Security issues having recently lead webinars on Ebola and Civil Disobedience and Demonstrations. He is a 2004 recipient of the GIGI Award of Excellence and member of the Event, Sales and Marketing Hall of Fame. He serves on the Board of Advisors for the National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security. He is currently the independent security consultant to the National Hockey League. Russ is a member of IFMA and the Stadium Managers Association.

Russ currently serves as the chairman of the Department of Homeland Security Public Assembly Facility Sub-Sector for Commercial Facilities. He is a former volunteer firefighter, instructor at the Hartford County Fire Training Center, and an Emergency Medical Technician.

Russ is the architect of the Walmart "Black Friday" crowd management plan, including the development and training of over 1.6 million Walmart Associates in more than 4,000 Walmart stores in the United States. Russ' plan is now standard operating practice for all Walmart "Retailtainment" events.

Prior to creating Venue Solutions Group, Russ was a Senior Principal with the global design firm Populous. There he managed the firm's facility operations, evaluation and analysis group which assisted public assembly venues in the renovation and development of new facilities. He also worked closely with designers and architects as they created functional and secure sports and entertainment facilities. Russ' previous positions include: Senior Vice President and General Manager of Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, home to the NHL Nashville Predators as well as Senior Vice President of Powers Management and President of Powers Solutions, a professional sports and entertainment facility consulting company.

Ingress Gate Design/Crowd Management Planning

Pittsburgh Pirates
Sacramento Kings
Penn State University, Beaver Stadium
Detroit Lions, Ford Field
Reliant Park, Houston Texas
Cleveland Browns, First Energy Field
Heinz Field, Pittsburgh PA
Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland OH
Tennessee Titans, Nissan Stadium



Education

Bachelor of Science, Sports Marketing,
University of Connecticut

Public Assembly Facility Management
School at Oglebay

Memberships

IAAM, Board of Directors, Life Safety Council; Past
Chair
Academy for Venue Safety and Security; founder
and instructor
Board of Advisors for the National Center for
Spectator Sports Safety and Security
Public Assembly Facility Management School at
Oglebay, Chair
IAAM-ADA Task Force, Ebola Task Force, Civil
Disobedience and demonstrations Task Force
International Facility Management Association
Stadium Managers Association

Relevant Project Experience:

Sacramento Kings, Sleep Train Arena/Golden 1
Center, Security, Mags
Amway Center, Orlando, Florida, Operations
Consultant
Consol Energy Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,
Operations Consultant
Kyle Field Renovation, Texas A&M University,
Operations Consultant
Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts,
Operations Review
Gwinnett Center, Security and Crowd Management
Review
Major League Baseball, Crowd Management
Initiative (26 teams)
Nanjing Sports Park, Nanjing, China Operations
Consultant
National Basketball Association – Peer Reviewer for
Safety Act Application
PETCO Park Operational Consulting, San Diego,
California
Prudential Center, Newark, New Jersey
The Point, Dublin Ireland, Operational Plan Review
Walmart USA
Major League Baseball – Crowd Management
Initiative
National Hockey League – Security Consultant