

## **Executive of the Month: Peter Simon of TSC: “We will stay in the forefront and embrace change”**

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New York, NY For Peter Simon, director of risk management, plans and logistics at Total Safety Consulting (TSC), coordinating a collaborative effort that requires the full participation of all involved is the crucial first step to ensure the safe completion of any project.

He understands the demands of the industry and its diverse stakeholders. “In the fast track realm of construction, meeting deadlines is always a priority. The key is to put a highly detailed site safety plan in place before the first hole is dug. With the right balance, you are able to adjust the work safely throughout the life cycle of a project,” said Simon, adding that he views each project holistically.

His own career path has likewise followed a master plan with multiple fine-tuned adjustments.

Before his career in construction,  
Simon was a firefighter

Focus is Key

Born in Atlanta, Ga., Simon received a football scholarship to McNeese State. Immediately he focused on the degree, not the sport.

“My parents stressed education,” he said, adding that his father was a corporate and criminal defense lawyer.

After two years at McNeese, Simon pursued another lifelong passion, firefighting. Inspired by a boyhood fascination and an uncle who was a fire chief in the Houston area, he matriculated at one of the most highly-rated firefighting schools in the nation and the globe: Texas A & M Engineering Extension Service Brayton Fire Training Field. Following training there, he took a civil service position with the Wichita Falls Fire Department, doubled his training and became certified as an EMT. Working alternating shifts of firefighting and construction, Simon was able to pay for his classes at Midwestern State at Wichita Falls where he completed his B.S. in sociology with a minor in psychology. That was step one.

“Physical work, construction and firefighting, are for young people. I needed a plan to take me into my 60s and beyond,” he said.

Simon enrolled in the Oklahoma City University School of Law.

“With an MBA, I’d learn how corporations work. With a J.D. (Juris Doctor), I’d learn how to create a corporation,” he said. Though his intent was not to practice, Simon knew that the degree offered the greatest utility and is, “Unique in that the education system utilizes the Socratic method,” –a technique of asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and draw out ideas.

Construction and NYC: A Working Collaboration

A Juris Doctor, Simon graduated from CUNY  
with a master’s in public health

After completing his J.D., Simon lived briefly in Argentina and in New Orleans, then settled in Manhattan’s Upper West Side in 2007. “I was always drawn to a high-density urban area. The architecture of New York City makes it a walking museum,” he said.

Furthermore, the city is, “The premiere market for construction in the nation” and the field is, “The most interesting and most collaborative industry in the city. Everyone works together, like firefighters or athletes on a team,” he said.

Simon answered an ad in the New York Times for a risk management and safety position at Total Safety Consulting, knowing that the turnkey company based in Bayonne, N.J., was recognized as the leader in construction safety. Following interviews with TSC managing principals James and Liz Bifulco, Simon was hired as a safety and loss control consultant.

He soon accumulated numerous safety certificates and licenses including the OSHA 500 and 62 hours of supervisory training through TSC Training Academy (TSCTA). He passed “the gold standard” and became a CSP or Certified Safety Professional and completed his master’s in public health (MPH) in environmental and occupational science at the CUNY School of Public Health.

“It gave me great exposure to the industrial hygiene perspective, the dangers of toxicity to workers and the public,” said Simon.

Over the years at TSC, he transitioned from field work – starting with an early “incredible” assignment at Lincoln Center – to risk management and planning, assessing potential financial and insurance-related risks both internal and external.

Develop the Plan. Implement. Monitor. Enforce.

Simon helped create TSC’s Risk Management, Plans & Logistics department from the ground up with the support of the Bifulcos. Starting with Simon and a draftsman; the 12-person team now includes a drafting group, administrators and design professionals. One of the department’s responsibilities is to create complex site safety plans and temporary structure plans for TSC clients at jobsites, some complying with DOB standards, others with various public agency or client requirements. He also helps create Tenant Protection Plans (TPPs) and Occupant Protection Plans (OPPs).

According to Simon, “The TPP existed since the 1980s, but it wasn’t always adhered to. Recently the DOB and the NYC Council have placed an emphasis on enforcing tenant protection plans and the 18 bills passed in 2017 are known as the Tenant Bill of Rights. The TSC planning group often uses planning principles and strategies honed in NYC when working on projects out of the TSC Miami office or in other states along the East Coast.”

His definition of the components of any comprehensive site safety plan—development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement—has become a model for the industry.

His diverse background has also enabled Simon to become an industry expert on building codes. “I am able to bridge the gap between the legal and the technical,” he said.

A frequent contributor to peer review journals, in one in-depth article published in Professional

Safety, the journal of the Association of Safety Professionals, Simon detailed the 21 elements of a site safety plan and noted, “Building codes aim to protect occupants safety and health...However, the codes are often as important in protecting the safety and health of the community’s residents during the construction process.”

He serves on the Board of Directors of the Construction Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) of New York State, a nonprofit organization with a longstanding relationship with and respect for TSC’s advocacy role.

“TSC and CSAC are committed to improving overall safety in the industry – a rising tide lifts all ships,” said Simon.

### TSC Sprinting toward Tech Now and Going Forward

Simon is responsible for spearheading industry presentations on local and national regulations

What’s next? Simon is helping to develop TSC’s utilization of state-of-the-art technology. He sees 3D modelling and printing as a communication tool used more and more in safety planning with the potential to improve safety and revolutionize production techniques.

The tech transformation in construction is growing exponentially. Jobsites are increasingly connected to technology and data collection systems. The Internet of Things( IOT), refers to any object, tool or machine that can have sensors installed on it to monitor operating conditions and is an example of currently ongoing projects that can help prevent accidents and alter human behavior vis-à-vis safety.

“The industry is adopting technology and data collection in a manner that hadn’t occurred previously. It’s picking up momentum as construction and safety sprint toward tech. More data about construction will be collected in the next 10 years than in the last 100,” said Simon.

And TSC’s part in the changes? “We are committed to our leadership role,” he said. “We will stay in the forefront and embrace change.”