

# Career spotlight: Andy Neal

In this interview, Andy Neal shares his career path and advice on successfully managing risk and making an impact at work to inspire those up and coming in their careers.



## How did you get into health, safety, risk management as a career?

My career in the military introduced me to some bespoke initiatives and situations that required a unique response to complicated military objectives. With the advent of an increased global threat of terrorism, I developed strategic education and training programmes based on current high risk threats.

Whilst in this role, I designed resources and risk management models for the Qatar World Cup command. I also concentrated on travel solutions and the prevention of risk to lone workers and personnel working in unsupported environments.

This led to developing an international company focusing on asset and people risk and

### Name:

Andy Neal

### Position:

Associate Director  
Global Security

### Organisation:

Cardinus Risk  
Management

### Industry/ Sector:

Security & Safety

over the past 10 years my focus has been on educating people deemed at risk by training and implementing education programmes that utilise the skills of recognition and procedures to reduce risk. My focus has always been on ensuring companies support their most valuable asset, their people.

## What Qualifications do you have, which have proved most valuable and what advice would you give those starting out or considering a career in risk management?

I am a member of the IIRSM, currently in the final year of a MSc in Terrorism Studies and have also gained a Certificate in Education to assist in the design of education programmes.

My advice would be to look at all relevant qualifications to enhance your career, what makes you different from everybody else and how can you evidence that.

## What are the benefits of joining professional organisations such as the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM)?

For me, the key to joining any membership body or professional institute is the ability to network with like minded people. Yes, you will have access to technical knowledge and maybe qualifications which lead to more

## BRIEF BIO/ KEY CAREER MILESTONES:

Andy has been involved in the risk management profession for 20 years, initially starting his career in the armed forces, before moving into safety and general security, where he specialised in high net worth asset and people protection, with a primary focus on counter-terrorism.

In his career, Andy has been responsible for strategic planning and implementation of specialised risk reduction measures and he has been instrumental in the introduction and delivery of behaviour recognition programmes across the globe.

letters after your name, but the key is to discuss new ideas and complex issues with your peers.

IIRSM has 1000s of members each with diversified expertise and experience, and it is this that is key.

Keeping updated in industry sectors is vital for my own skill set, networking and education programmes scheduled by the IIRSM offer this vital support method.

**What advice would you give to build a strong professional network and how important is this for someone starting out on their health, safety and risk management career?**

Building a network of professional peers is vital for career development. Risk management is often multi-faceted and changes with market solutions and concepts. A network of associates and peers is vital to keep updated with current risks and risk reduction solutions. I am keen believer in a problem shared is a problem solved.



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**What does a typical week look like for you?**

Activities include:

- Development meetings
- Writing programmes
- Carrying out surveys and audits
- Researching and developing new areas
- Training programme delivery
- International team calls

Being in an advisory role is key to market exposure so, client discussions and project development are a large part of my portfolio.

**What is your approach to leadership and what advice would you give to those starting out on their career to develop their leadership skills?**

My approach to leadership is communication and team work, if you have no communication then you have no team. Always try to have a balanced approach to risk management. Your experience and skills mean something but unless you are flexible to the risk, your solution and advice maybe flawed. This is why networking and associates are key.

**What is the biggest career challenge you have faced, how did you approach the challenge, what was the outcome and would you approach it differently with hindsight?**

After an injury in the military, I left the service with 40% disabilities. The future looked grim, after huge adjustment and self determination, not only did I have to adapt

**BRIEF BIO/ KEY CAREER MILESTONES:**

As the Associate Director of Global Security Solutions at Cardinus Risk Management, he provides training in corporate travel safety, lone working, hostile environments, conflict management and behaviour profiling to a range of clients.

Throughout a career spanning 24 years, Andy has a proven track record in delivering outcomes across regional, national and international projects in partnership with Government, Military and non-Government agencies. Highly regarded in his field, Andy has extensive experience, specialist training and a unique style of delivery that gets results.

He has designed and delivered strategies on counter-terrorism, lone working, global travel safety, personal security operations training and procedures.

Andy is the tactical security advisor to IIRSM, and delivers masterclass talks on safety and security around the globe.



from a military career, I had to adapt to a life with very different and limited prospects. I surrounded myself with colleagues (also injured) and looked at the market where I (we) could utilise our skills in the civil sector. I placed myself into the market and each day, and over weeks and months my portfolio grew.

**How do you manage client/stakeholder expectations whilst encouraging commitment to continuous improvement in risk management?**

For me this is relatively easy to answer - quite simply 'quality'. Whatever I deliver I want the client/stakeholder to want more. Being a trusted solution provider is critical in risk management. What you deliver has to be memorable and presented with such high quality that you become a trusted advisor to your client stakeholder group.

**What is your proudest achievement so far?**

Many military achievements, studying for my Master's degree after leaving school at 16 with no qualifications. My children and newly introduced granddaughter.

**What/ who inspires you and why?**

People inspire me, I enjoy learning from people. People who do not accept the ordinary and adapt their circumstances

to improve inspire me. Individuals and organisations that think outside of the box, in other words people who try and find solutions outside of normal methods.

**What are your most important tips for someone starting out on their health, safety, risk management career?**

- 1) Get the right qualifications.
- 2) Know your market - understand the present and predict the future.
- 3) Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- 4) Know your limitations.
- 5) Find a trusted mentor to support you.
- 6) Have vision and seek quality in everything you do.

**What are your career aspirations now?**

My aspirations are to be respected as a professional and be regarded as a high quality member of the Cardinus team.

**Please share any other details you feel relevant.**

Don't start a Master's at the age of 52 - it makes you realise you should have tried harder at school!

Never accept rejection - treat it as a door. If the door is shut, knock on it, if it still doesn't open, kick it, if its stuck, blow it open and enter. Never stop learning.



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## About IIRSM's Emerging Risk Leaders Network

The IIRSM Emerging Risk Leader Network (ERLN) is a working group of ambitious professionals who are proactively looking to get ahead in their careers or support others to do so. The purpose of the Network is to:

- Support its members in developing their influence and profile within their place of work and the wider risk community.

- Empower members to build career success by learning from and supporting others from different industries, risk disciplines and geographical locations to cross-pollinate ideas, knowledge, best practice and lessons learned.
- Facilitate opportunities to showcase member capabilities through delivering informative and novel

ideas and solutions through different channels.

- Promote the importance of developing risk and leadership skills early on in careers.

**To find out more and for sponsorship opportunities, visit:**

[www.iirsm.org/iirsm-emerging-risk-leaders-network](http://www.iirsm.org/iirsm-emerging-risk-leaders-network)