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4-25-2023

Astroworld: Crowd Surge and Communication Errors

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AstroWorld Festival Case Study SEE4060



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Executive Summary

AstroWorld Festival is an annual music festival run by Travis Scott, an American rapper, and is held in Houston, Texas. AstroWorld works with Live Nation as the promoter of the event. Live Nation is an American based global entertainment company founded in 2010. During the third annual festival in November of 2021, tragedy struck, and lives were lost.

An influx of sudden motion or, a crowd surge, began causing concert-goers to panic.

Ultimately, fans were trampled and passed away from compression asphyxiation. This case study explores the AstroWorld Festival tragedy in the ways of facts, an internal and external analysis, alternative solutions and a conclusion with recommendations.

Problem Statement

The problem with the AstroWorld festival was the lack of communication and an operational plan, included but not limited to seasoned employees who would be able to identify risks along with threatening and destructive behavior.



Facts on Festival



Travis Scott has had a history for inciting violence in the past – facing charges and pleading guilty twice for telling his fans to jump barricades

AstroWorld Festivals had experienced smaller incidents in the past. In 2019, 3 people were injured due to a crowd surge like movement.

Day 1 of the 2021 AstroWorld Festival, rowdy fans and chaos had ensued by noon. According to the Houston Police Department, by 4:00pm over 50 people had received medical attention.

No shows were happening on the second stage night one. All eyes were on the mainstage at 9:00pm for Travis Scott's performance.

Facts on Festival

Within 10 minutes of Travis Scott's performance beginning, video shows fans struggling to stay on their feet.

Around 9:25pm, Scott paused the show for the first time, calling for someone to receive medical attention. He began performing again but stopped an additional two more times.

At 9:38pm, Houston Police Log claims that police officers and firefighters responded to the event with "mass casualties"

Approximately 10:12pm Travis Scott ended his performance. The Houston Chronicle reported that the promoter of Live Nation agreed to end the show early; however, Travis continued to perform.

The AstroWorld Festival Operations Plan has no plan regarding crowd surges

Facts Upon Investigation

Communication between AstroWorld management/ NRG Park Management to the mayor's office was lacking

Communication first started on October 25th – a week and a half before the festival began. A revised copy of the road closure plans, and site map were sent on October 31st after concerns were made.

November 1st, AstroWorld got the correct permits although emails shows there was still discrepancies about road closures and managing transgressions being handled on November 2nd.

A permit received on November 1st was only an updated version from an original NRG Park permit allowing them to have concerts and other events such as Monster Jam,

Other documents involving fire code, fireworks, and catering weren't approved up until November 5th. With some fire safety documents going unsigned, undated and unmarked for approval.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Popularity of Travis Scott
- Other popular artists performing at the festival
- Working in conjunction with Live Nation Entertainment

Weaknesses:

- Poor communication
- Poor Operations Plan
- Travis Scott's History

Opportunities:

- Attracting a larger demographic
- Acquiring more of the festival market
- Availability to historic data from Live Nation Entertainment

Threats:

- COVID-19
- Rowdy demographic
- Inundated Festival Market

Alternative Security Solution #1

1. Inform people on how to protect themselves in the event of crowd surge and explain evacuation plans before the concert

Pros: People will know what to do in the event of crowd surge.

Cons: Information may not be spread to everyone, in the event of crowd surge people may panic and forget what to do.

Alternative Security Solution #2

2. Change the barricade set up

Pros: Prevent crowd surge, set barriers in a manner that keeps people safe.

Cons: Heavier weighted barriers can be bulky and may be hard to move in the event of an emergency.

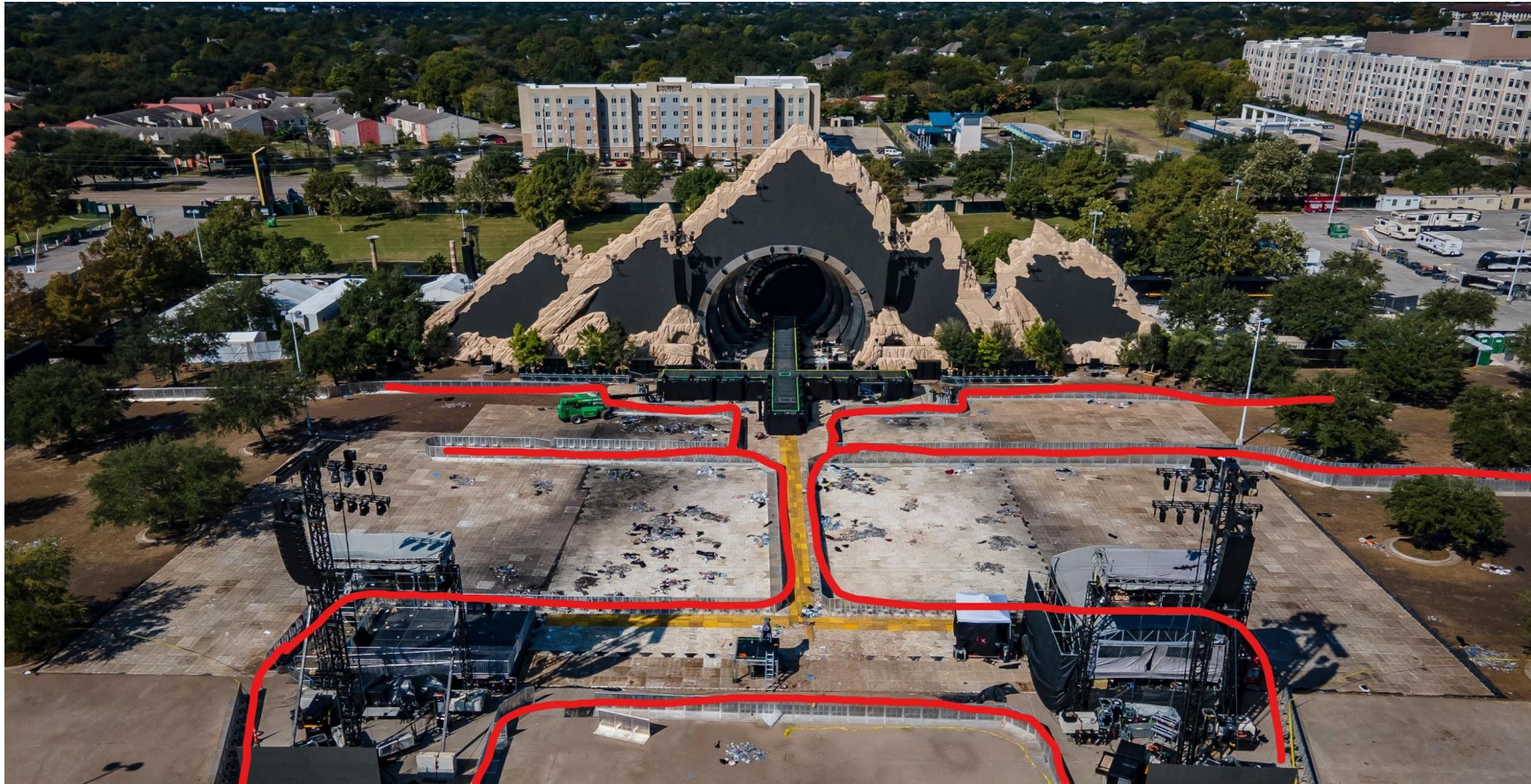
Alternative Security Solution #3

3. Using a different venue

Pros: Seated, controlled environment, more space, capacity limit.

Cons: Cost of the use of the stadium, seated (most festivals are standing room only).

AstroWorld Barricade Set Up



Conclusion/ Final Recommendation

Proper Planning –
How can the festival
and team improve
from year to year

Inform Attendees –
Spread information
early on how to
protect yourself in the
event of an
emergency

Different Venue –
Move the festival to a
larger venue

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