



Jim Dowdall

British Stunt Coordinator and performer who worked on eight Bond movies, Indiana Jones, Star Wars, Where Eagles Dare and Saving Private Ryan as well as Top Gear and dozens of other TV shows.

Offering something totally different to the business of Risk Management, Jim's 40 plus years as a stunt performer and coordinator presents a perspective based on rapidly changing scenarios involving a variety of skills.

Jim's biography

About Jim Dowdall

These skills can be applied to almost any situation with reference to danger/risk management and prevention and Jim offers a working directive offering the experience of having been a movie armourer, a member of the Parachute Regiment (Champion Recruit) and now the Chair of the British Stunt Register constantly dealing with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) matters pertaining to the stunt side of the film business.

No stunt can be 100% safe! However, elimination of as many of those potential risks as possible either through training or the correct piece of kit, can make the difference between someone going home in one piece at the end of a filming day with some successful film 'in the can' and an unwelcome hospital visit with all its later problems.

Having worked on 'Star Wars' 9 'Bonds' 'Indiana Jones' 'Batman' 'Top Gear' a series of very hard hitting road safety films etc., and a host of other movies, TV shows and commercials, Jim's broad spectrum of creative [risk management](#) offers a very different but entertaining talk mixing amusing and sometimes hair raising anecdotes backed up by his experience of looking after some of the most expensive 'stars' in the world.

His collection of military vehicles and firearms knowledge and active involvement with several military museums also lends a historical aspect to his talks offering a wider diversity to different audiences. Winner of several film awards including The Advertising Craft Awards 'Best Stunt' combined with membership of BAFTA and the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts, Hon Fellow of the BKSTS and

a regular speaker at The Tank Museum in Dorset, The Imperial War Museum, The National Film and Television School and many august dining clubs in London.

Running a team of professional stunt performers both men and women who have struggled hard to get where they are and are all strong characters, requires a form of [leadership](#) which involves a large degree of mutual respect which, though democratic as far as possible, has to be finalised with 'the buck stops here!' and therefore, 'my word is the last word'.

Making films is a collaborative process involving milking the best skills and talents to produce an end product. This process is enhanced by melding the team together and although drawing on individual expertise where required, the end product requires everyone to pull in the same direction to realise the director's vision. The imperative is to recognise the team's individual strengths and weaknesses so that 'they know that you know!'

Risk management and avoidance (where possible) is a huge part of the process of film making, particularly when it comes to stunts. Not only the physical risks but also the creative, visual and financial risks emerging as a result of the creative process must be interpreted, balanced and offset, often "on the hoof" as spur of the moment creative changes are common. On some occasions action sequences can actually be made safer by ramping them up.... Knowing one's craft well enough to recognise, embrace and fully commit to the pivotal choice points in any given stunt is paramount... as is being prepared to 'stick to your guns' where safety is concerned!

Film making and the film industry is comprised of a huge pool of greater and lesser talents encompassing a truly marvellous [diversity](#) of skills coming together to make an end product which hopefully 'hooks' the audience into wanting to 'see what happens!'. Many of the film technicians will say they are 'unemployable' for a "normal" job, as the diversity of their talents is often unique in their skillset. Being able to "read" your colleagues is key to having the kind of relationship required for those unique and widely diverse skill sets to come together symbiotically. I've learned to sometimes quietly ask a few innocuous questions to new colleagues to sound out their character and assess the level of cooperation that one may or may not be offered from that person, which may prove vital when the pressure is really on and the proverbial hits the fan!

Utrinque Paratus is the motto of my old regiment and it means 'ready for anything'. Very valuable advice given the ever changing parameters involved in the film business.

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