

# Delivering Peace Of Mind

An Interview with Dan Donovan, Founder and Managing Partner, Stratoscope

**EDITORS' NOTE** Dan Donovan is the Founder and Managing Partner of Stratoscope (stratoscope.com), a security and event consulting firm specializing in large-scale events and venues. With over 30 years of experience, he has managed security operations for prestigious events such as 13 Super Bowls, seven Olympic Games, 10 of Salesforce's Dreamforce conferences, and F1 Las Vegas. In November 2024, Donovan expanded Stratoscope's offerings to address modern event management



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challenges, integrating advanced technologies and strategic expertise to enhance operations and guest experiences. He also founded Ingressotek (ingressotek.com), a company specializing in innovative event security solutions that balance safety with guest convenience. Donovan's extensive experience includes roles such as Vice President of Sport & Entertainment at T&M as well as Guidepost Solutions and Founder of The Inocon Group. His leadership in the industry is marked by a commitment to proactive planning and rigorous preparation, ensuring seamless execution of complex events.

## Will you discuss your career journey?

My path didn't follow a traditional blueprint – it began on the football field. I've been in the event business my entire career. It all started when I was coaching football at Georgia Tech. From there, I was recruited by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to run their sport technology department, which opened the door to an entirely new world. While planning for the Atlanta Olympics, my work caught the attention of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Organizing Committee, and I became the first expat

they recruited to Australia. There, I ran the entire sports competition department, overseeing 28 sports. It was a masterclass in leadership with 28 direct reports, which makes you quickly learn the art of teamwork, delegation, decentralized management and communication – because one person can't manage that volume alone.

After the Sydney Games, which were widely hailed as one of the most successful in history, I took the entrepreneurial leap, founding The Inocon Group. My goal was to tackle the complex challenges of operational readiness, crisis, and incident management in the world of major events. Early projects included the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics and a partnership with Coca-Cola Worldwide – until the events of September 11, 2001, reshaped the industry overnight. After 9/11, we were suddenly writing all the standard operating procedures between the Salt Lake organizing committee and law enforcement. I turned to my business partner and said, "We're now a security company."

We pivoted the firm toward developing specialized security strategies for large-scale events, carving out a unique niche in the industry. In 2011, we sold Inocon to New York-based Guidepost Solutions. I spent the next five years as Vice President of Sports and Entertainment, later moving to T&M USA, where my loyal client base continued to follow.

Today, I lead Stratoscope, Ingressotek, Ford K9, and Stratos K9 – four powerhouse brands transforming the landscape of event security, advanced technology, and K9 explosive detection. It's been a journey shaped by incredible mentors, pivotal moments, and an

unwavering commitment to raising the bar in security, crowd management, and innovation. At the end of the day, it's about delivering peace of mind to our clients and making sure every event is not just successful, but safe.

## Will you provide an overview of the brands and how you define their missions?

Our companies don't just protect events – they set the gold standard for how safety and security should be done. Stratoscope is our consulting division and really the heartbeat. It's where the strategic vision comes together. We don't just advise on event security – we get deep into the details, building the crowd management plan and covering everything from weapons detection and canine units to security staffing, police integration, medical, and vehicle mitigation. We bring the same level of precision and protection to special events that you'd see in a top-tier professional stadium in the U.S.

Complementing that is Ingressotek, which I would call the premier weapons detection rental company for special events. With cutting-edge technologies like Evolv and CEIA in its arsenal, Ingressotek specializes in not just providing the tools, but in seamlessly operationalizing them. We're the best at integrating these technologies into the flow of an event, making sure safety never comes at the expense of experience.

The most recent additions to our portfolio, Ford K9 and Stratos K9, elevate the role of canine detection to an elite level. Ford K9 is the gold standard for training, certification, and consulting. We're constantly working to enhance the skills of handlers and their dogs so they're the best in the business. Stratos K9, on the other hand, is our deployment arm. That's where we send out highly trained handlers and detection dogs to protect events, corporate campuses, and schools. The

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goal is simple: to raise the bar for the private K9 and handler experience across the board.

Our mission across all four brands is clear. We’re here to deliver peace of mind. Whether it’s through world-class strategy, cutting-edge technology, or highly trained canine teams, we’re committed to creating safer spaces – because every event, every gathering, and every crowd deserves nothing less.

**How critical has the P5 Strategy been to Stratoscope’s industry leadership and success?**

At the heart of Stratoscope’s industry leadership lies a deceptively simple but profoundly effective philosophy: the P5 Strategy. P5 has been absolutely critical to our success. It’s the framework that guides everything we do.

The first “P” is People, and this is non-negotiable. We have the best people in the business. Our team knows how to strike the perfect balance between a rock-solid security posture and exceptional guest experience. That balance is what special events demand.

Next comes Process. Our solutions are built on tested, proven processes. We don’t just show up – we rigorously exercise and vet our plans before we ever deploy to an event.

The third pillar, Planning, is where Stratoscope’s meticulous attention to detail shines. We leave no stone unturned. Every possible scenario is considered, every contingency accounted for, to make sure our clients’ events run smoothly and safely.

Then there’s Performance. Our track record speaks for itself. But we’re not resting on our reputation – we constantly look for ways to improve, and we invite our clients to grade us so we stay sharp.

Finally, the fifth “P” is Products. This extends beyond physical tools to include the

systems and deliverables that Stratoscope brings to the table. If we don’t have the right product or solution in-house, we’ll go out and find it. Our clients can be confident they’re getting the absolute best available.

Together, these five principles form the backbone of Stratoscope’s approach – and have set the company apart in an increasingly crowded and competitive space. P5 is more than a strategy – it’s our promise to our clients – and it’s been key to driving our growth and leadership in this industry.

**How is Ingressotek redefining event security with advanced technology?**

As the event landscape grows more complex, Ingressotek is leading the charge in redefining how security technology is deployed – and more importantly, how it performs. When we launched Ingressotek, our goal wasn’t just to introduce the most advanced weapons detection systems on the market – it was to completely transform the guest screening experience. But technology alone isn’t the answer.

While cutting-edge tools like Evolv and CEIA weapons detection systems form the backbone of Ingressotek’s offerings, what really sets the company apart is the team. You can rent a detection system from anyone. What matters is how you operationalize it. Without the right people to configure, adapt, and run that technology in real-world environments – whether it’s a red carpet premiere, a stadium entrance, or a 30,000 person business conference – it’s just equipment. And equipment alone can fail.

Ingressotek’s success lies in its ability to blend elite technology with tactical execution. Our team ensures that every deployment creates a secure perimeter without compromising flow or guest experience. That’s the magic – it’s

invisible security, done with precision. In doing so, Ingressotek is not just keeping people safe – it’s setting a new benchmark for what modern event security should look like.

**Where do you see the greatest opportunities for growth for Stratoscope, Ingressotek, Ford K9, and Stratos K9?**

The future of our companies is defined by limitless potential – and a fast-evolving landscape that demands innovation. There are endless opportunities for growth. On the Stratoscope side, more and more events are realizing they need comprehensive security strategies and crowd management plans to keep guests, fans, and attendees safe. That demand is only going to increase.

With Ingressotek, the technological wave is gaining momentum. New technologies are constantly hitting the market, but the event industry needs partners who know how to operationalize them effectively. Risks are always evolving, and Ingressotek is perfectly positioned to stay ahead – both with the cutting-edge detection systems we already use and with whatever comes next.

Ford K9 is poised to remain the gold standard in training, certification, and consulting. The special event K9 sector is on a steep growth trajectory. As more events recognize the value of detection dogs, the need for expert consulting and certification will only accelerate.

And then there’s Stratos K9, which I believe is entering a moment of unprecedented demand. The reality is that most events can’t access law enforcement or federal K9 resources. Stratos K9 is filling that gap – providing elite handlers and detection dogs that meet or exceed law enforcement standards. We’re bringing that level of expertise to the private sector, and the opportunities there are enormous.

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With strong tailwinds across all divisions, we are bullish on what’s ahead. Each part of our business has a clear runway for growth, and we’re incredibly excited for the future. We’re just getting started.

**Will you highlight the strength and expertise of the Stratoscope, Ingressotek, Ford K9, and Stratos K9 teams?**

The secret to our success isn’t just talent – it’s the mindset and culture our teams bring to the table. What makes our teams exceptional isn’t just their expertise – it’s the way they show up. They have a mindset of ownership. Whether it’s the Stratoscope consultants writing security plans, the Ingressotek crew rolling out cutting-edge tech, or the Stratos K9 handlers deploying with their dogs, everyone takes personal responsibility for delivering excellence. That’s hard to teach, but it’s what separates a good team from a great one.

The diversity of backgrounds of our team is a defining strength. We have people with major event experience from Super Bowl’s, Olympic games and high profile venues like Madison Square Garden or Mercedes-Benz Stadium – you name it. That cross-pollination of experience means we’re never looking at a problem from just one angle, and that’s where innovation happens.

Perhaps most importantly is the trust and cohesion among our teams. These are high-pressure environments, and you need teams who trust each other implicitly. That’s something we cultivate deliberately – because when you’re protecting lives and reputations, there’s no room for ego or silos.

At the end of the day, the biggest strength we have isn’t any single person or skill set – it’s the culture we’ve built, and the way these teams come together to get the job done.

**What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership and how do you approach your management style?**

Effective leadership isn’t about holding the reins tightly – it’s about knowing when to let go. My management style really traces back to some of my earliest mentors. When I was at Georgia Tech, Coach Bill Lewis and George O’Leary gave me a piece of advice that stuck: always bring solutions to any problem you identify. That mindset has shaped the way I lead to this day.

At the Atlanta Olympics, I found another key influence in Dave Maggard. Dave believed in decentralized decision-making. He trusted his

team to lead, but he was always there when we needed executive support. I’ve carried that forward in my own leadership approach.

For me, empowerment is the cornerstone. I make sure my team has the authority and confidence to make decisions. We put the right processes and structures in place so they can thrive – but we also recognize that young leaders are going to make mistakes, and that’s okay. Mistakes are where growth happens. If we don’t give people room to navigate challenges on their own, we’ll never develop the next generation of leadership.

At the same time, I believe in the importance of balance. My style is really about decentralized communication and decision-making, but with clear communication and guardrails. Everyone understands which decisions need to rise up the chain. And I work hard to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy so we can stay nimble and make the best decisions quickly. It’s an approach that has helped me not only build exceptional teams – but shape future leaders who are ready to carry the torch.

**Did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own company?**

While I started my career on the sidelines of a football field, the desire to lead something of my own was always in play. My entrepreneurial spirit really sparked in grad school. Even then, I knew I wanted to own and lead my own company one day.

That drive crystallized after the Sydney Olympics in 2000. I knew I wanted to stay in the event industry, but I didn’t want to be just another event gypsy, bouncing from one gig to the next. I wanted to build something sustainable, which is why I launched The Inocon Group, with the support of investor Dave Gheesling. Dave helped me build and structure the company the right way. He also taught me how to sell the problem you’re solving to my clients. I learned a lot over those ten years – some of it the hard way. I made mistakes, but they were incredibly valuable in shaping how I lead today.

After selling Inocon, I briefly explored the idea of joining a larger organization in a C-suite role, working with firms like Guidepost Solutions and T&M. But something was missing. I eventually realized that what makes me happiest professionally is building something of

my own. Creating companies, nurturing teams, solving complex problems – that’s where my passion lives.

Today, at the helm of Stratoscope, Ingressotek, Ford K9, and Stratos K9, I have not only had the opportunity to embrace my entrepreneurial spirit, but also to build a thriving ecosystem of companies that are transforming the future of event security.

**With all of the success that you have experienced in your career, are you able to enjoy the process and take moments to celebrate the wins?**

For me, success has never been a solo pursuit – and neither has celebrating it. Our team’s success has been an incredible experience to be part of. There’s that old cliché, “It’s not work if you love what you do,” but it really rings true for me. Since launching Stratoscope and Ingressotek, the first four years have been intense – there’s been a lot of heavy lifting to reach the level we’re at today. But now, with a strong leadership team in place, I’m able to step back a little and truly enjoy the process.

My priority is making sure the whole team feels that joy. It’s not just about me. Sure, my name is at the top of the org chart, but what matters is that everyone across the organization has the chance to celebrate the wins. One of the best moments each year is when we come together in January, look back at everything we’ve accomplished, and honor that success as a team. That’s what makes the hard work worth it.

**What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?**

My advice is simple: find something you’re passionate about and then surround yourself with the right mentors who can help channel that passion into a career you love. For me, effort is the ultimate differentiator. I come from a coaching background, so almost everything goes back to sports for me. And in sports, the one thing a coach should never have to teach is effort. It’s the same in your career – you control how hard you work, how much you show up, and how invested you are in learning and growing.

My message to young people entering the workforce is clear: Focus on your effort. Find your passion. And connect with mentors who can help you reach new levels of success. That’s the formula that will take you far. ●