



# Objective takes the risk out of travel



**Charlie McGrath discusses the increasing need for travel safety awareness for both business and leisure travellers.**

Objective Travel Safety specialises in training a wide range of professionals and individuals prior to their travels. Set up in 2002 by, amongst others, ex-army professional, Charlie McGrath, the company has been running a number of travel safety courses - from ones that are aimed at those working in high risk countries, particularly popular with NGOs and media workers - to training for business travellers so that they can be safe and productive whilst travelling abroad. The company currently have a contract with the European Broadcast Union and have run courses for most of the UK's print and TV media. Courses are also available for leisure and adventure expeditions and these are adjusted according to the requirement; in fact, Objective trained Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman before both the Long Way Round and Long Way Down motor bike expeditions!

Charlie McGrath comments; "After leaving the army I worked for a number of years for Railtrack and it was whilst speaking to a journalist who remarked

that traveller safety courses were too military that the idea for the business came about. Our approach at Objective Safety Travel is a sensible, practical and thinking approach to safety. Our courses are very well attended and we are constantly adapting what we offer in line with key events; we are currently running programmes for the up and coming Euro Championships and the Rio Olympics. We also have to tailor our courses not only in line with key occasions, but also depending on what is going on in the world around us. More and more so now, we are spending time teaching people how to act if they find themselves in a Paris style terrorist attack. We have seen a significant growth in providing one day courses for business travellers due to the increased threat from terrorism, political instability and data intrusion."

The increasing need for safety awareness for young travellers also led to the launch of an additional course by the Objective team. "We received a call from someone whose daughter was going on a gap year asking us if we offered anything to this market. This led to the creation of the Gap Year Safety course. In one day, students are given advice, warnings and responses to various situations so they can avoid trouble and to give them the confidence to get off the beaten track and explore and therefore make the most of their gap year. We hold the sessions at the Troubadour Café in Earls Court and run approximately 20-25 courses each year. It is very much aimed at the



young traveller either on their gap year or post-uni or just in the younger age group. We are basically teaching them how to think on their feet - particularly useful for an 18 year-old travelling to Bolivia or the far reaches of India!" The course has now been running for 12 years and is very well attended. In fact, Objective was the first company to run a dedicated Gap Year Safety course and it remains the market leader. Not just aimed at the individual, Objective can also provide tailor made gap safety or urban safety courses for schools.

"We are also very aware that we need to be flexible in what we provide and adapt to changing conditions and evolving consumer needs. Standardisation can also lead to predictability and complacency - which is never good!" The differing requirements of every client dictate that no Objective course can ever be the same. Business clients included Proctor & Gamble, Exxon Mobil, Boden and the Medical

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Research Council. For companies and NGOs, the ability to either avoid a crisis situation or be able to react to unfolding events can be of vital importance. We have extensive experience of carrying out security reviews for NGOs, corporations and high net worth individuals working and living abroad. Our consultants are ex-military officers, including former intelligence and Special Forces officers with extensive experience in the commercial sector, as well as travel experts and remote trauma medics."

Ever mindful of adapting to evolving market conditions, Objective are planning to introduce a digital course to the market but "face to face briefing will still be the most important way of getting the message across."

**Objective Travel Safety**

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