

BC Live Venue Managers & Peer Networking Meeting Notes

April 8, 2026

Main Presentations

Crowd Management (Caleigh Hoot, ActSafe Safety Association)

- Free crowd management training and resources available
- Webinar on crowd management science scheduled for April 9
- Level 3 Foundations course on May 5th with Kevin Kennedy
- Developing resources: volunteer materials, risk assessments, crowd risk indicators, safety briefings
- Customized venue-specific training available at no cost

Controversial Content Discussion (Galen Olstead - Key City Theatre & Kirsten Soder - Tidemark Theatre)

Key City (Cancelled show):

- Initially operated as an open venue (non-illegal content accepted)
- Conflict arose between values-based organizational statements and content neutrality
- Staff and an 80-person volunteer corps refused to work the event due to safety concerns
- The board made a second decision to cancel based on staffing collapse
- Outcome: Published new policies allowing the decline of events conflicting with organizational values
- Learning: The public doesn't distinguish between rentals and programmed content

Tidemark (Proceeded with show):

- Maintained content neutrality policy as a municipally owned facility
- Staff supported the decision after thorough communication
- No protests occurred on the night of the show
- Responded personally to all complaints rather than making public statements
- Productive dialogue with the tour manager about community impact, and that the complaints they received were not just from a small group of people
- Emphasized defending this decision enables defending other programming (e.g., Pride events)

Common challenges: Limited legal support, multiple legal specialties needed, inconsistent municipal guidance, difficulty quantifying harm, difficulty with getting pulled into managing or judging the content of rental events

Breakout Session Reports

Box Office & Front of House

- **Ticket resellers:** Delayed delivery, geographic screening, fraud profile management, flagging third-party sellers (wack-a-mole!)
- **Staffing:** Increased online sales resulting in reduced box office hours (4 hours/day from 12pm-4pm and 1-2 hours pre-show)
- **Spektrix features:** Automated comp bookings, auto-reports for promoters/accessibility needs
- **Volunteers:** Aging demographics, creating credit systems for unpopular shows, criteria requirements (physical capabilities), and managing difficult conversations
- **Dance competitions:** Volunteer requirements, venue control challenges, and requiring volunteer lists from dance schools
- **Technology:** Phone scanning replacing pistol scanners, bulk scanning features

Marketing & Development

- **Sales trends:** Mixed results - some venues up, others down post-COVID
- **Successful strategies:**
 - Personalized digital campaigns via Spektrix analytics
 - Age-targeted messaging with varied language
 - Artist collaboration on social media
 - Community presence (booths, tables, personal connections)
 - Print media still effective for local engagement
- **Kelowna model:** Citywide ticketing system for all venues
- **Tribute shows:** High attendance despite complaints
- **Rental vs. programming:** Offering paid marketing packages for rentals, website hierarchy prioritizing programmed shows
- **Youth engagement:** 30-under-30 programs, University partnerships, TikTok presence, community-oriented social events, putting youth on stage

Technical & Production

- **Controversial content:** Challenge with non-English events - difficult to assess content
- **Safety:** Laser safety concerns (manufacturer claims vs. proximity), hard hat policies, certification importance (LPEC tickets, ActSafe, TechSafe BC)
- **Governance:** Navigating hybrid venues (operating organization vs. building owner - municipality/school district)
- **Flooring:** Discussion of products and maintenance issues

Venue Managers

- **Fire regulations:** New restrictions on open flame (affecting shows like "Burning Mom")
- **Show times:** Earlier times (7 pm or earlier) show mixed results depending on demographics and event type
- **Intermissions:** Some artists are eliminating them; venues are responding with fees to compensate bar sales or adding opening acts
- **Fraud prevention:** Weekly education campaigns, encouraging renters to promote official box office, using house seats for scam victims
- **Accessibility:**
 - Various certifications and funding available
 - Trained volunteers for sight impairment, dementia support
 - Trauma-informed training for Indigenous events
- **Service animals:** New provincial guidelines prohibit demanding proof; venues must assess based on conduct/safety only