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Profile

## Getting to grips with crisis response

**Costa Concordia will be a catalyst for cruise firms, says casualty specialist Kenyon**



RASAAD JAMIE — INSURANCE DAY

KENYON International Emergency Services is the oldest and the biggest disaster management services company in the world, with a long history in aviation disaster management.

It has been leading a push into the maritime sector, over the past year developing its relationship with major companies in the cruise and ferry industries.

Galvanised by the grounding and sinking of *Costa Concordia* last January, president and chief executive Robert Jensen has publicly criticised the cruise sector in the press and on television, arguing that the time has come for the industry to change and learn from others.

"The aviation industry,



*"Costa Cruises cannot undo the sinking; it cannot turn back the clock. The only positive thing it could have done was not make this worse, yet, that is exactly what it did. What it should have done is shown leadership, compassion and courage"*

Robert Jensen, Kenyon International Emergency Services

### A career switch from crime to casualty

ROBERT Jensen has been with Kenyon since 1998, acquiring it on October 1, 2007, when it became a private company.

He has directed responses to numerous mass fatalities, including terrorist bombings, criminal investigations into mass murder and transport-related casualties.

Mr Jensen joined Kenyon's planning and training department in 1998. From 1998-2003 he held several positions in the company — including director of planning and training, senior director of planning, training

and operations and chief operating officer — before becoming president and chief executive.

He earned a BSc in criminology and law enforcement from California State University, Fresno.

While at college, Mr Jensen trained and worked in various military and law enforcement posts and served on active duty as a commissioned officer in the US Army until 1998. He has had wide and varied experience in responding to mass fatalities and other death investigations. ■

### A reputation built in aviation

THE very first event Kenyon responded to was a train crash in Salisbury, UK, in 1906.

However, it was Kenyon's response to a 1929 aircraft casualty, when an Imperial Airways Junkers monoplane came down in southeast England, that established its reputation.

From then on, Kenyon was called on to respond to aviation accidents, including

events linked to the then thriving, but accident-prone, airship industry.

Airlines continue to be the larger part — close to 70% — of Kenyon's client base. Although the company has increased the number of airlines on its books in recent years, its non-aviation client base has grown at a faster pace.

Its non-aviation clients include governments, state

governments, municipalities and companies in the rail, natural resource and hospitality sectors.

The company, which relocated its commercial headquarters from Houston, Texas to Bracknell, Berkshire in 2011, has offices and mobile morgues in Houston, London, Sydney, Hong Kong, Beirut and the Dominican Republic. ■

where the single largest plane carries 500 people, learned years ago while safety has improved, humans still can and do make errors," he said.

"As a consequence, many airlines have developed plans and resources to respond to the loss of an aircraft. Yet companies whose ships

carry more than 5,000 lives still do not."

He was particularly critical of Costa Cruises' response to the crisis. "For the survivors and the families of those deceased nothing will ever be the same," he said. "Costa Cruises cannot undo the sinking; it cannot turn back the

clock. The only positive thing it could have done was not make this worse, yet, that is exactly what it did. What it should have done is shown leadership, compassion and courage. It could have been different from the rest of the industry."

Costa needed to explain the process for providing long-term support to the families and the survivors, he said.

"This needed to come not just from staffers, but also from the chief executive and senior leaders of both Costa and Carnival, who should have been on the scene.

"How will Carnival/Costa keep them informed of the investigation into the cause and response to the sinking? The questions are just beginning. Press releases and media reports are not sufficient. Families and survivors should be told the process for investigation, have input when relevant, be kept up-to-date and informed of the outcome."

Mr Jensen argued that once good communication had been established with the families and survivors, Costa Cruises should have communicated with the public. "Blaming the captain is an easy but poor out," he said. "It was after all Costa that hired, trained and supervised the captain. Few accidents are the result of any single act; more often they result from multiple factors.

"Early blame merely causes people to protect themselves and not co-operate with investigations. Early blame deflects attention from care of the families and survivors, who should be the priority. It also builds a false expectation everything will be known quickly and will be over soon."

In Mr Jensen's view, after the initial rescue efforts and the compassion and care shown by the local population, it became the responsibility of parent company Carnival and its subsidiary Costa Cruises to

take over and provide the same level of compassion and care.

Later last year, cruise and ferry companies approached Kenyon for help.

"We are looking at developing training programmes for the sector," Mr Jensen said. "The *Costa Concordia* sinking was a wake-up call for the industry. The hope is by the end of this year we will have entered into contracts with all the major companies in the sector."

The contracts will be very similar to those that Kenyon has with the aviation sector.

"Nothing changes. The cause of the accident is different but the consequences are the same. It is just a question of scale. Fortunately, we are set up to deal with events of whatever size," he said. ■

This is an edited version of a profile first published in *Insurance Day*. For the full version visit: [insuranceday.com](http://insuranceday.com)

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