



BEYOND
TRAINING

VISUM CONTRACTING GROUP: TURNING PREPAREDNESS INTO CAPABILITY

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Anthony Gizzi built Visum Contracting Group around a belief that sounds simple until lives depend on it: preparedness cannot be theoretical.

Gizzi's first real introduction to professional training happened almost by accident.

He was still in high school, an Eagle Scout looking for an internship, when the father of another Scout offered him one.

"I thought he was a cop," Gizzi remembers. "I really didn't know what he did." Then he showed up.

The building was roughly 150,000 square feet, with police cars parked outside. Inside, it was something else entirely: a training environment built for undercover officers, complete with a bar, bodega, school and two-story apartment building. "The first month of my internship was a police academy for undercover police officers," he says.

That experience changed the direction of his life..

Gizzi stayed in the field through college and beyond, spending roughly a decade around law enforcement, government and specialized training environments. Over time, he began to see a recurring problem.

The people being asked to perform under pressure were not always being trained to the standard the situation demanded.

"These are people, whether they're law enforcement agencies or government agencies or private institutions, that focus around saving people's lives or putting themselves in harm's way to make sure that other people can live," he says. "They deserve a higher bar of training than a lot of them get." So, in 2020, he started Visum Contracting Group.





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Preparedness Has to Be More Than a Plan

Visum began with training.

The company's early years were not easy. Coming from a civilian background created barriers, particularly in environments where credibility is often tied to uniformed experience.

Gizzi responded by doing what he had learned to do throughout his career: keep building capability.

He pursued instructor certifications, strengthened industry relationships and expanded the company into equipment and supply partnerships with vetted manufacturers. That evolution gave Visum another way to support the agencies and organizations it serves, but training remained central. For Gizzi, the difference between classroom preparation and real-world readiness is pressure.

"You can tabletop an exercise all you want," he says. "You can say if X happens, then Y and Z will happen. But in reality, if you don't put yourself into that situation, you don't know how you're going to react until it happens."

And often, he says, people react differently than they expect.

That is why Visum emphasizes scenario-based training.

A law enforcement officer may qualify annually on a shooting range, but a paper target does not create uncertainty.

"They know they're safe," Gizzi says. "When they come to us and we're doing training and using the training rounds, now someone's shooting back." The purpose is not to manufacture fear. It is to expose gaps before those gaps matter in real life.

"In reality, if you don't put yourself into that situation, you don't know how you're going to react until it happens."

A group of law enforcement officers in tactical gear are gathered in a room, observing a person who is standing against a wall. One officer is kneeling in the foreground, while others stand around him. The room has a plain wall with two small, dark rectangular objects mounted on it. The officers are wearing various types of tactical clothing, including helmets, vests, and holsters. The scene appears to be a training exercise or a demonstration.

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Every Client Is Different



There is no universal preparedness plan at Visum.

Gizzi says the first step is always the same: sit down with the client and understand what outcome they actually want.

“We take every client and we sit them down and we say, what is it you want to gain from this training?”

The scenario then gets built around that answer.

A police department preparing for traffic stops has different needs than a hospital security team, firefighter, military unit or organization preparing for a natural disaster. “We customize everything to the very last little tiny detail.”

That may mean role players, vehicles, travel, a specific environment or a completely custom scenario. But realism has to be controlled.

“Scenario-based training is a very thin line,” Gizzi says. “You do too little, and it’s not realistic. You do too much...”

The point is not spectacle.

“We not only want to make sure that the client is happy, but we want to make sure they learn something. That’s really what it comes down to, is learning.”

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One of the most important moments in Visum’s growth came during a large training exercise involving a high-level federal law enforcement team and a local SWAT unit.

Gizzi’s team played the role of hostage takers inside a building, creating a multi-day scenario involving an unknown number of hostages and adversaries. At the end of the exercise, one of the instructors approached him.

“He was like, ‘Hey, run me through what you think they did right and they did wrong.’”

That question stayed with him.

“This guy who’s been doing this for 15 years is asking me what I think they did right and wrong.”

For Gizzi, it was a turning point.

“That was a huge milestone.”

It was the first time he really felt that his experience had earned the room’s respect.

That idea also informs the way he leads.

Early in his career, Gizzi spent time around special operations teams and noticed something that contradicted the rigid hierarchy people often associate with the military.

“It didn’t matter what your rank was, didn’t matter how long you had been there,” he says. “If you had an opinion on how to do something, they wanted to hear it. Because your view may be the right way.”

In that environment, the reason was obvious. “That’s life or death.”

He brought the same philosophy into Visum.



"I don't care where you rank. I don't care if you're an intern or my secondhand man. I want to hear your opinion on what we're doing, because you may have a better way to do something that I may not have thought of."

Preparedness Is an Investment Before It Is a Cost

One of the hardest challenges in emergency planning is convincing organizations to invest before anything has gone wrong.

Gizzi hears the same phrase repeatedly after disasters: *"We never thought it would happen here."* That, he says, is exactly the problem. *"Anything could happen at any time."*

A hurricane changes direction. A tropical storm reaches a place that never expected one. A facility faces an active threat. A team encounters a medical emergency it has never rehearsed.

The question is not whether every scenario is likely. It is whether the organization is ready for the one that does happen.

Gizzi often returns to a familiar training principle: "We don't rise to our expectations. We fall to the level of our training."

That is the business case for preparedness. The value does not begin after an incident. It begins in the decisions made before one.

Products Worth Standing Behind



“Complacency Kills”

Visum's work also includes sourcing and supplying equipment, but Gizzi is selective about what enters the company's offering.

“I do a lot of research on companies before I reach out to them.”

He looks for manufacturers producing superior-quality equipment without unnecessary commercial markup. More importantly, he wants to work with people who actually know and believe in what they sell.

“When I call a manufacturer, I don't want to talk to somebody that is there for a nine-to-five job and doesn't really know much about their product.”

He wants people who understand the details.

“I want to know that they know about their product. And that really tells me a lot about the company.”

Relationships matter just as much.

“I could probably pick up the phone and call any one of my manufacturers and I know they're going to take my phone call.”

That kind of access matters in an industry where reliability can be more important than branding.

Visum's renewed educational partnership with the Committee for Tactical Emergency Casualty Care reflects another part of Gizzi's philosophy: the company itself has to remain a student.

“Being a lifelong learner is so important to me because things are always changing and evolving, especially in this space.”

He encourages the people around him to keep taking courses, certifications and classes regardless of experience level.

“I don't care if the person's been in the military for 20 years. I want you to keep learning.”

His reason is blunt.

“Staying complacent is how people get hurt.”

Then he goes one step further.

A large crowd of people is gathered under a white tent at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The people are mostly sitting on wooden benches, and some are standing. The tent is set up on a grassy area with trees in the background. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and communal.

HOUSTON AND WHAT COMES NEXT

“This is going to sound extreme, but complacency kills.”

For Visum, that is not a slogan.
It is the reason training has to evolve.

At the Disasters Expo and Resilient Cities Expo in Houston, Gizzi is looking forward to conversations with agencies and organizations responsible for protecting communities under pressure.

“Our goal is to help,” he says. “Yes, we are a for-profit company, and we need to make money. Our goal is to help not only your organization, but the communities that you interact with.”

Visum’s reach extends nationally, and Gizzi says the company will travel wherever the need takes it.

“Whether that’s California, New York, Florida, Arkansas, it doesn’t matter to us.”

Looking ahead, his vision is larger than expanding revenue or geography. He wants organizations to abandon the idea that preparedness starts after something happens.

“I want people to start taking a more proactive approach, instead of reactive.”

He also hopes to create a dedicated training environment where first responders, agencies and organizations can learn together and collaborate.

“Ultimately, that’s when you learn the most. When you’re collaborating with other people who work in the same industry as you.”

That may be the most revealing thing about Visum Contracting Group.

The company is built around preparation, but not certainty.

No one can control when the next disaster, emergency or high-stakes moment will arrive.

What can be controlled is whether the people facing it have already tested themselves, learned from mistakes, built the right relationships and trained beyond what was comfortable.



For Gizzi, the goal is not to make people fearless.

It is to make sure that when fear, uncertainty and pressure arrive, they are not meeting them for the first time.

Prepare Before the Moment Arrives

Connect with Visum Contracting Group to strengthen your organization’s readiness before the next challenge becomes real



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visumcontractinggroup.com
for more information.