



Magne Bakke

**OPERATIONS MANAGER,
STATOIL,
NORWAY**

From delivery boy to running operations on the G4S contract for leading oil and gas producer

Most people choose the career they wish to follow and work hard to achieve that ambition. In the case of Magne Bakke, however, working in the security industry was never his goal. It was meant to be just a temporary job while he studied sales and marketing.

Yet, 11 years later, Magne is now G4S Secure Solutions (Norway)'s operations manager on its huge Statoil contract and enjoying every aspect of his demanding role. His experience shows that career choices sometimes happen unexpectedly and fortuitously.

Based at Bergen, Magne has three G4S team leaders reporting to him and between them they control close on 200 security officers whose duties range from access control to patrolling and everything in between.

What Magne, 35, particularly likes about working at Statoil are the challenges that he faces every day in solving issues for the customer.

"I have always liked to be challenged: to have issues that need to be dealt with," he explains. "And the G4S colleagues I work with have the same outlook. It gives me great satisfaction to know, when I finish my work each day, that no matter what problems or challenges have come our way, we have been able to handle them."

After completing his high school education, Magne joined a fishing business, working first as a delivery boy and then with its sales team. "I closed a couple of deals and decided selling was what I wanted to do," he recalls.

First, however, he needed to do a year's mandatory service with his country's armed forces, choosing to serve with the Military Police Academy. Once completed, he successfully applied for a sales job with a different company but because of the economy there was not much demand for what he was selling.

So Magne decided to start his own company, MC Express, offering motorcycle messenger deliveries. Starting with just a couple of bikes, the business took off just as fast as the mode of transport his messengers were using. Within a year, his business was running 12 motorbikes and four vehicles. And at that point he decided to sell the company.

"We'd grown too big, too quickly, and I didn't have the knowledge I needed to handle a lot of customers," he explains. But the young and successful entrepreneur still felt a career in sales was the right choice and decided to study at a marketing college to gain the necessary management skills.

Since he knew from acquaintances who worked in security that shift working offered the flexibility he needed to accommodate his studies, he applied in 1998 to join one of Norway's leading security providers.

Without realising it, by taking on that "temporary" job as a security officer, Magne Bakke had found the career he was seeking – or perhaps it had found him.

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His first job in security was to patrol an empty warehouse that was being rebuilt. With a passion for martial arts since childhood and having always enjoyed an active life, Magne felt much more at home in such an environment than sitting at a desk all day.

Within six months, in 1999, the security company transferred him to the Statoil contract, a move that was very encouraging for Magne. This customer is, after all, the largest operator on the Norwegian continental shelf – the underwater area off its coast over which it exercises sovereign rights. It has 60 per cent share of the total oil and gas production from this ocean shelf. Together with its overseas developments, it is ranked the world’s 13th largest oil and gas company in revenue terms. The Norwegian Government owns almost two-thirds of the company.

It was not long before Magne began moving up the management ladder and thoughts of a sales career rapidly evaporated.

“I always try to do that little extra, so that customers are more than satisfied with the work we do,” Magne observes. “When my manager noticed that I had a good relationship with the people we worked for, I soon became shift manager, then traffic coordinator at Statoil’s Heliport.”

The Bergen Heliport was also the location for his next two promotions, first as regional traffic planner and then as team leader. Those positions were followed by stints as area manager and operations leader on the contract, which also covers Statoil’s Mongstad refinery, 75 km north of Bergen, where a further 100 security officers are on duty.

Within a year of Statoil’s merger with Norsk Hydro’s oil and gas division in October 2007, Norway’s largest security contract in that industry came under review and the company Magne worked for found itself bidding against G4S for the contract.

“G4S had always been a serious competitor to my previous employer in Norway and when this issue came up I looked into the company and talked to some of the managers I knew who worked for it. I was really impressed, so I had no hesitation in indicating my desire to transfer to G4S if the company won the contract.”

It did, in early 2009, and only a handful of security personnel chose not to make that move out of loyalty to their previous employer after long periods of service. Starting on 1 May, G4S Secure Solutions (Norway) took over manned security and reception duties at all of that country’s Statoil office buildings and onshore plants, on a three-year contract with an option for a further three, and Magne Bakke was confirmed as operations manager.

Together with G4S, Statoil established new standards and skills for all officers employed on the contract, and Magne is already on the second level of management training. G4S is, he says, a company that offers tremendous opportunities for those prepared to work for them.

“My decision has been more than justified,” Magne adds. “G4S’s concern for its employees is notable and has exceeded my expectations. My first child, a son, was born towards the end of 2009 and it was a difficult time for both my wife and I. My new manager was extremely good and insisted that I focused my efforts at home before returning to work.”

That experience, Magne adds, “makes me want to perform that little bit extra when he gives me the opportunity”.

Does he not miss being his own boss and running his own company?

“Not at all, because that business had its limits, both geographically and developmentally. G4S, on the other hand, offers exciting opportunities in both respects.”