

A photograph of two young women at a party. The woman on the right is wearing a bright pink dress and a multi-strand necklace, holding a martini glass. The woman on the left is wearing a dark purple dress and is also smiling. The background is a blurred party scene with blue and purple lighting.

U-Nome Security

Australia's leading security service for **teenage**
and **young adult parties**



Safe Parties

How to plan, set and run a secure teenage / young adult party

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INTRODUCTION



More and more we hear of teenage and young adult parties gone wrong. This often catches parents and their kids by surprise.

Lack of forethought, planning, preparation and management of parties often leads to horrific situations that we see in the media.

While parents and teens don't expect these things to happen to them, I've seen it in every socioeconomic group.

This guide is to help parents, young people, teachers and community leaders understand what they can do to:

- ❖ **Ensure safe parties.**
- ❖ **Avoid tragic outcomes from parties gone wrong.**

Planning a party involves many considerations. These include choosing a location, ensuring a safe venue, predicting risks, deterring unwanted guests (gatecrashers), serving food and alcohol responsibly and arranging transport.

Crowd controllers minimise risks and ensure a fun, safe and successful party for all.

Their role isn't to stand in a party looking over guests' shoulders. Rather, they secure and manage entry points, patrol risk areas, halt and disperse gatecrashers and respond to situations in or around the party.

Burly, aggressive bouncers at the front of an event make guests uneasy, provide a 'challenge' for some guests and often constitute 'overkill' on security needs.

By contrast, an expert and professional crowd control team is happy, unassuming and able to communicate with everyone in a friendly way.

This guide details how to plan, prepare and manage a safe party. By following the steps, you and your guests will enjoy an event to remember – for all the right reasons!





BACKGROUND

During my 12 years with Victoria Police, I attended many out-of-control events. En route to these callouts there was concern about standard operating procedures for complaints pertaining to events.

With minimal information about the event, we didn't know:

- ❖ The type of event.
- ❖ The age of guests.
- ❖ Whether they were intoxicated.
- ❖ If they have access to weapons (e.g. garden tools).
- ❖ If adults were present.

It was like responding to a domestic violence call. I became frustrated by the lack of planning and accountability for events.

On leaving the police, I saw in the media that events were getting more violent and out of control more often. I realised the community needed something else to curb alcohol abuse and violence at events.

On joining the private security industry, I continued to research this issue. I then formed a firm to provide specialist advice, safety and crowd control for events (specifically with guests aged up to 21) across Victoria.

Helping parents plan a child's celebration is vital for the safety of their guests and our community.

Many parents hold events with minimal experience. This guide will aid successful event planning. If you have questions, contact me via the details at the end of this book. I'll be happy to help.

I've also created a proposal that I hope will be enforced nationally by local government.

This proposal is not a promotion for my business. It stems from my deep concern about violence in our community. I've seen violence increase in the last few years and believe this proposal will reduce it.

I have 17 years first-hand experience of dangerous and volatile events. My answer is state-wide and national uniformity and planning. I've identified an inconsistent approach to event regulation. Local and regional authorities use different guidelines. This creates confusion and incorrect procedures for planning safe events.

I believe it's our duty to do something before more young people are harmed or killed.





PLAN: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Planning a party should begin at least six weeks before the day.

The four areas of successful planning are:

- ❖ **Where: Venue.**
- ❖ **When: Date & duration.**
- ❖ **Who: Guests, supervision & security.**
- ❖ **What: Things to organise.**

Where: Venue

Choosing a party venue isn't thought about often or in detail. Yet this is frequently the main source of trouble. Whether it's a private home or public hall, it's crucial to provide a safe and secure environment for guests.

To determine venue suitability, three areas must be explored:

- ❖ **Location.**
- ❖ **Size & facilities.**
- ❖ **Dangerous areas.**

Location

The risk of gatecrashers rises dramatically if a venue is:

- ❖ **Walking distance from a railway station or a shopping centre.**
- ❖ **In an area with history of gatecrashers.**

To learn more about an area, ask local police and young people if they've seen problems at other parties in that area.

Higher risk requires increased crowd control. A better solution is to find a safer venue. A tennis club with a secure perimeter fence and heavy gates is ideal.

These make it very hard for gatecrashers to enter your event. Like robbers, offenders don't bother with 'hard' targets.

Most parties are better held in a public venue than a private home. Many neighbours are terrified of parties and can lose an entire night's sleep because:

- ❖ **The noise can be intense.**
- ❖ **They fear for their safety during the event.**
- ❖ **They worry guests will damage their property as they leave.**

In Tweed Heads in May 2010, a middle-aged father was attacked by 20 teens who'd just left a party. Half were girls. He received extensive injuries.

Most public venues have several entry points. A party should only have one.

The best entry is not the front. A side entry is better, as it makes milling guests less obvious to passing opportunists.





PLAN: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Space

Ensure the venue is big enough for your event, especially if there's alcohol. People need plenty of room to move, dance, eat, drink and sit. Crowding causes accidental bumps, which can quickly escalate to alcohol-fuelled fights.

Marquees

You may want to hire a marquee (tent) to beat fickle weather. Depending on conditions, 100 guests normally need a marquee that can fit 60 (as not everyone uses it at once). One chair for every two guests is also usually enough.

Event and hire companies can be a great help, but you must also remain vigilant.

Ensure poles, ropes, pegs, power cords, lighting gear, speaker cables and so on are well secured and visible so guests don't trip and harm themselves (and sue you!).

Toilets

If partying at home, decide if you'll use your toilet or hire extra ones. Some clients allocate an inside toilet for females and hire one for males. If hiring, ask for lit toilets. Men can barely aim in daylight, so it's not pretty when hired toilets are dark!

Ensure you have enough paper, soap and hand towels to last the entire event.

Also ensure all toilets can be opened from the outside (e.g. with a screwdriver). Intoxicated guests can faint after locking themselves in. And sometimes toilets are used for more than their intended purpose.

Heating

If you have a party in cooler months, you may want to hire heaters for marquees and outside areas. Take care, as there are different kinds of heater.

want the safest heaters available. . If you decide to have an open fire please ensure responsible adults are supervising this area at all times.

This news article link ["bonfire explosion"](#) is a familiar story particularly in rural areas

First Aid

Ensure the venue has a fully-stocked first aid box. Freshen up (or learn!) your first aid skills.

It's always handy and comforting when someone at a party knows first aid. This person must stay sober during the party, so they can act with a clear head if needed. Prepare and clearly display a list of emergency numbers.

Smokers

While most parents don't like smoking teens, we must be realistic. It's better to cater for and control this group than disperse them to areas beyond your control. If partying at a home, you can provide an outside area for smokers.

As some public venues don't have adequate fencing, a side entry is a better area for congregating smokers. They're less likely to be seen from the road (and thus attract gatecrashers).

You must regulate smokers, or you'll have the whole party outside.

Do this by:

- ❖ Forbidding alcohol outside.
- ❖ Restricting the total number of smokers to five.
- ❖ Limiting them to 15 minutes outside.

Tell the supplier you're having a teen party and you





PLAN: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Lighting

Walk around the venue or home when its dark to establish where you will need adequate lighting, if you have any potholes, or slippery areas or ledges that need to be made safe. Make sure the clothes line is made safe and any trampolines removed. Trampolines don't go well with young people and alcohol. Remove any garden tools or backyard junk to minimise any attempt to use any of these items as a weapon or similar.

Cooking Facilities

Check that your venue gives you access to the appropriate (and working!) oven / stove / heating facilities you need to feed your guests. Offer hot and cold food options that cater to various diets such as vegetarian, gluten-free and (especially) nut-free. Ensure you have ample food to provide throughout the event.

Prepare food hygienically and heat it to the right temperature. Food poisoning can really ruin your day!

Provide small plates and paper towels so guests can hold food without soiling their clothes or burning their fingers or mouths.

Dangerous Areas

Access

To ensure safe venue access, enter and leave it the way your guests will (ideally at the same time of day they will). Physically walk the path guests will take to check that it's well lit, not slippery and easy to navigate. With some guests in high heels, anything uneven can cause sprains (or worse). You may need to buy or hire mats to make the area safe.

where guests may walk. Decide if they're:

- ❖ Stable.
- ❖ Sufficiently lit.
- ❖ In good repair.
- ❖ Easy to negotiate.
- ❖ Unlikely to snag heels.
- ❖ Able to bear extra weight & traffic.

If there's any doubt, section off the steps or pick another venue.

Ledges

See if the venue has any ledges (e.g. around terraces and decks).

Ledges are very dangerous if guests step backwards or chairs slip off them. If you can't section a ledge off, put large pot plants across it to prevent injury.

Balconies

Balconies are even more dangerous than ledges – for two reasons:

- ❖ Teens often skylark & fall from balconies.
- ❖ Some balconies can't hold many people at once. Especially if they're jumping around to music. Both situations cause serious injury, as numerous media reports attest. If the venue has a balcony, close it off or have the party on the ground floor.





PLAN: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Pools & Spas

As these can be deadly when teens get out of control, it's best to remove pools and spas from the equation. Hard covers are best, and some event companies hire them. If money's tight, remove any soft covers and roster adult helpers to watch the area in shifts for the whole event.

Soft covers are worst of all. A tipsy guest who falls (or is pushed) can get wrapped, trapped and drowned.

A no-glass policy around water is a 'no brainer'. As any pool owner knows, broken glass in water causes a huge clean-up issue

When: Date & Duration

Date

Warmer months attract more people (and gatecrashers).

People drink more when it's warm. If drinking alcohol, they need more water to curb dehydration and intoxication.

The 'silly season' of multiple parties sees people in holiday mode letting their hair down. The cooler months usually see more sensible guests and fewer groups of youths looking for parties to crash. The flip side is you must keep guests warm and dry.

Duration

Parties during the day or late afternoon tend to be more contained than those held late into the night. While young people prefer night parties, it's best to finish them at midnight and ensure parents are ready to collect them at this time.

You could also organise a shuttle bus, driven by an adult helper, to safely ferry guests home.

Many issues occur at the end of parties, where intoxicated guests mill about and trouble breaks out.

Who: Guests, Supervision & Security

To plan a party effectively, you must think ahead to determine who'll attend. The following areas need to be considered:

- ❖ Number & age of guests.
- ❖ Guest list.
- ❖ Supervising adults.
- ❖ Crowd control.
- ❖ Invitations.

Number & Age of Guests

The greater the number of guests, the higher the risk of things getting out of hand. It's wise to keep private parties under 100 guests. Apart from the security issue, it's hard for a host to greet (let alone speak with) so many people.

If guests will range above and below age 18, special vigilance is required for serving alcohol and monitoring behaviour.

Guest List

All invitees should be named on a guest list with no 'plus friend'. It's important to know who's attending your party so you're confident they'll respect your property and loved ones.

The guest list is also one of the best defences against gatecrashers.





PLAN: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Supervising Adults

Sufficient adult supervision of a party (ideally by parents) is one adult per 20 guests. Adults should take it in turns or do shifts to keep an eye on guests and make their presence known. Adults will also need to remain sober so they can judge situations effectively and respond appropriately.

Crowd Control

Crowd control is an important part of a safe party. One way to find a reputable crowd control firm is to speak to people who've used one successfully at their parties.

Alternatively, use the internet to Google 'crowd control for teen parties'. Because it's in an uncontrolled environment exposed to greater risk, a teen party is the most volatile crowd control work in the industry.

It's very different to security at a shopping centre, gatehouse, nightclub or hotel.

It's therefore vital you ensure the firm you choose has:

- ❖ Experience looking after teen parties (ask for references).
- ❖ Public liability insurance (ask for a copy). Don't hire security guards without their firm's knowledge, as they'll have no public liability insurance. If you choose **U-Name Security**, I'll personally assess the venue prior to your event. If you're outside Victoria, send me comprehensive footage of the venue (inside, outside and surrounds). For a nominal fee, I'll analyse the venue and send you a detailed report.

Invitations

When designing your invitations, name your crowd

control firm at the top in Bold Letters.

Don't write something vague like 'security at the event' as teens will assume it's old Uncle Harold helping out.

Teens are extremely computer savvy and will research the crowd control firm you name. The more experienced the firm, the less risk of gatecrashers. RSVP should be at least two weeks before the event and include date of birth. This prevents friends using names on the guests list as they never remember the DOB. Knowing guest numbers will let you finalise catering, adult helpers, crowd control staff and so on.

If allowing BYO alcohol, ensure adults control it via a makeshift bar. All alcohol must be poured into plastic vessels.

BYO doesn't mean you can sit back and relax.

Parents must be on top of this and teens must come to the bar for each drink and consume water 'chasers' between drinks.

Ensure the invitation clearly stipulates:

- ❖ A maximum of four pre-mixed alcoholic drinks.
- ❖ A no-glass policy.
- ❖ That guests must name their alcohol with a permanent marker.
- ❖ That energy drinks won't be permitted.
- ❖ That intoxicated guests will be refused entry.



PLAN: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Intoxicated guests cause huge problems. Most out of control parties are created as a result of guests being intoxicated. Groping and bumping into people, vomiting, passing out – not the sort of people you want at your party. If let in, they become your problem, just as you have your hands full with everything else. If you're concerned about underage guests at your event, consider parental permission of minors if they're drinking. This can be as simple as phoning their parents. At these events, you can either provide alcohol or allow managed BYO (Please refer to U-nome Booze bag system (www-u-nomesecurity.com)). If you make a diluted fruit punch or hire an ice slushy machine, you can control alcohol concentration.

With either a BYO U-nome Booze Bag Managed System or Supply please ensure that two people are running the bar and both have a RSA(Responsible Serving of Alcohol Certificate)

If it is a 'dry' event young people or minors will often tape alcohol to their bodies. Canny mothers can detect this by hugging each guest as they arrive! Another tactic is to watch out for unusually frequent toilet visits, surprises in the back yard(Hidden in garden, in bbq's anywhere else that sounds silly) or zip sealed plastic bags placed down bras.

Some of the alcohol free events we had occasionally some of the girls inserting 'vodka soaked' tampons. You can research how bad this is for your health on google !

Drugs and now Synthetic Drugs have sadly become evident at some of the teen parties we have been involved in. Drugs are very hard to detect and often we only know about this until they have been consumed.



The worst thing you can do with your invitation is broadcast it to the world.



PLAN: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Synthetic Drugs often mimic the same affects as street drugs however the reactions can be extreme and sometimes fatal. Synthetic Drugs are on the increase ref article: [“War on synthetic drugs”](#)

Popular Synthetic Drugs contain substances such as cannabinoids and the cathinones , as well as the NBOME group. All are of concern to the medical profession and emergency services. At this stage a standard urine drug screen will not show novel products,, an extended drug screen won't either.

Often young people experiment with Synthetic Drugs for the following reasons:

- ❖ **Can't be detected**
- ❖ **It is cheap and not illegal to use**
- ❖ **They are very easy to obtain online, and their legal status is blurry- their rate of evolution is far faster than the rate of legislation..**
- ❖ **They get a similar high to many of the illegal drugs sold**

Characteristics of people that have consumed drugs are as follows:

- ❖ **Extremely animated (more so then the rest of the party)**
- ❖ **Dancing with extreme energy and exaggerated movements**
- ❖ **Conversation is erratic and does not make sense**
- ❖ **Over affectionate to strangers**
- ❖ **Frequency of consuming water**

Often people that are consuming drugs will consume a minimal amount of alcohol but drink plenty of water



PLAN: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Side affects are as follows:

- ❖ **euphoria, energy, alertness for up to six hours**
- ❖ **aural and visual senses enhanced**
- ❖ **stimulation of brain and central nervous system**
- ❖ **increased or erratic heart rate and raised blood pressure**
- ❖ **skin tingling, sweating, tremor, fever**
- ❖ **clenching of teeth**
- ❖ **rigid muscles**
- ❖ **vomiting**
- ❖ **reduced appetite**
- ❖ **difficulty urinating**
- ❖ **agitation, anxiety**
- ❖ **insomnia**
- ❖ **paranoia**
- ❖ **water retention or dehydration, especially if the pills were used with alcohol**
- ❖ **sore throat or nasal passages if snorting**
- ❖ **significant hangover effects that can last up to 4 days**

In greater quantities

- ❖ **hallucinations**
- ❖ **convulsions**
- ❖ **slowed breathing**
- ❖ **death**





PLAN: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Don't allow 'plus ones' on the invitations. Use all invitees' full names.

All guests to bring photo id

If they don't have id ask them for their mobile number and have them send you a message prior to entry. This way you have some form of communication and identification of the individual. Txt will read: 'Hi its James' or similar

State on the invitation that there'll be no pass-outs at the event. This will ensure guests don't wander the streets texting friends and consuming spirits (or worse) while out of sight. Teens will make all sorts of excuses, like getting cigarettes or buying soft drink. I've heard it all before. If your invitation is clear on this point, they'll have no excuse.

Facebook or MySpace invitations can be okay as long as the settings are in a private settings for the private group

Smartphones are the biggest concern as SMS messaging can be sent quickly with location promoting your party to the entire community.

A party for 100 ends up a nightmare of 1000.

A great way to deter gatecrashers is to post on the social networking platform the following: This event is monitored via external cameras to deter gatecrashers and ensure guest safety. (Even if you don't have cameras it is a good rumour. It will make potential troublemakers reconsider their destination

If you want to manage RSVPs and the guest list online, try www.myinvites.com.au where you can choose or customise an invitation design. This option is good because if anyone tries to forward an email invitation to someone else, the name stays as the original recipient. This stops gatecrashers getting added to the guest list.

ORGANISE: 6 WEEKS PRIOR

Depending on the type of party, organise these things in the six weeks leading up to it:

- ❖ **Venue.** Research a safe one and book it.
- ❖ **Pre-party assessment.** Organise a security firm assessment to minimise all risks.
- ❖ **Toilets.** Ensure there are enough toilets (and consumables) and order more if required.
- ❖ **Equipment.** Hire what you need (e.g. marquee, floor, light, heat, music, sound system, tables, chairs, bar items).
- ❖ **Crowd control.** Book your professional security team.
- ❖ **Supervision.** Arrange enough adult helpers to cover guest numbers (with shifts and breaks during the event). Be careful who you choose, as not all adults have the best intentions towards (especially female) teens.
- ❖ **Invitations.** Design, write and send invitations with full information.
- ❖ **Catering.** Use professionals or do it yourself. Ensure you have enough cooking and heating facilities.
- ❖ **Cake.** Make or order one.
- ❖ **Alcohol.** Decide whether to supply it or have BYO. If BYO research the booze management plan. Depending on what state or region you are in, ensure you comply with the relevant laws in your state in regards to alcohol and minors. If you are in Victoria you can also **download this consent form in regards to minors obtaining permission to consume alcohol at your party.**
- ❖ **Note it is better to manage all BYO at all events thus the reason we have included this in the secondary supply letter**
- ❖ **Permits.** Check what you need and get them (e.g. a hall may require a Liquor Licence).
- ❖ **Music.** Decide on a band, DJ or iPod.
- ❖ **Entertainers.** If planning a magician or comedian for your teen, take care. I once saw a boy so annoyed at his parents' surprise that he fled his own party!
- ❖ **Set-up and decoration.** Book professionals or enlist helpers

Unless you have professional crowd controllers, this is how your 'security' will be perceived.





PREPARE: 1 WEEK PRIOR

The excitement's building. But for you to relax and have fun at this event, you need to organise some things in the week before.

- ❖ **Venue.** If using a public venue, confirm booking and organise a time for decorating. If at home, remove rubbish and dangerous items and clean things up. Clear paths and access areas and ensure all is safe. Prune plants that could catch a foot or face. Section off private or dangerous areas where you don't want guests to go.
- ❖ **Toilets.** Confirm hires and decide where to put them.
- ❖ **Equipment.** Confirm all other hired items and time of arrival (e.g. marquee, floor, light, heat, music, sound system, tables, chairs, bar items). Ensure someone is around to show where things need to go.
- ❖ **Crowd control.** Confirm booking and numbers to cover expected guests.
- ❖ **Supervision.** Confirm parents and other adult helpers. Prepare a roster of activities (e.g. serving food and drinks, monitoring toilets and boundaries, cleaning up).
- ❖ **Invitations.** Finalise numbers based on RSVP and prepare an alphabetical guest list so crowd control staff can cross guests off as they arrive.
- ❖ **Catering.** Confirm you have enough for the numbers attending. Ensure you have cooking and serving facilities that work. Check you have plenty of rubbish bins.
- ❖ **Cake.** Confirm collection time. Or start baking!
- ❖ **Alcohol.** Decide serving method. Ensure you have ice, containers and clear plastic drinking vessels.
- ❖ **Permits.** Make sure you have the right permits and licences.
- ❖ **Music.** Confirm band or DJ or make your iPod mix.
- ❖ **Speeches.** Decide who's giving them so they have time to prepare. Schedule them. Around 11 pm is a good time to pause drinking and dancing.



BYO doesn't mean you can relax.



THE DAY

The day of the party is the time to sort all last-minute things. Use this list to get everything ready before the first guest arrives:

- ❖ Set up and stock the bar with ice, vessels and slushy machine. Set times to introduce water chasers. About an hour after a party starts, it's a good idea to ask drinkers to consume a glass of water before being handed their next drink.
- ❖ Chose a storage spot for gifts that's easy to access on arrival but away from dancing and other high-traffic areas.
- ❖ Organise a secure room for bags and coats. Thefts happen at parties. Task an adult helper to monitor this area if crowd control can't.
- ❖ Check the food is all there and warm the ovens. Food must be served continually an hour and a half after a party starts. If you leave it on tables, guests won't eat it. So allocate a couple of helpers to take turns circulating with food.
- ❖ Set up the cake.
- ❖ Check that the band/DJ/music is in position. Music should be going from the start as it's a good ice-breaker for early guests.
- ❖ Ensure you have a couple of copies of the guest list.
- ❖ Check lighting is adequate inside and out. Ensure the venue is not so dark that people will trip or fall over things.
- ❖ Check that speech makers are prepared and aware of their allotted time.
- ❖ Ensure all adult helpers know their duties and shifts.
- ❖ Ensure all adult helpers know where to find the first aid box and emergency numbers.
- ❖ Ensure toilets are clean and well-stocked with paper, soap and hand towels. Ask an adult helper (of appropriate gender) to check regularly during the party.
- ❖ Encourage guests to inform crowd control of any gatecrasher rumours.
- ❖ Ensure crowd control is in position with the guest list, marker pens for labelling alcohol and a secure storage bin from which adults can responsibly serve it.
- ❖ Ask crowd control to check with guests on arrival so they can estimate the number of taxis you'll need after the event. You can usually only order two taxis at a time. So if your event finishes at 1 am, ask helpers to start ordering taxis at 12.30 am.
- ❖ Enjoy yourself!

POST PARTY

You made it; well done! A great success I'm sure.

Now it's time to:

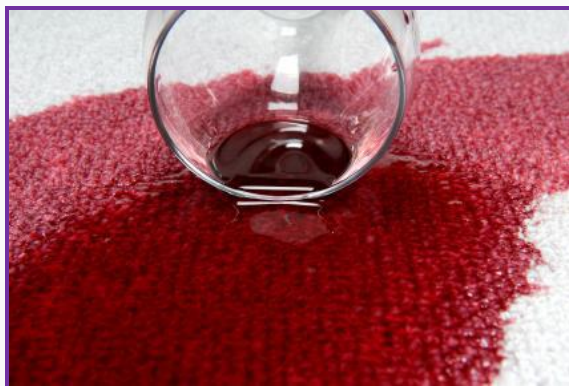
- ❖ **Return hired items.**
- ❖ **Clean the venue and dispose of rubbish responsibly.**
- ❖ **Thank and give feedback to your suppliers and helpers.**
- ❖ **Thank guests for coming. Mention that they behaved so well that there may be another party next year.**
- ❖ **Send photos of the night. Beware of posting them on Facebook (or other social media sites) as some young people (and their parents!) are becoming wary of public exposure.**

For school functions and other big events, I send clients a written debrief to ensure the next event is even better.

You can do this too.

Summarise how you think your party went.

Was there anything you'd change?



The better a party is planned, prepared and run, the fewer problems you'll have.



LEARN MORE

I'd love to receive your ideas, feedback, questions and news – good, bad or ugly!

Email me at info@u-nomesecurity.com.au

Visit my [website](#) for details of my approach, services, products, testimonials and media appearances.

Read my [blog](#) for up-to-the-minute reports of:

- ❖ What I'm doing.
- ❖ What it's like 'out there'.
- ❖ My campaign to improve community safety through better laws.

Thank you very much for reading.

I hope to hear from you soon!

Naomi Oakley,

Managing Director

[U-Name Security](#)

