



THE Connection

Official Newsletter of the Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Next
GAPPI Atlanta
Upcoming Meeting

January 8, 2013
General Membership
Meeting

Networking and lunch
from
11:30 a.m.—12:00 noon
Meeting from
12:00 noon—1p.m.

The cost is \$15.00 for
GAPPI members

\$20 for non-members
(includes lunch and
beverage)

\$10 for meeting only -
no lunch

Students and potential
members are always
welcome.

“We look forward to
seeing you all there!”

Private Investigator Marketing: 13 Innovative Tips

Innovative marketing tactics can go a long way in creating new business opportunities, and as private investigators look for ways to rejuvenate their marketing strategies considering new ideas is a great start.

Whether you are a professional with years of experience or an industry newcomer looking for ways to snag your first clients, combine a well-written introduction letter with these creative marketing strategies to help you get your business name out there.

Here are 13 innovative marketing tips for private investigators:

1. Give away logoed goods

Everyone loves free stuff, whether it's t-shirts, mugs, coasters, water, stickers, pens, key-chains, mouse pads, calculators, food, you name it! To help get your name and services out there, print your logo and contact information on a variety of products and drop them off at local businesses. Try to target businesses that are most likely to utilize your services as well as other unconventional places like local bars and restaurants.

2. Drop off bi-monthly treats

Think freebies. Drop off cases of water, chocolates or donuts stickered with your logo on a bi-monthly basis. Stopping by with complimentary gifts on a regular basis is a great way to become a familiar face and build rapport with a company, but don't forget to include your contact information! Process Server LinkedIn group member Kelly Townsend has found success in giving candy dishes printed with his company's logo and contact information to paralegals. With the dish on the paralegal's desk comes the excuse to drop by and fill it. Try this tactic and not only will you become a familiar face, but with your contact information always in front of the paralegal you may get a call the next time they're instructed to hire an investigator.

3. Sponsor a local criminal attorney or paralegal event

Consider covering the cost of catering or offering monetary sponsorship for a local association event. As a sponsor you can request a few minutes to talk, hang a company banner or supply pens and notepads printed with your contact information to attending members. Sponsoring events is a great way to present your company to several attentive attorneys at once, which can have a huge impact on your business.

4. Get involved in or host a community event

Donating a prize for a contest, drawing or raffle or hosting a local race can help you reach out to potential clients at a community event. Being an active member of your community can create goodwill and help your firm gain exposure through word-of-mouth advertising. You may also consider utilizing your expertise to teach a public safety, self defense or basics of home surveillance course to community members.

5. Volunteer during search and rescue missions

Communities often rally in the case of a missing person. Volunteering as a private investigator can help a search and rescue team stay organized and get your firm noticed as a leader and caring member of the community. If the search turns noth-

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ing up, explain that some of your more advanced services might help locate the individual.

6. Offer to take on a client's toughest case at no charge

We took this cue from Investigator Marketing group member Tom "Maverick" Gorgone. He once requested to work a locate case that none of the hired investigators had success with. Gorgone made the offer contingent upon using him in future cases at his normal rate, and with his success came repeat business.

7. Do favors--once in a while

If a friend or acquaintance approaches you with a problem, consider the future benefit of doing a quick favor. Member Kenn Harton landed repeat work with a big local attorney after doing a favor for a friend. In line with Gorgone's strategy of accomplishing something other professionals have not, Harton conducted an investigation for a friend after the attorney's investigator came up empty handed. A favor for a friend turned into repeat business from a major client when Harton's findings revealed case-turning evidence.

8. Keep in touch with past clients

Whether it's an attorney who utilizes your services for research or an individual that you helped during a surveillance investigation, make sure you are reinforcing your brand by keeping in touch. Reach out to past clients and ask them for testimonials or to fill out a feedback questionnaire for insight on how you can improve your business. This establishes trust and shows past clients that you care about their experiences.

9. Offer to work as an independent consultant for a local television or radio network

Team up with a local news or radio network to gain positive publicity. Consider reaching out to local news stations and offering your services as a consultant on local cases. Though you will likely be donating your time, with the opportunity to offer your expertise on missing persons investigations, fraud, surveillance, security issues and a score of other topics you will automatically be viewed as an expert in your field.

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10. Start a private investigator blog

Take a cue from our [Top Investigator Bloggers](#) and start your own private investigator blog. Whether you focus on technology, highlight specific services and cases or offer your thoughts on breaking industry news, keeping a blog can help you gain exposure among potential clients and peers. As an added bonus, opportunities for guest blogging on other sites will expand your readership and client base.

11. Write an informative article about private investigation

It's no secret that many people are fascinated with the mystique of being a private eye. Whether it's a human interest piece about your experiences, debunking some major myths or a professional piece offering tips to your peers, having an article published is a great way to get your name out there. It's also a less-daunting alternative to keeping up with your own blog.

12. Connect on social media

Hosting fun activities on your firm's Facebook Fanpage and interacting with your peers on LinkedIn and Yahoo is a great way to get connected, stay up-to-date on industry news and learn about the latest products. If there's a firm or attorney's office you would like to contract for, interact with them through your firm's social media channels. Become an integral part of the conversation and when you send your introduction letter or bring their paralegal flowers you're already a familiar face.

13. Promote process serving as a gateway to future investigative work

A great way to get in the door with local attorneys and paralegals is to first promote your experience in process serving. If you can become the go-to professional for serving legal documents you're already a trusted option when the need for a private investigator presents itself.

With a well-planned and innovative marketing strategy many investigators experience growth using creative tactics. There are an unlimited number of ways to get your business name out there, so take some time to brainstorm which introduction strategies work best for you. Ask new clients how they found your services to determine where you are experiencing marketing success, and don't be afraid to try something new.

This article was written by Kimberly Faber and was originally published on www.pinow.com.



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10 Ways Electronically Stored Information is Changing the Investigative Industry

Background checks, infidelity, embezzlement, insurance claims, theft, surveillance, lie detection. These are all areas of professional services traditionally associated with private investigation. Almost all cases involve investigating trust.

Discovering the answers needed for a client requires trust in the client-agency relationship, and delivering on your promise to gather intel on the subject you are investigating. For the past several decades, most of the information needed for a case file came from observing visible activity and records: printed documents, receipts, surveillance photos, subject interviews, etc. Fast forward to today, and the investigative industry is more interested in Electronically Stored Information (ESI). Whether the information comes from private data sources (e.g. CLEAR, TLO, and IRB), from public records, or from electronic evidence (e.g. email records and internet log files), the availability of large volumes of intel in an electronic format is appealing. Modern investigators seize the opportunity to access this information with apparent simplicity, efficiency and convenience while leveraging the intel into more valuable case results.

Here are 10 ways that electronically stored information is changing the investigative industry today:

1. Electronic data requires analysis

True case intel does not come from pushing a button. The real value to the client comes from deep analysis of records from all available resources. Agencies who employ experts at comparison, cross-referencing, and creative interpretation of records will be the ones to enjoy extraordinary success in the coming decade.

2. Electronic information can be leveraged into bigger opportunities

The enormous volume of information available from electronic records is just letters and numbers by itself. However, intelligence extracted from it can be leveraged to create new services and products to offer clients, be used to engage with new clients, and provide deeper case results for existing clients.

3. ESI levels the playing field for investigators

Deep ESI skills brings the competitive position of a smaller agency closer to that of a larger or more established firm. The barrier to entry for a smart PI or agency is lowered if you use alert smarts to develop intel extraction practices.

4. Agencies are differentiating themselves by adding value to ESI

A professional agency who goes beyond sending video footage from investigations and integrates intelligence from ESI becomes a new type of resource for clients. The expertise creates a stronger agency relationship which is harder for the client to replace.

5. The core purpose of the PI changes

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to transform electronic information into usable intel. Clients are more likely to look at agencies to provide interpretation of information, more often than just

video footage or background snapshots. Agencies enjoying the greatest success are those who bring to the table more than what every other competitor can.

6. Clients are practicing "DIY-investigations"

As electronic records are more commonly available, potential civilian clients may try their hand at more self-directed "investigations". Individuals snoop on Facebook or emails to catch partner infidelity, so there are fewer domestic cases going to PI's. Companies may use public online records to weed out applicants, so they need background checks less often. Agencies may be competing against other investigators as well as their own clients.

7. Access to electronic information leads to new cases

An investigative agency proficient in the use of ESI can take on new types of cases which match their new existing business model, including asset recovery or FCPA. Asset discovery is an excellent example where a smart investigator can utilize their skills and provide value to a client using electronic records for tracking the flow of funds, asset purchases, and vesting of property, etc.

8. Investigators must keep up with changing laws

As technology changes and electronic records become more widespread, regulation and legislation on restrictions of their use increases. Scenarios where ESI creates a public outcry causes government agencies to pass laws on ESI usage, sometimes in a knee-jerk reaction. PI's now need to understand the requirements of DPPA, GLB, HIPPA, and the FCRA when using ESI. For example, employers in some states have restrictions on when Facebook can be used in hiring decisions.

9. ESI can boost client relations

Use electronic information to cement a relationship with new and existing clients. An astute agency will do as much or more due diligence on a client as they do with a subject. Understanding the true needs and history of a client serves their interest in engaging with a business partner who is truly intended on helping them discover answers.

10. Investigators are evolving into full service agencies

Now is the opportunity for professional investigators to develop a new version of the industry for themselves. Focus on identifying and building trust so your services exceed your clients' expectations, and distinguish yourself from the inferior competitors who commoditize their background checks and products.

No matter what the reason for the investigation, your client is trusting you to find the answer. Leveraging electronic data and distilling it down into usable intel is an invaluable service. Progressive agency owners are recognizing the evolution of their industry due to ESI.

This article was written by David Pelligrinelli and was originally published on www.pinow.com.



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Annual Financial Report for GAPPI

As we close out the year we are proud to announce that GAPPI is financially sound. We are at 180 members and, once again, we had very good turn-outs for the Spring Training and the SEIC Fall Conference. We are still escrowing money in order to accrue a one year's operating capital which runs about \$35,000 annually. This is one of the goals assigned to the Board of Directors in order to provide financial stability for GAPPI. As we closed out the profit and loss statement for November, GAPPI recognized a short-fall in collecting revenue to cover our legislative advocacy. GAPPI members should understand that using money designated for our reserve fund to cover legislative expenses is not sustainable. We need your help.

There are still legislative issues that could adversely affect our members and your livelihood. These issues will be back to haunt us again in the 2013 State Legislative Session which starts in January. The cost of legislative advocacy is more than what the basic GAPPI budget can handle. We are dedicated to covering this expenditure by continuing to grow our membership, and have added members by adding a Security Agent membership category to assist with that, fund raising by selling GAPPI apparel and, last but not least, asking for voluntary donations. We realize that these are still tough times. Please give what you can to help us protect our industry. If you can't donate right now please consider giving of your time to talk to our State Legislators so that they will be better educated on issues that affect Private Investigators.

If you have any questions please give me call at 404-766-1632 or you can e-mail me at vernon@ahqi.com.

Vernon Thomas
Executive Director, GAPPI

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