



LAID OFF, TICKED OFF

Disturbed by an Ex-Employee's Online Rants Against its CEO, a Medical Device Maker Seeks Outside Expertise

SERVICE: Threat Assessment, Investigation and Social Media Monitoring

INDUSTRY: Healthcare

CLIENT: A Global Medical Device Manufacturer

UNPLUGGED

A FRANK OPINION

The Project Manager's Post-Engagement Perspective

"We were not surprised that this individual had changed targets. In our experience, a concerning subject will often switch his or her direction of interest in order to achieve a desired outcome."

"We were able to gather the information necessary to make a thoughtful assessment of the threat the subject may have posed to our client. Fortunately, the situation did not warrant additional protective services."

Client's Challenge: Passing Emotion or Real Threat?

The Chief Legal Counsel for a Fortune 500 company was on the line. "Listen, we're very concerned about a former employee of ours. He was let go last month, and he hasn't stopped ranting about our CEO on social media. We're seeing posts - completely public - that are fantasizing about confrontation. We have no idea if this is all just bluster and whether it will pass."

This ex-employee also directly emailed the CEO, insisting on a meet-up to "air some things out." And there was more in the subject's history. Human Resources had confronted him on his history of alcoholism, which played a large role in his dismissal.

Our Solution: A Systematic Examination

The Threat Assessment and Investigation team laid out its course of action, prioritizing key services and tactics that included the following: (1) monitoring social media to assess the subject's online postings; (2) gauging the subject's risk of violence; (3) determining, to the greatest extent possible, the subject's motives and support system such as family, work, community criminal justice, mental health and social services; and (4) liaising with law enforcement, mental health professionals and the subject's family members. To guard against suspicion and threat escalation on the part of the subject, the team decided against directly interviewing the subject or identifying the client to his family members.

Impact on Client: All Clear - At Least for This Company

Several weeks of vigorous social media monitoring - and real-time collaboration with local authorities - produced a consensus. The Hillard Heintze team determined that the subject had a low risk of violence toward the client's executives, particularly the CEO and his family. The subject's fixation on his former employer had waned, and executive protection services - such as bodyguards or armed transportation - were deemed unnecessary.

Three months later, Hillard Heintze was contacted by another prominent medical manufacturer. After failing to advance in the interview process, a prospective employee had taken to a professional networking site to directly harass an internal recruiter. It was the same subject. He had moved on to a new target.

Corporate Headquarters

30 South Wacker Drive
Suite 1400
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 869-8500

www.hillardheintze.com