

HERTOG & ASSOCIATES, Inc.

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“Privacy” key to credibility of detective agency

By Randall G. Mielke

You may not know David Hertog, but he knows (or at least he can find out) a lot about you. That's his job. He's a private detective.

As president and CEO, Hertog heads up Hertog and Associates, Inc., in Rolling Meadows. His company is an Illinois and Wisconsin licensed private detective agency serving Fortune 500 corporations, major law firms and privately held companies. He has operated the business for nearly five years.

Hertog is quick to point out that “private” is the operative word in his organization.

“It is ‘private detective,’ he said of his occupation. “‘Private’ means I keep my mouth shut to protect the privacy of my clients. I often sign a confidentiality agreement. My clients know they will not end up on CNN (Cable News Network).”

Hertog said the “detect” part of the equation is a matter of gathering information by way of Internet Web sites or public records or by simply talking to people.

“This a people business,” he said. “Communication is as important as the actual investigation.”

Hertog services only corporations. The types of investigations his company offers include due diligence, threat management cases, background investigations and executive protection.

Hertog said that due diligence might concern checking the background of an organization or its officers.

“If you are going into a business deal with a company,” he said, “you may want to find out about the company and its executives.”

As for threat management cases, his company does advanced threat assessments to determine the possibility of violence with an individual.

The background investigations are a large portion of Hertog's case-

load. It is primarily a pre-employment background investigation.

“We call it ‘criminal history name check,’” said Hertog. “We help keep clients from hiring the wrong people. You would not want a convicted felon, for example, working in a sensitive area of a pharmaceutical company. We have found that the best way to prevent a problem is to not hire a problem.”

Hertog and Associates also are personal protection specialists. They provide basic bodyguard service for executives.

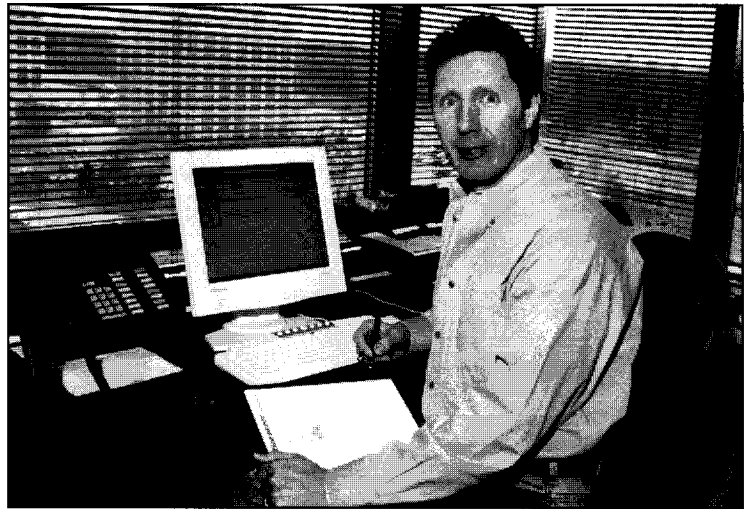
When Hertog is hired to handle something for which he may not have the proper expertise, he brings in outside assistance.

“For example, perhaps a company is having a shareholders meeting and they want to be sure the room in which it is held is not bugged. We will have someone come in and sweep the room to detect any bugging devices,” said Hertog. “We bring in specialists who are much better at it.”

Privacy is such an issue that Hertog is not willing to disclose company profits, the number of associates he employs, or specific names of companies that he is hired to serve. But he did indicate that the company has grown about 50 percent with clients and personnel over the last five years. And the events of Sept. 11 have only increased Hertog's business.

“After 9/11 our calls for service were up 20 percent,” Hertog said. “There is an overall feeling of vulnerability. Our current clients called with questions on upgrading security. Others were calling with questions on how to keep their executives safe and wanted to find out info on people who work for them or on those who are trying to work for them.”

Hertog seems well suited for his work as a private detective. He has a Masters degree in business



“Private” is the operative word for David Hertog, who runs a five-year-old private detective agency in Rolling Meadows which serves Fortune 500 corporations, major law firms and privately held companies. (Photo by Dietrich Wolfframm)

administration and Bachelor of Science degrees in criminal justice and accounting. But growing up, he thought his life would take a different path.

“In high school I always loved dogs and I wanted to be a veterinarian,” said Hertog. “But I was not good at math and science, so there goes a degree in medicine. But I am good with people, and I was always into communicating with people.

“No precipitating event brought it on,” he said of his interest in detective work. “I just thought it would be interesting.”

Hertog believes that several things make a good detective.

“First, I think you need good communication skills,” he said. “And you need to have a tenacious

nature. Then you must have the ability to work hard, the ability to look at the big picture, and also some good common sense and some street smarts.”

Another aspect of detective work is that it can be dangerous. Hertog and his personnel all are qualified and authorized to carry firearms.

“I have a healthy respect for my clients and the threats posed to them,” he said. “Threats always need to be assessed, managed, and taken very seriously.”

Still, Hertog finds other aspects of his job even more unnerving.

“I am more comfortable on an assignment where I might get shot at than doing sales calls,” he said. “Rejection is scary.”

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