

The power of outsourced intelligence analysis

September 2023

In today's fast-paced business landscape, corporations face the formidable challenge of assessing unprecedented volumes of information. Increasingly, businesses are turning to outsourced intelligence gathering professionals to collect and make sense of vital open-source intelligence on their behalf.



What are OSINT and HUMINT?

While governments have a long-standing history with open-source intelligence (OSINT), the commercial world has only been actively engaging with it in earnest for a couple of decades. OSINT involves the collating and analysis of publicly available information from online platforms, government databases, and social and public media – including our radios and televisions. People think that anyone with an internet connection can do this – but it is more complex than it appears. If you know where to look, have access to the relevant sources and, most importantly, know what to look for, then you are 75% there in terms of time, cost and results. But therein lies the rub. Experience is the gamechanger – and this is where good OSINT analysts will pay dividends.

Human intelligence (HUMINT) involves gathering information from people and interactions. Sources might include confidential informants, agents under pretext and undisclosed diplomatic associates. All provide a unique personal understanding, culture and picture of a line of inquiry that OSINT alone cannot fulfil.

Enhancing strategic decision-making

Professional, outsourced OSINT and HUMINT services – where information is both collected and analysed – enable businesses to develop a deep understanding of their environment and the situations they operate in.

In areas such as the evaluation of potential business partners, monitoring market movements, following competitor activities, industry changes, identifying opportunities and mitigating identified risks, intelligence must be high quality for decision makers to be able to act confidently.

Combating external and internal fraud and deceit

In cases of external or internal corporate fraud, reliable OSINT and HUMINT is indispensable. Outsourcing allows investigations to be conducted discreetly, in a manner that is usually not possible for the clients themselves.

Outsourced intelligence gathering agents can use their OSINT tools and expertise to obtain data from overt social media, government and publicly available records to the more covert Deep and Dark Web platforms. For example, in the case of cybercrime involving disruptionware, malware or Intellectual Property theft, analysts can follow up on leads provided by an IT forensics team, thus identifying instances of fraudulent scamming software toolkits and delivery methods being sold and used. With large-scale IT fraud, analysts can also tap into Dark Web communities to detect and assess potential threats to international corporate groups, or even countries and their governments.

In cases of fraud and deception, HUMINT adds a vital perspective to an investigation. If an individual is suspected but yet to be proved guilty, a client must tread carefully. External HUMINT through human interactions can play a vital role, using sources such as undisclosed informants, surveillance and overt interviews.

HUMINT also provides an insight into motive, intentions and the scale of an issue (additional associates or a solo operation) plus an assessment of a suspect's possible involvement in a fraudulent activity. This personal and intimate 'eyes and ears' or 'fly-on-the-wall' intelligence gathering gives clients a true picture of the person suspected of being behind a fraud or deceit. Such intelligence will reveal hidden connections and agendas, patterns and vulnerabilities. The information will also help the client to mitigate against a possible recurrence.

Summary

Using the expertise of outsourced intelligence gatherers and analysts allows corporations to exploit a network of trained and experienced OSINT and HUMINT professionals who specialise in acquiring and analysing data. HUMINT complements OSINT and the combination of the two enables clients to make informed decisions, giving them significant advantage in this competitive world.

Knowledge is power.

KCS Group Europe – Strategic Intelligence & Corporate Security

KCS Group Europe is a leading provider of security and intelligence services, operating in some of the world's most difficult environments on complex cases of fraud, theft, corruption or market dynamics. We gather intelligence through the discreet use of human sources to level the playing field and help our clients identify and deal with any risks, weaknesses and threats which could impact on their business, financially or reputationally.

Our key areas of expertise include: Corporate Intelligence Services - New market or sector entry research - Know your customer screening.

In addition, we offer a unique service in the areas of Cyber Security and Cyber Risk. This covers penetration testing, vulnerability assessments, intelligence gathering and cyber security audits – providing unparalleled analysis, contingency planning and implementation.

To find out more or to arrange a meeting to discuss your business needs, please email the team at info@kcsgroupeurope.com or call (00 44) 20 7245 1191 – www.kcsgroup.com