Rome Wasn’t Built in a Day: How to Grow Your Grant Business

GPA Conference | October 2014
Who am I?

- Responsible for the day to day management of the Grants programs at Praetorian Digital
- The PD grant assistance program has helped over 20,000 public safety agencies with grant assistance resulting in a reported $50 million in funding
- I’ve been working with non-profits professionally and personally for over 10 years
- Prior to PD, held various marketing and organizational management positions within financial services
- A west coaster my entire life, I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, raised in Southern California and currently call San Francisco home
Overview

- Who or What is Praetorian?
- The Grants Division – A History
- Foundations of Good Growth Strategy
- Realistic Goals and Objectives
- Maintaining Efficiency
- Managing Program Growth
- Turning Lemons Into Lemonade
- Best Practices & Lessons Learned
- Q&A
Praetorian’s mission is to use digital media to revolutionize the way in which Public Safety, Local Government and our Nation’s Military protect and serve our communities.

We provide best of breed resources and cutting edge information that help those who insure our freedom and safety become better informed, share information, more effectively protect our communities and come home safe.

Our goal is to be the leading digital media company for government and public safety.
Who or What is Praetorian?

- Founded in 1999 to connect buyers and sellers in the public safety and local government market, including Police, Fire, EMS and Corrections to address the technology gap for first responders and provide them with online resources that they were not getting elsewhere.
- Media properties reach 5MM first responders and government personnel each month with 1.3 million registered members.
- Highly Profitable, rapidly growing business at 20% per year.
- Unique new media business model scalable across multiple industry verticals.
- Strong track record of successful value delivery to high profile clients: Panasonic, DuPont, ITT Industries, Taser, Sprint-Nextel, Motorola, L-3, Globe, Cisco.
The Future of Digital Media

Our Business: 3 Divisions

- Digital Advertising
- Grant Assistance
- Online Training

1999 2009 2011

Being a media company is no longer just about selling impressions or simply connecting buyers and sellers.

Today, you must be able to operate multiple business models effectively and serve a wide range of audience and advertiser needs.
Mission Statement:
The mission of PoliceGrantsHelp.com, FireGrantsHelp.com, EMSGrantsHelp.com and GovGrantsHelp.com is to provide members of the public safety and local government community with a free comprehensive resource for grant information and assistance.
Grants Division – A History

The Challenge in 2008:

Registered Praetorian Digital Website Members Who Need Grant Help

We have no money!

We need equipment, training, personnel!
Our Original Business Model

[Diagram showing a triangle with '$' at the center and labels 'DEPARTMENTS', 'SPONSORS', and 'PRAETORIAN DIGITAL' at the vertices]
Grants Division – A History

The Solution launched in 2009:

Use Technology to Create a Grant Assistance Program to PD Members
Our History

2009
- Program Launches
  - Interns
  - 4 GWs
  - Grant Reviews only

2010
- Hire AM staff
  - add TurboGrants

2011
- Focus on PGH
  - add Grant Writing as a service

2012
- Jan 2012 - $20M in funding
  - add Application Assembly

2013
- Develop Ops team
  - FT staff grows to 7
  - add Grant Alerts

2014
- Launch Local Govt Division
  - $50M in funding;
  - Grant writing staff 35+

2015
- ??
1. Start Small & Focus on What You Know

2009

- Myself, Intern + 4 grant writers
- Focus was
  - developing technology,
  - defining process
  - providing basic grant assistance
- Fire and EMS Grants were the focus
- Research, Grant Reviews, Consulting
2. Think Big (Picture)

2010 – 2011

- Requests for grant help increasing as well as requests for new services
- Focus and Refine Police Grant help
  - Complete grant writing offered
  - Expanded grant writing staff
  - Expanded full time staff
  - 4 full time staff and 12 grant writers + intern
3. Figure Out Roles

2011 – 2013

- Define roles for team
  - Operations
  - Research
  - Application Assembly
  - Grant Writer Manager
  - Account Management
  - Grant Writers
  - Director
4. Don’t Be Afraid to Try New Things (and Fail at them)

- 2009 – Grant Reviews
- 2010 – Grant Writing
- 2011 – TurboGrants
- 2012 – Application Assembly
- 2013 – Grant Alerts
5. Partnerships

- Organizations
- Grant makers
- Media – publications and social
- Conferences/Trade events
- Other Grant Consultants

*From day 1, I recognized I needed to secure partnerships in order to succeed.*
Realistic Goals and Objectives

Make Goals Stretch but Attainable

What are the targets?
- Revenue/sales
- Grant Submissions
- Awards

Create rewards and incentives for meeting targets!
Realistic Goals and Objectives

Make Objectives Transparent

- Define our targets in January
- Repeat our targets each team meeting
- Clearly articulate our progress
- Spell out incentives for meeting goals
- Be accountable to your team
Grant Assistance Program (GAP) Lifecycle

1. Department fills out request form (DAR)
2. Lead is contacted 48 – 72 hours
3. Grant pre planning form sent/received
4. Grants researched and sent specific to that project and dept
5. Dept selects grant to apply for
6. Grant team assists dept with grant application
7. Grant writers review and edit narratives for dept
8. Dept. submits grant application!
9. Quarterly check ins with depts
## The Good…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What's Working</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Individual and team targets met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipeline</td>
<td>Plenty of leads to meet targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support/teamwork</td>
<td>everyone pitches in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus/Strategy</td>
<td>Clear focus each month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Identified and shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Hip chat, email, phone, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus Structure</td>
<td>added incentive to meet team and individual goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>High marks across all roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Weekly and 2xs a year in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>Team interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Knowing how to handle and elevate when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>bi weekly 1:1s and opplys in weekly team meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant writers</td>
<td>increased significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Territories</td>
<td>successful transition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The Bad…and the Ugly?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What's Not Working</th>
<th>What do we need to make this work?</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better CRM reminders</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>redistribute workloads</td>
<td>Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>redistribute workloads</td>
<td>Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half day verification</td>
<td>create policy and send</td>
<td>Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsors not contacting leads</td>
<td>Regional sponsor Contacts</td>
<td>in process for 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face Interaction</td>
<td>Budget for team face time - quarterly w Sarah; 2x per year with whole team</td>
<td>in process for 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% Submission</td>
<td>Over communication - clear directions &amp; deadlines</td>
<td>in process for 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead notes consistency</td>
<td>Simplify</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding grant info</td>
<td>Partnership Marketing</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardizing eblasts</td>
<td>Training - transition to coordinators</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROI for Sponsors</td>
<td>Better record keeping in DAF; share successes with sponsors</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers/Software Development tasks</td>
<td>Address w Nick</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status 16 leads</td>
<td>Reg follow up meetings with Ken</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant funded info from depts.</td>
<td>contact sponsors for verification; change language in request</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create process</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
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Managing Program Growth

Growth: the process of increasing in physical size

What does “Program Growth” mean to you?

- Increase in Resources
- Breadth of Offerings

Well this what is means to me:

- Think like a chess player – be two moves ahead of where you are
- Increase resources – when my team is about to mutiny
  - As a band aid - interns are a good tool to bridge as are part time contractors
- Breadth of offerings – when I know I can not only sell something but deliver on it
  - Example Grant Alerts
Turning Lemons into Lemonade

Every little failure is a success if you’ve learned something from it

• Managing contracted agencies expectations on services
• Clearly understanding target programs and contracting appropriately
• Learning to say no to bad contracts
• Always taking the high road – you never know where referral business will come from
• Others?
5 Biggest Lessons Learned

1. Know How to Perform Each Role You Manage
2. Screen Grant Writers Carefully
3. Root out Bad Contracts
4. Provide Free Direction to your target audience
5. BUT – realize that your knowledge is valuable and there is value associated with it
10 Best Practices

1. Start Small but think big picture
2. Have clearly defined goals and objectives; be transparent with your team
3. Try new things and be ok with failing at some of them
4. Grant Writers and writing success – create metrics and measure each year
5. Define roles and focus your team
6. Define processes, then refine refine refine
7. Partnerships
8. Continuous training for staff and target audience
9. Take care of your internal and external customers
10. Lead with integrity always
Any Questions?

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