

In 2010, Trends Will Accelerate the Growth of Those in the Information Protection Industry.....

Product Evolution:

In 2003 I created a presentation on Trends in the Industry for a Records Management Conference. Before writing this article I revisited the 2003 Trends to determine if things are still heading in that direction or, have gone off in a new direction.

I predicted in 2003 that CEO's and CFO's would seek more security in the field of information management and more protection from harsh legislation. I referred to media articles where cartoons mocked CEO's about failure to protect business records. (e.g. Christmas beer commercial where they show snow in the air but it was really the auditors shredding documents illegally and tossing the confetti out the window.) Articles warned of inflated stock values without corresponding financial values. Clearly executive management has been charged with protecting organizational information assets in all formats.¹

Obviously record media protection is now an integral part of the records management plan for responsible organizations. The role of lifecycle management has evolved to deal with what to protect and for how long. Offsite storage companies became a part of the protection cycle for records as clients realized the danger that exists for those who fail to protect records.

While some in the offsite records storage industry have experienced large fires, thereby creating bad publicity for the Industry, others have stepped up to provide media vaults as a standard component in their facilities. These vaults have drawn

¹ Sarbanes-Oxley, HIPAA, Graham-Leach-Bliley, FDA Fines.

new interest from a market segment that looks to protect its vital information assets rather than simply store it offsite.

One simple example is responding to legal requirements to protect media from spoliation, as dictated in Sarbanes–Oxley. **In 1990 few vaults had environmental control. Today, it would be considered ridiculous to be without it.** Media decays at a faster pace without proper environmental control of temperature and humidity. The same can be said for magnetic shielding of vault storage chambers. Various ISO Standards call out proper storage for media as well as NFPA 232 “*Protection of Records*” Standard.

Even handling of the media has evolved during this time period. Special containers for transport, slotted environments for racking, and locking cases to respond to HIPAA requirements are now standard. Insulated transport cases or refrigerated vans have become the norm. Barcode tracking software allows service providers and clients see exactly where each tape is at any time.

In the past, the role of the offsite media storage facility was simply to hand off the media in a Business Resumption situation. A recovery without contractors such as Sunguard or other specialized recovery sites was unthinkable as this was the only model. Today there are many **business resumption models** and the offsite media vaulting company is often a key player in the recovery.

Offsite media vaulting companies often offer co-location services. Or they offer e-vaulting to help a client recover at another site. While disk-to-disk has allowed clients to move away from the old protocol, offsite media storage has continued to increase in volume.² **Corporations found that maintaining all information on line, all the time, was extremely expensive.** The utility costs,

² Many articles and consultants predicted the demise of tape, that storage via virtual servers would reduce the need for media, the use of Cloud storage would eliminate the need for tape and the clients own disk to disk platform would eliminate tape.

the cooling costs and the increase in servers and requisite staffing ballooned their expenses. The result was to maintain the non-active archive data in tape format.

Maintaining staff at a redundant disk-to-disk location that requires little interaction makes no sense. **Many in the offsite storage industry have taken advantage of this by offering a site for back-up storage in an electronic format.** By working with local clients, a specific and tailored solution can be provided that meets the needs of the client while creating revenue for the offsite storage company. The offsite storage provider has evolved into an extension of the service model in the same way the mailroom in many locations has been affected by FedEx, Email Communications and Virtual Meetings.

This continued linkage between the client and the vendor enhances the bond as the vendor willingly supports specific clients needs for information continuity and protection. **Client surveys continue to reflect a need for protection of information assets, not just racking space,** especially if these efforts reduce their staffing and in-house expenses.

In addition, offsite storage protects information assets from **sabotage by disgruntled employees (definitely on the rise in this economic downturn) as well as competitive intelligence gathering.** International competition has created threats from well funded and government backed digital terrorists. The rise in encryption is a response to this but illegal activity has moved to stealing encryption keys. **Offsite storage in a vaulted environment removes the information from a “hackable” platform and key elements can be stored offline and in a secure and anonymous location.**

Vaulting electronic information in Class 125 Vaults has evolved from client real estate to also dominate in the offsite storage model.

Vault ratings have changed from simply paper document ratings (Class 350) to vaults that carry a fire rating that assures the client that the media vault interior will not see heat sufficient to destroy the media (Class 125).

Vaults in the past offered water sprinkler protection while the vaults today offer Clean Agent Fire Suppression to avoid damaging the computer media.

As we seek to determine future trends, **we see the IT Community moving their computers into Server Vaults.**

(www.servervaulting.com) **We are also witnessing the development of the “Data Center in a Box”** wherein IBM, SUN, Dell, HP and others seek to expand the Digital World and strengthen their position in the world of Disaster Recovery as well as providing a modular data center that expands with the clients’ needs.

The hardware computer companies see a need for greater protection and explosive growth in the Data Center development. **Modular expansion follows the same model as a modular vault – “Grow with the Client.”** The use of a secure modular environment evolves into the high-density environments which can be transported to an alternate location for faster start up of data centers. (<http://www.servervaulting.com/save.asp> _

Evolution Provides More Opportunity:

The hardware manufacturers solved everything but the site location and real estate solution. It makes sense that these units could be stored at the offsite media vaulting contractors site where the necessary infrastructure is available, the mind set of a secure site already exists, and staff exists to perform certain ongoing service requirements such as removing disks or inserting new media.

Hosting these centers adjacent to the media storage environment provides clients a ready-made recovery site.

Marketing Evolution:

Media stored on tapes and disks, stored offsite and available for rotation or disaster recovery was not only the least expensive model, it was even less expensive than in past years. This is due to the explosive growth of media processing. Application software has increased in volume, user platforms have increased, new applications such as Email and Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP), eMeetings, Webinars and now into Social Sites which have evolved into marketing.

The same products that balloon the market for offsite storage are the same tools that are used to market to this client base. Cold calling, referral letters, Yellow Page ads, direct mail, and telemarketing are no longer the only arrows in the quiver for marketing to a client base.

Marketing Plans call for E-Newsletters, electronic email blasts to existing clients alerting them to new services, broadcast emailing to potential clients advising them of all your capabilities, service advantages, as well as other reasons why they should consider your company. Linked-In and other services make it possible to spread the word of your outstanding performance from one IT Manager to others as well as tangential friends. If the world is all-inclusive via the “Six Degrees of Separation”³ represented in the Human Web as is often exhibited with viral emails, then marketing can also be

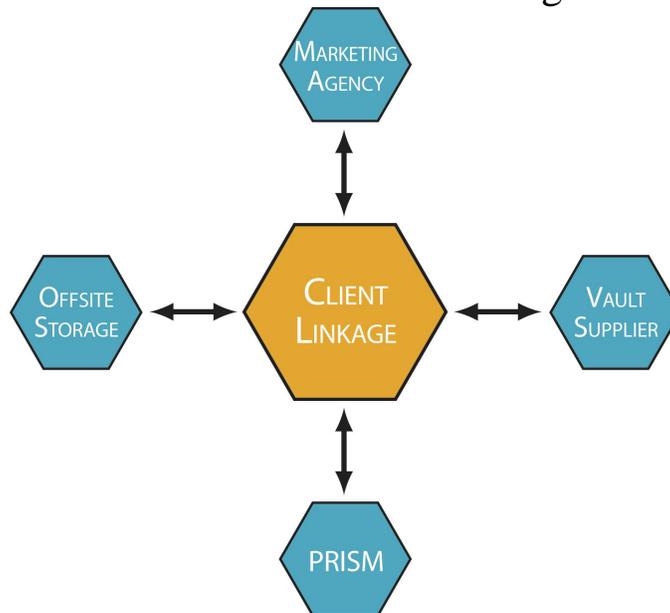
³ The concept **Six degrees of separation** (also referred to as the "Human Web") refers to the idea that, if a person is one step away from each person they know and two steps away from each person who is known by one of the people they know, then everyone is at most six steps away from any other person on Earth. It was popularized by a [play](#) written by [John Guare](#).

devised to take advantage of this Web or Hive concept to raise awareness for a company that develops its marketing skills.

Hive Marketing is simply the evolution of an organizations total contact base. It is the maximization of these contacts to not only market your organization but also those of the organization that help to further your marketing goals. Too often companies see themselves and their clients as an A to B Vector.

Offsite Storage Vendor A \longrightarrow B

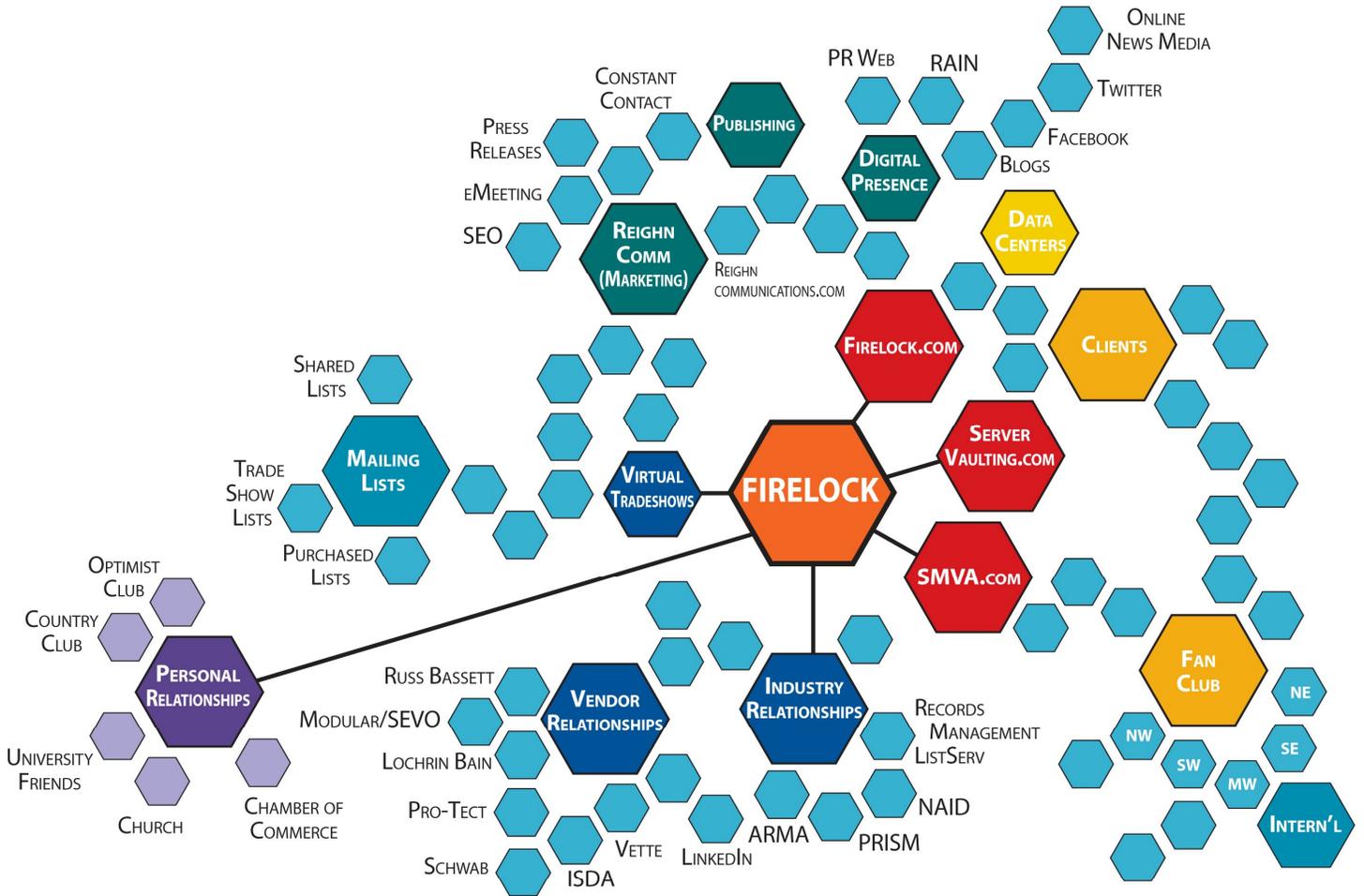
But many more vectors or paths exist that can be utilized. See Chart below for the basics of HIVE Marketing:



Typical HIVE Marketing Vector for PRISM Members

In the example above you may utilize certain connections and vectors to strengthen your linkage to the client. It is not just you and the client. The Client may have found you through PRISM or marketing from PRISM might keep you in a “Top of Mind” position with the clients or your marketing agency may have created leads through other marketing.

In the following example, you see a HIVE designed by FIRELOCK to help market vault chambers, help their users group benefit from the marketing and then multiply the overall effects by combining other vendors to magnify the range for the many vectors.



Concept and Design by Reign Communications: www.reigncommunications.com

The evolved HIVE shown above depicts not only the various contestants for bandwidth, but your potential teammates as well. The purpose of the HIVE Marketing Concept is to magnify bandwidth through the use of allies who benefit with your success and who will help you create Top of Mind Awareness in the appropriate market places. You in turn help them gain awareness through your broad-based marketing program.

Members of PRISM are encouraged to share leads thereby amplifying the B2B marketing. This makes these entities more likely to send leads back to your company. In addition, your marketing agency or consultant may set up various vectors to assist you. (e.g. email newsletters, web sites, mailing campaigns.) This is the beginning of the HIVE.

By looking at the evolved model, you can immediately start to develop those teammates that might assist you. When your business grows, who benefits? Your staff for one, your marketing agency, your various suppliers and sister companies with which you share leads.

This network can provide their up-to-date email database and you in return provide yours. All benefit without cost to themselves. These simple marketing upgrades strengthen your market position. Each growth level propels each of you with no added costs.

In one simple program, you might link your web site to their web site and they in turn you provide you a back link. This simple tool just made both of your web sites stronger and more easily found.

Any web optimization that anyone in this HIVE creates, now benefits all the players. **Creating a blog and having your associates post on your blog and you in turn on theirs, increases your ranking with Google, Yahoo and other search**

engines. Every teammate in your HIVE again benefits from this program.

In fact, any recognition you create by educationally developing your site to be even more descriptive of your corporate mission not only helps your site naturally draw more visitors but that in turn helps all of your business partners.

The inclusion of a Virtual Trade Show Floor on your site creates a simple way to expose teammates to the market and place the links necessary to increase the strength of all the web sites.

As the sites evolve you may place educational materials and resources on the site to create a Virtual Education Conference. Imagine this Trade Show: It creates leads for everyone with no travel costs, no hotel and no cost for booth rental space and this Trade Shows never closes. The resource material creates new items for Web Releases and each joint press release creates traffic for each and every site. Each visitor to each site increases the data list for the email database.

Any referral your site provides for a partner creates a partner that in turn is supportive of you and seeks to create return leads back to you. As the HIVE grows the power of it grows in a factorial multiple. Creativity and Time are the fuel for this marketing engine.

In my Linked-In pool, I added a few contacts, and with no real effort others sought me out that saw a benefit to a linkage. With no real strategic action I soon had 58 links to other people. If one can imagine that I am an average or less than average Link-In practitioner, then my each of my 58 Links will have at least 58 links and you start to see the power of the HIVE Marketing approach. It can be created with minimal work beyond your normal business activities.

This HIVE Marketing is like Linked-In® on steroids. Every friend of yours is a friend of mine. A popular friend brings even more visitors to the HIVE.

Imagine a new product or promotional release that is spread with the speed of a computer virus but with no ill-intent or damage. Simply education material about new technology available, placed in front of the potential client at the very moment they seek this product or service.

As an example of the HIVE marketing approach, FIRELOCK assists its clients with an online directory of FIRELOCK-equipped facilities so potential offsite data protection clients can easily find the service provider in their area. It is also common for FIRELOCK to share email lists, attend Open Houses for new customers, do joint exhibiting at trade shows, and write articles for local newspapers and PRWeb.com to help clients market their capabilities. All of these activities create value for both FIRELOCK and the client.

Provider Evolution:

In recent years we have seen True Value Hardware on the corner displaced by Home Depot® and the local appliance store displaced by Best Buy® as customers seek out wider access to products.

How will the shredding service provider evolve? Taking that premise along its logical path, then securing data media, e-vaulting, co-location and business resumption are the linear direction of the industry.

Looking again at the HIVE, do we see opportunities to expand in non-linear ways? For example, a company is storing media offsite

they may also need destruction services for tapes at the end of their lifecycle. If so then developing a relationship with an information destruction firm makes sense. No two vendors will develop in the same way. Some will add co-location for temporary recovery and this might lead to a relationship with an air transport company to handle the high-speed movement of tapes to a company recovery center.

Certainly developing relationships with co-location companies is a great connection. They serve the same IT personnel you seek. You can provide a service on both ends of that client equation that serves the co-location entity and his clients and in return can create revenue for both. It merely requires strategic development.

The opportunities are limitless. Each market has distinct needs and your evolution to serve those needs and the teammates you develop along the way, make this an exciting time.

Adding service like Home Depot® or Best Buy® where they not only offer the products but in some cases, the installation and the service contracts on the products, they offer video and in-store personnel to train you on how to use their products.

PRISM companies must evolve not only into new products but new relationships with other companies and new relationships with their own clients. Most importantly, they must evolve in their marketing.

This is what the next decade holds in store for the intelligent Owner.