

SMALL BUSINESS

Clevelander locks in role as source on school security

Experience in field, straightforward nature have national media outlets calling on Kenneth Trump

By SHERRY GAVANDITTI
clbfreelancer@crain.com

When there's a student shooting or random act of school violence anywhere in the country, Kenneth S. Trump doesn't stray too far from his phone.

That's because despite having a small, Cleveland-based consulting firm with just two employees — Mr. Trump and his wife of 10 years — he's become known in some circles as a school safety expert.

Mr. Trump's company, National School Safety and Security Services, doesn't rent officers or guard dogs, and he doesn't sell security cameras or metal detectors.

Instead, Mr. Trump's product is his knowledge and experience in school safety issues.

And it's been this knowledge and experience that has led to Mr. Trump becoming known as somewhat of a go-to man for the national media.

Information source

Over the past 20 years, Mr. Trump, who founded his company in 1997, has worked in 45 states with school and public safety officials, utilizing his experience in school security and assessments, emergency preparedness training and school safety and crisis consulting services.

"Emergency training has become very popular in recent years, with Columbine and other school shootings and 9/11," according to Mr. Trump, who has trained teachers, school administrators, police and fire department personnel and emergency management agency officials.

But in addition to his hands-on

work in training, another dimension of Mr. Trump's business is the time he spends being an "expert" — whether it's on the phone with reporters, doing live interviews, fielding offers to endorse some safety product (which he always refuses) or answering questions.

"It's neat to be on the air being asked your opinion on Fox or CNN, but it's time-consuming," said Mr. Trump, who has a bachelor's degree in social service with a criminal justice concentration and a master's degree in public administration from Cleveland State University.

In the wake of a school-safety crisis such as the early October Amish school shootings in Pennsylvania, Mr. Trump said he may get as little as two hours of sleep in a night and field as many as 70 calls in a day from national media asking him to go live with his analysis or opinion.

In October, Mr. Trump's opinion on school safety was included in publications ranging from the *Orlando Sentinel* to *The Washington Post*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *Baltimore Sun*.

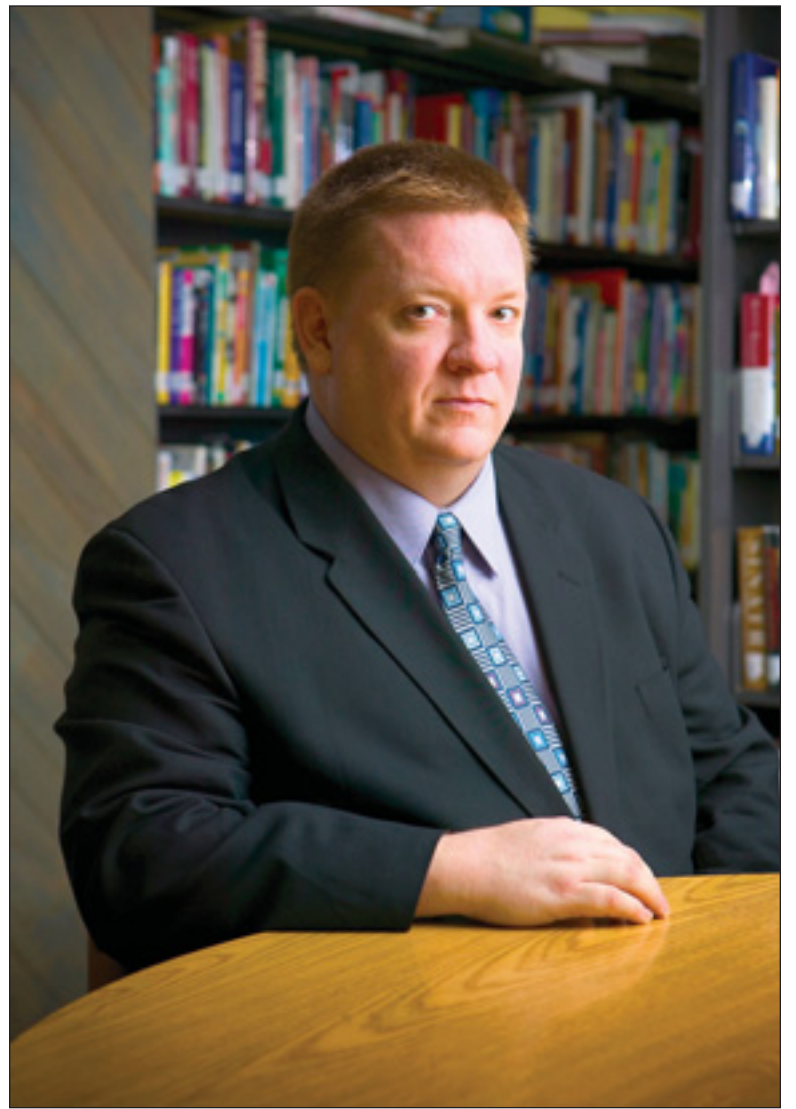
Making a name for himself

How did a small Cleveland business owner's name end up in the Rolodex of the national media?

The best way to get on the media's go-to lists is to contact them and let them know about you or pay someone to do the legwork for you, according to Cynthia Bell of Bell Public Relations in Cleveland. National speakers bureaus also can be helpful.

"Let them know your expertise, and that you are available for consultation. Give credentials," she said. Other advice from Ms. Bell includes sending out press releases and having a web site, which could help when members of the media search the Internet for sources.

Although Mr. Trump sent out a few news releases when he started his



JESSE KRAMER

Cleveland native Kenneth Trump is a popular choice among national media when school safety issues arise, like this fall's Amish school shootings in Pennsylvania.

company, today he doesn't use advisers or PR firms to tout his name to the media during a crisis. However, he has kept his name visible to the media and public in other ways.

Mr. Trump, who in 1990 founded and then supervised the youth gang unit for the Cleveland Municipal School District, authored the 1998 best-seller titled "Practical School Security: Basic Guidelines for Safe and Secure Schools," and has written more than 40 articles on school security and the book "Classroom Killers? Hallway Hostages? How Schools Can Prevent and Manage School Crises".

In October, Mr. Trump attended the White House Conference on School Safety and was named chairman of the prevention committee, executive board member, and a project management team member for the Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative project, administered by the Office of the United States Attorney of Northern Ohio, in Cleveland.

While U.S. Attorney Greg White was reluctant to discuss specifics of the gang initiative project, which is designed to prevent gang membership and prosecute gang violence, he did make note of Mr. Trump's work.

"I've known Mr. Trump for a long time and appreciate his involvement, especially in chairing the prevention committee," Mr. White said.

Straight talk

John H. Weicker, security director of Fort Wayne Community Schools in Fort Wayne Ind., oversees the safety of more than 32,000 students in 53 buildings. He defines Mr. Trump as a man who doesn't blow a lot of smoke.

"Trump is good at what he does, but he's not real politically correct," said Mr. Weicker, who has known Mr. Trump for about 16 years and worked with him on security for Fort Wayne. "When I ask him something I know I'm gonna get an honest answer. He's gonna tell me what is right, not what I want to hear, and frankly, I think that is why he is becoming more recognized as the school security safety expert in this country."

Becky Orr, a reporter for the *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle* found Mr. Trump through the Poynter Institute, a school for journalists in St. Petersburg, Fla. A daily e-mail on industry news and tips included a link to a site that listed Mr. Trump as a source for covering school shootings.

"I then went to Mr. Trump's web site to find out more about him. I also did a web search and plugged in school safety, and his name came up a lot. I called him, and he was really approachable, and knowledgeable. He doesn't mess around, and he's not afraid to say what he thinks," said Ms. Orr, who spoke with Mr. Trump about school security after newspaper employees walked unannounced into several schools in that state.

As far as Mr. Trump is concerned, hard work and honesty are part of the reason people turn to him.

"A lot of times consultants tiptoe, or they are afraid to tell their clients what they don't want to hear," Mr. Trump said. "You can't change the climate if you don't change the conversation. You have to be outspoken and politically incorrect and you have to step outside the box to become an expert in your field."

We help financial investments

SOAR

We're Zinner & Co. LLP, a full-service accounting, tax and wealth management consulting firm focused on each of our client's success. We are there with each of them every step of the way for all of their accounting, tax and wealth-management needs.

You can trust the professionals at Zinner & Co. LLP to be an essential partner for your financial success.

ZINNER & CO. LLP
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

29125 Chagrin Blvd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44122
Phone 216-831-0733
Fax 216-765-7118
www.zinnerco.com

Your success is our business.



Creating Value.



focus | resources | success

Trust the professionals at Meaden & Moore to provide expertise in employee benefit audit services



Meaden & Moore helps to protect your employee benefit and retirement plans including:

- 401(K)
- ESOP
- Health and Welfare plans
- Nonqualified executive compensation plans
- Profit-sharing plans

Meaden & Moore

Call 216-241-3272 or visit www.meadenmoore.com

Cleveland | Akron | Atlanta | Charlotte | Chicago | Columbus | Naperville | New York | Orlando | Phoenix | Pittsburgh | Wooster