

Peter Martin On Combining Passions For Business And Security

*By Nina Lincoff
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Peter Martin, CEO of AFIMAC Global, is really in the business development space, even though, on the surface, his day job could be described with one word: security. AFIMAC provides a fleet of security-related services from bodyguards to transport to mitigating kidnapping situations. But what got Martin into the security industry in the first place was a passion for business and a desire to blend security with growth.

AFIMAC and Martin are often consulted by companies looking to enter new international markets or exit markets in sustainable ways. Martin knows which economies and countries are stable, and which may be on the edge of collapse, and he and AFIMAC can provide clients with intelligence on how to safely navigate business opportunities around the globe. AFIMAC's global headquarters are in Miami.

Where are AFIMAC's offices? I'm staring right across the 836 at the Miami International Airport as we speak. Watching planes taking off is actually very soothing. You can see the massive cargo planes taking off. We relocated in 2012, and it's been very good for us. We're a global company, [so] it's a great launch point for all of our services. From a strategic standpoint, it's been great. We relocated from Cleveland.

Did you always know you were going to go into security? It wasn't quite that. I come from a family of police officers, and I knew I wanted to do something in the form of private security or law enforcement. I graduated with a law and security administration degree, and from there I got a job in corrections in Canada. I did that for about four years, but corrections is a very difficult world in which to affect change, and I wanted to do something where I could combine business passion with security passion. At that time, in the 1980s, security had a very different view, a pre-9/11 view, and it was really viewed as an impediment to business.

And were you able to merge business and security when you went into cash logistics? After 9/11, security became very popular. When I transferred into cash logistics, to a global armored car company, we had a real position to affect change. The value we brought was business-enabled, and that really sparked a passion for me not to just work in security, but in major crime, as well. There was a lot going on – kidnapping of family members, grenades being thrown at armored cars, attacks, etc. It was a real education.

What's the value of security to business today? We work with global clients, and what we bring is a different perspective. A lot of our businesses have global footprints and need to go to places that are considered dangerous like Somalia, the Ivory Coast, Brazil, Honduras, etc. We look at the strategic business values and help companies achieve their goals and help them quickly enter the areas they want to enter into.

How many countries have you been to? Personally, in excess of 80 countries.

What is your day-to-day like? My day starts out with a combination of internal business; we have six companies in our portfolio. I spend about 70 percent of my day working on internal pieces of business, helping people get to new markets, solving problems. And then the rest is dealing with emergencies. We are in the crisis business, after all.

Do companies consult with you when they're thinking about entering new markets? Yes, they do. We'll provide them with a white paper and analysis when they want to go to a new place. There are opportunities, but there may also be pushback. On the other side, sometimes companies will consult with us if they want to exit a market. For

example, if you try to pull out of Venezuela, there are potential criminal charges that could be weighed against the owner.

What do you do outside of work? Pretty much every minute outside of work is spent with my kids and my wife. We like to do very normal things like take advantage of the beach and try to get away from our smartphones.

How many phones do you have? I have three cellphones that I rotate. I have a BlackBerry for traveling to certain areas because it just works better. I have a Samsung Galaxy, and a Note Five that is excellent for marking up documents and annotating things on the move. I don't carry all three all the time, just when I'm traveling.

Peter Martin

Age: 48

Current position: CEO, AFIMAC Global

Past positions: President, AFIMAC Global; VP of Corporate Security & Investigations, Group 4 Securicor Cash Logistics

Birthplace: Brantford, Ontario

Residence: Plantation

Current boards/associations: Board, National Association of Manufacturers; Education Committee, International Security Management Association; Young Presidents' Organization

Education: Carleton University