



## Internal Investigations: Rooting Out and Preventing Fraud

There are few events more destabilizing to an organization than wrongdoing by its own employees. Theft of trade secrets and proprietary data, violations of employment contracts and company policies, vendor fraud, expense account fraud: all can damage not just the bottom line, but brand reputation.

QRI has the experience to identify patterns of fraudulent behavior and suspected bad actors. We help clients understand problems, build a case for termination, respond to regulators' requests, enforce compliance protocols, or make a referral to law enforcement. Some of our internal investigations are overt, some are, at the direction of our clients, quiet; we understand the need for discretion when a company is examining alleged bad behavior. We often collaborate with computer forensics experts and forensic accountants. And we are often hired through the General Counsel's office and work at the direction of outside counsel so any analysis and opinions are protected by the work-product privilege.

Our team of former prosecutors, investigative journalists, and cyber experts is adept at identifying, retrieving, and analyzing the often hidden data where evidence of malfeasance often resides. We also speak with critical witnesses to obtain evidence or confessions that will withstand legal review. Where appropriate, we draw on our law enforcement contacts to make referrals for prosecution.

### Case Studies

#### Bank Breach

When a client suspected that a socially-engineered breach of its corporate bank account might have been an inside job, QRI led the investigation to identify the culprit. Our team collected and analyzed critical internal documentation, including deleted digital data, and audio recordings of the perpetrator's voice. Armed with this evidence, we mapped key data points, interviewed insiders, and identified potential suspects. Ultimately, we made a successful referral to the state Attorney General.

#### Media Leak

A prominent startup turned to QRI when an anonymous detractor began planting comments about one of the company's executives in a trade publication and on social media. Our investigators interviewed witnesses to assess the validity of the accusations, and our cyber team probed the client's network to identify internet browsing activity revealing the leaker. The company terminated the detractor.

#### Mail-Theft Ring

The co-op board for an exclusive residential building hired QRI to investigate a pattern of theft that targeted residents' mail over the course of three years. Recognizing that the perpetrator could be a member of the building staff, our investigators met discreetly with resident victims, compiled data about the thefts, and assessed the total losses—approximately \$200,000, far more than the board had realized. We were able to draw connections between the postal delivery worker who serviced the building and key geographical locations where stolen checks and credit cards were cashed or used. At the board's request, we successfully referred the case to law enforcement.