



# THE PERFECT SCAM

## WHAT WE DID:

We hosted an event on February 22nd, which was billed as an investment seminar held by “Maplestock Investments”, a fake company that was created by the ASC. We hired an actor to play the role of the ‘mastermind’ – British-born financier Jonathan Fisher – and developed a detailed fake profile for him, including a website, Facebook page and LinkedIn profile. Halfway through the packed event, it was revealed to the audience that the entire seminar was a setup, designed to educate Albertans about the realities of investment fraud. The entire event was filmed, and was turned into an educational video for Fraud Prevention Month.

## HOW WE DID IT:

Everything about the fake investment opportunity – from the company’s name and logo, to the financier’s bio and the colour of his tie – was extensively researched and specifically designed to be trustworthy. We know from experience that good fraud artists are charming, convincing,

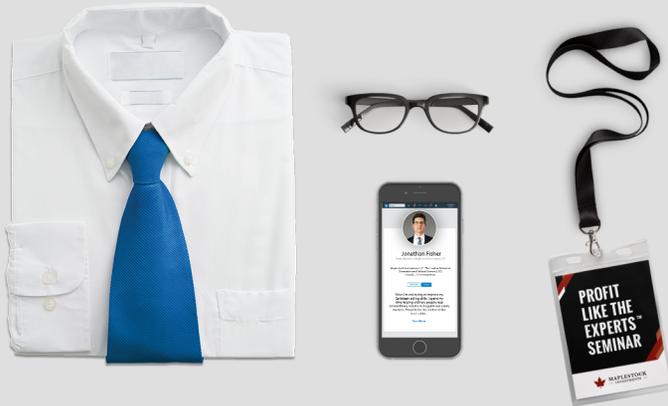
well-dressed and could be someone you know. We backed this anecdotal evidence up with hard data to create the perfect fraud. This research was not difficult to conduct, and anyone trying to appear trustworthy could access the same information.

## WHY WE DID:

Albertans continue to fall victim to investment fraud, which can have a devastating impact on a person’s life savings, relationships and general well-being. The ASC needed to do something impactful that would get Albertans’ attention. According to a survey conducted by the ASC in 2016, 21 per cent of Albertans believe they have been approached with a possible fraudulent investment. We created this campaign to educate people about the red flags of investment fraud, and ways they can protect themselves.

## CONTACT:

Nicole Tuncay  
Senior Communications Advisor, ASC  
403.297.4008



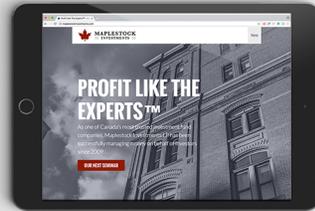
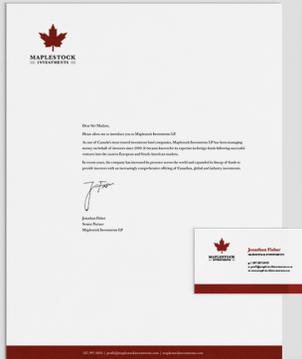
Details such as the blue tie, glasses and [LinkedIn](#) profile added to Jonathan Fisher's overall credible persona.



Attendees of the seminar received a Profit like the Experts kit.



More than 800 flyers and posters were hand-delivered to local residents leading to increased awareness.



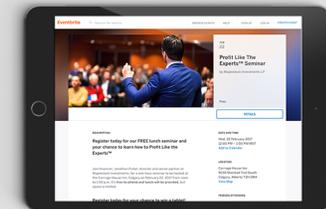
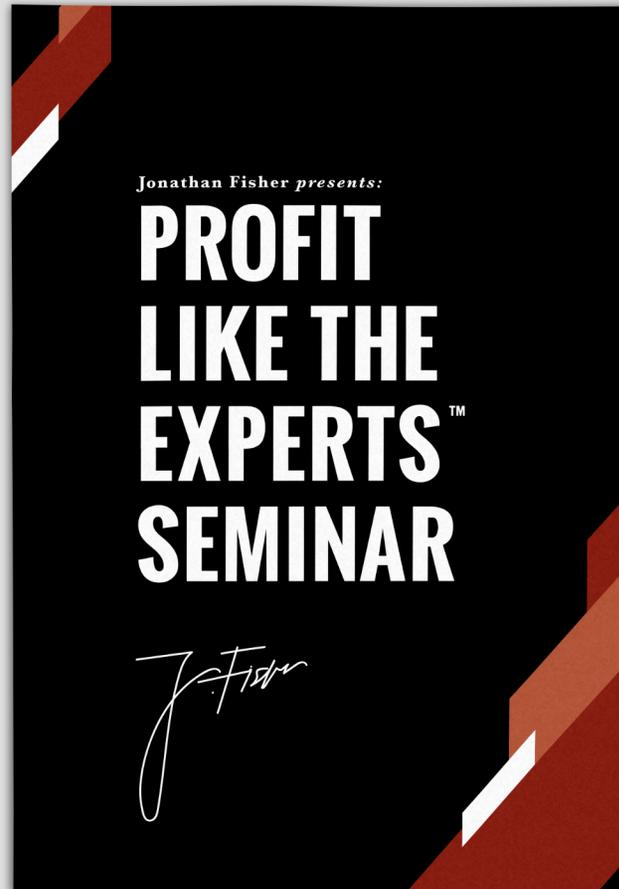
Professionally-designed stationery, business cards, and [website](#) increase credibility.



165,000 people were targeted via [Facebook](#), [Craigslist](#), and [Kijiji](#) advertising.



The majority of 1,500 people surveyed online chose Maplestock Investments as the most trustworthy company name and logo.



An [Eventbrite](#) page was created with 8,500 people accessing it and 48 registering for the event.

# RED FLAGS OF INVESTMENT FRAUD

The best way to protect yourself is to do your homework before making any investment decision, and to watch for the ‘red flags’ of investment fraud. Always check the registration of the person or company offering the investment opportunity. Generally, for someone to sell securities or offer investment advice in Alberta, they must be registered with the ASC.

The national database can be accessed at [checkfirst.ca](http://checkfirst.ca).

## 1 **GUARANTEED HIGH RETURNS – NO RISK!**

There is no such thing! No one can offer you a guarantee – all investing involves some level of risk. Usually, the higher the returns, the higher the risk.

## 2 **OFFSHORE INVESTMENT – TAX FREE!**

You can sometimes defer paying taxes, but you can’t avoid them. If you are persuaded to send your money overseas, it may be difficult, if not impossible to get back if something goes wrong.

## 3 **GREAT INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY – YOUR FRIENDS CAN’T BE WRONG!**

Yes they can! Many investment fraud victims are introduced to the scam by family, friends or co-workers. This approach relies on the trust you place in your friends and the fear of missing out on a “too good to be true” opportunity.

## 4 **INSIDER TIPS - PROFIT LIKE THE EXPERTS!**

These scams are pitched as opportunities known only to a select few who are said to be making a lot of money. The scam artist convinces you that he or she has access to this inside information that the general public does not have.

## 5 **DON’T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY – GET IN NOW!**

Scam artists use this tactic to pressure you into making a quick decision and try to exploit your fear of missing out on a valuable opportunity.

# WHAT IS THE ASC?

The Alberta Securities Commission (ASC) is the regulatory agency responsible for administering the province’s securities laws. It is entrusted with protecting investors and fostering a fair and efficient capital market in Alberta.

## **CONTACT:**

Nicole Tuncay  
Senior Communications Advisor, ASC  
403.297.4008

**CHECKFIRST**

**A|S|C**  
Alberta Securities Commission