

GTSCConnection



Advocating for small and mid-sized companies in the Federal security marketplace

Why Small and Mid-Size? Quality, Innovation and Value



The Small Business Act established the goal of awarding 23 percent of federal contracts to small businesses. In the last several years, we've seen an increased emphasis on meeting these goals and more fully utilizing the quality, innovation and value brought to

federal missions by the small and mid-sized business community. Not only because it's the right thing to do—because it's the smart thing to do.

As our feature articles show, innovative entrepreneurs are bringing their expertise, creativity and agility to the federal market to solve persistent security challenges, improve efficiencies and achieve our homeland/security missions.

Quality. Small and mid-size CEOs are close to their customers and provide an agile business environment. Often agencies are working directly with the leaders of these businesses, those who can quickly change and adapt to ensure the highest quality products and services. These CEOs understand their evaluation is only as good as their last contract. Their commitment to the highest level of quality is a win for them and a win for the taxpayer.

Innovation. Creativity, inventiveness and innovation are born of necessity. Small and mid-sized companies are started by entrepreneurs who believe they can do something better and/or have the next great idea. And they are willing to risk everything to execute it. Their passion and creativity is unsurpassed. Not only is their company concept based on innovation, their pursuit of excellence also provides the environment for constantly creating value.

Value. Small and mid-sized companies are close enough to their own missions that they really understand what can be done—and at what cost. For their own enterprise to survive and grow, they must find ways to achieve mission smarter and better. Because of this perspective they constantly find ways to re-engineer, repurpose and reinvent to bring the greatest ROI for the customer.

Delivering effective and efficient solutions at a better price is the space in which small and mid-sized businesses thrive. Just tune in here to learn how they do it.

Kristina Tanasichuk is chief executive officer of the Government Technology & Services Coalition. She is also president and founder of the organization, Women in Homeland Security.

Virtual World Meets Cyber Security Awareness

Three Wire Systems, LLC and Teleplace worked with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and their partners at the U.S. Departments of State and Agriculture to create an innovative, engaging alternative to traditional two-dimensional cybersecurity awareness training. Using three-dimensional virtual world technology, Three Wire created a cybersecurity training scenario that incorporated game mechanics and collaborative exercises, tested for up to 16 people at a time. Upon entry to the virtual training center, participants assembled in a virtual theater where they watched an introductory video that provided key information they needed to complete the scenario. An instructor then guided them through the exercise in the virtual world.

Part "Clue" and part treasure hunt, the exercise demonstrated the efficacy of virtual collaboration environments like Teleplace as distance learning and distributed collaboration tools. Test users reported that they appreciated the combination of game mechanics and dedicated instructors.

Learn more about Three Wire's virtual world collaboration solutions at www.threewiresys.com.

By Dan Frank, CEO, Three Wire Systems, LLC 



Lion's Den Member

Future Thought

FUTURE THOUGHT will raise an issue in the community to generate comment and discussion in our online community: www.GTSCoalition.com. We invite you to weigh in and join the debate.



What do YOU think about the future of 8(a) Certification?

Named for Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act, the 8(a) program was created to help small and disadvantaged businesses compete in the marketplace. It also helps these companies gain access to federal and private procurement markets. Learn more at www.sba.gov/content/8a-business-development.

These tough economic times force us to take a hard look at everything, including how we encourage and support small business. Some growing small business owners believe that the term "Economic Risk" as posed by SBA should be revisited for 8(a) certification. They believe that SBA should provide a waiver to continue allowing 8(a) certification for those firms that are growing and contribute to the economy and the community by establishing good business practices and investing in their infrastructure. For example, if a small business has proven past performances for a period of three to four years, up-to date tax returns, a facility clearance, an established line of credit, a corporate certification such as CMMI or ISO, and continued sales and revenue in excess of \$1 to \$3 million after year four, that firm should be granted a special waiver to 8(a) Certification.

Barbara A. Gray is CEO & President of Gray Matters Technology Services
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What are your top three challenges working with federal agencies?

Send your answers to josh@gtscoalition.com

Saving Time...Saving Money for DHS

Highlight Technologies is helping to modernize the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Immigration and Customs Enforcement Data Warehouse. In support of prime contractor Northrop Grumman, Highlight enhances and maintains the data model, develops reports and helps to implement additional data sources.

Highlight Technologies improved the performance of a critical, high-visibility report for ICE. Highlight staff analyzed the report, identified design weaknesses, and re-architected the queries, schemas, mappings and relationships used by the report. We reduced the time to generate the report from two days to approximately three hours, and were able to eliminate intermediate manual processes. Highlight's enhancements saved time, contractor resources, and reduced risk of human error in generating this high-profile report, which is disseminated at the Departmental level and beyond.

By Rebecca Andino, CEO of Highlight Technologies, LLC 

Business and Academia Key to Continued R&D

Large-scale cuts in government budgets at the state and national level combined with a slow economic recovery have had a significant impact on higher education, particularly in their ability to conduct innovative research for our nation's homeland security efforts. Strategic partnerships between colleges and universities, particularly those designated as Centers for Excellence by the Department of Homeland Security, and small and mid-sized companies like those in the Government Technology and Service Consortium (GTSC) would provide significant benefits to the country's security mission.

How? For companies, partnership can:

- **Ensure a pipeline of skilled and adequately trained work force.** Partnerships allow companies to orient students to the business environment and its operations.
- **Provide new windows on research.** Joint efforts can smooth technology transfer and enhance the innovation process. It also could provide these companies access to state of the art facilities for R&D that they may not otherwise have.
- **Improve real-world applications.** Alliances increase industry's ability to influence research directions and educational programs to reflect the "real world" of security and provide feedback to universities on corporate research and training needs.
- **Improve contracting opportunities.** These collaborations can also help businesses win contracts and/or grants with federal/state agencies by partnering with educational organizations.

For Higher education partnerships can:

- **Gain additional revenue.** Companies can fund faculty salaries, research, and educational programs. Further, income could accrue from patents, successful commercialization, and published materials.
- **Access to technical and physical resources.** Companies can provide real-world resources that are not otherwise available to the university.
- **Enhance curriculum.** Alliances can offer faculty access to industry projects, furnish students with internships, or provide part-time employment.
- **Hands-on experience.** Business partnerships provide students and faculty important hands-on experience that cannot be gained in the classroom.
- **Enhancing the university's offerings.** Attracting business professionals to participate in the educational programs of a university provides a welcome source of adjunct faculty, particularly in such areas as computer science and engineering.

In our cash-strapped environment there are few win-wins. However, partnership between universities and small and mid-sized businesses benefits academia, students, companies, and our nation's security mission.

By Linda Kiltz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi



mission CRITICAL management

You Won That Big Contract: Now What?

With that new contract your business may quickly outgrow the lean team, ease of operations, and collegial management style that made you successful. How do you make the needed changes smoothly, with high adoption, and become even better than you were?

1. Begin with a strategy. Leading for change is complex and requires long-term focus and an organized approach. Your strategy must take a systems view, incorporating both the human side of change as well as infrastructure, systems and training needs. By developing a road-map for the changes you'll be making, you can ensure a smoother transition and a higher adoption rate while easing some of the anxiety that is a natural part of any change.

2. Build resilience in your teams. For change to be accepted and to be embedded, personal and team resilience are required. While you may not be able to turn around your most rigid employee, the good news is that there are key characteristics that resilient people possess that you can train for and build. By incorporating key resilience-building initiatives into your overall change strategy you'll not only help your people through the pending changes, but prepare your organization for the future.

3. Communicate, communicate, communicate! In the absence of information, people will "make it up." A consistent approach to clearly communicating about the pending changes is a critical yet often overlooked step in any change management strategy. Setting up feedback loops to ensure two-way communication will enable you to not only tell your employees how they will be affected, but allow you to involve them in developing creative solutions. (Tip: This is also a great strategy for heading off resistance and building buy-in.)

4. Lead by example. Great leaders inspire, motivate, and guide their employees toward a common goal. Clearly articulating the case for change while providing an inspired vision for the future is a critical component of any change effort. Developing a guiding coalition made up of key employees and your management team is a great way to lead the effort and model the desired behaviors.

By Mary Claire Burick, Founder, MCStrategy

