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The Most Powerful Name in Corporate News

High-end Consulting for US Government providing Engineers, Counter Terrorism SMEs, Information Technology Support, Linguistics and Cyber Experts



John Fitzgerald
 President & CEO
 FTS International, LLC

CEOCFO: *Mr. Fitzgerald, what is the focus at FTS International?*

Mr. Fitzgerald: FTS is a high-end consulting firm for the US government. We provide organizational conflict free, bias free, independent consulting for the government.

CEOCFO: *What does the no bias mean?*

Mr. Fitzgerald: We do not develop systems or products for the government. We actually advise them on science and technology missions and we will advise them with independent modeling and simulation analysis to help them come to the right decision on what the mission really needs. There is no conflict of interest relative to providing them advice on what their strategic decision should be.

CEOCFO: *You mentioned high-end. What goes into that description for you?*

Mr. Fitzgerald: We hire many subject matter experts that are top experts of their fields. Almost all of my engineers have PhDs in electrical, aerospace, and mechanical engineering, and they have worked at the big firms out there that develop national security systems across the country. I am bringing in advisors who can help the government and who have done that before. That is the high-end side of some of the support. Additionally, we have people that are fluent in different languages and have advanced degrees from some of the best universities in the nation to help them do analytical work to ensure decision and policy makers have the right information to make the right decisions.

CEOCFO: *Would you give us an example of the range of your projects?*

Mr. Fitzgerald: On the engineering side, one example would be the government needs to acquire a new, very complicated technical system. What FTS does is work side by side with the government to look at alternatives to what is needed and help build the requirement for that technical system, which can be very complicated and require analysis modeling or simulation to see how to refine the requirement. Then we will help the government go through the process of putting that out for bid to vendors to propose technical solutions on those products and we will even advise on source selection and then oversee the project as it is being built.

CEOCFO: *With so much change in technology, how do you come up with a system that is the best with what is available today when down the line, there could be some changes that would have a major effect?*

Mr. Fitzgerald: One of the capabilities or qualities of FTS is we are on the cutting edge of technology innovation so we can help identify for the government what is coming out, the trend, and how it should be taken into consideration in the solution space. Therefore, when the government taxpayers' money is being used to buy some big, complicated system, we are getting the most bang for the buck in something that will endure and not be obsolete.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned over the years in how to work effectively with government agencies?*

Mr. Fitzgerald: For me it is always working, especially in our fields, with honesty, transparency, integrity, and teaming. I often say, especially in our world as consultants, most of our staff sits side by side with the government in their daily mission. We are really invited guests into their place of business, their mission areas, and project offices. We have to be in there as a trusted partner. We always work with complete transparency and the highest integrity. As consultants, our only focus is on the mission. We are not there to grow business in the sense of selling them something. We are not selling them software or hardware, we are in there selling them how to accomplish very important, strategic needs. We help save the government money with most of the missions we support. They love that we are inventive enough to identify where

there are areas we can increase risk a little to save a lot of money or we cannot take any risks. We need to make sure our resources are spent on the right thing to bring down those risks. That is one of the key things I think I have learned.

CEOCFO: Will you tell us about your work in counter-terrorism?

Mr. Fitzgerald: I cannot say much there except we are side by side with the government and we have some of the best analysts out there to really bring talent to the government's mission.

CEOCFO: Do agencies turn to you directly or do you still need to go through the standard bidding process? What is involved in working on different projects?

Mr. Fitzgerald: You definitely have to go through RFP process to win contracts. There are some circumstances when some missions are so sensitive they might be able to go directly to you.

CEOCFO: How do you decide what to bid on?

Mr. Fitzgerald: For me, I often talk about enduring missions as well as the most significant and impactful missions the nation needs to work with. From my perspective, if it is a really hard problem, then you need our company on it because we truly do provide the best and the brightest to solve hard national security problems. How do we do it better than others? We are employee owned and operated. Everyone I hire has become a real member of the company and takes a great deal of pride in making sure they represent these incredibly hard missions without bias and with technical or analytical expertise, which is necessary and required on these important topics.

"In our world, we wear lanyards for our badges. One thing I have always said is, if anyone is wearing my lanyard, I want people to immediately recognize that person is confident, talented, trustworthy, and they can get the job done. That is the kind of feedback I get today about the people who are members of my company. They cannot believe what great people we hire and the amount of talent we bring."- John Fitzgerald

CEOCFO: Was employee owned the concept from day one?

Mr. Fitzgerald: Yes.

CEOCFO: How is FTS International better today?

Mr. Fitzgerald: Back to transparency, even with teammates, we are mostly a sub contractor. We have to make sure we are doing business honestly with them. Some of the contracts which are bid are very large where a smaller company like FTS cannot go after them. We have to have great relationships not just with the government but with the other major, larger companies in the area. In our world of consulting, unbiased support, and independent analysis for the government, if you do not do business with integrity, then you are going to have a bad reputation and you will not be doing business.

CEOCFO: What is different as you approach the problems? Does it seem harder to figure out because there seems so many bad possibilities that come along?

Mr. Fitzgerald: For me, just looking at it from FTS's perspective, sequestration has been a real risk to the nation. Sequestration and the budget cuts which have occurred have driven the market in a way that the government is being forced to try to do the same missions they have done but with less resources and they move to contracting that does not value experts like the type I hire. For example, you are not going to get a 20 year, PhD in electrical engineering at a lowest price technically acceptable (LPTA) contract. This term of LPTA contraction has come out where the government only has so much money but still wants the same mission done, so they are going to make cost just as important as technical. I see that as a huge risk. Now you are bringing in people who are not qualified, do not have the experience, and are trying to advise the government on significantly strategic problems.

CEOCFO: How do you navigate the waters as a company in this situation?

Mr. Fitzgerald: I personally try to work with senior government employees so that they understand the tough situation LPTA contraction puts FTS in and speak to them about how instead of worrying about an LPTA contract that is 100 people, they should focus on a best value, which might only need 50 to do the same job as 100.

CEOCFO: FTS was recognized with a GovStar award. Would you tell us about that?

Mr. Fitzgerald: Smart CEO nominated us for the GovStar award for best up and coming small business in the local D.C. area, and against three other nominees, we won.

CEOCFO: What might be different a year from now?

Mr. Fitzgerald: What's next for us is I have hired some senior government retirees who I am proud of and who were good friends all my years of supporting the government. Together, we are going to try to build real innovation, continue to focus

on productive technologies that can help the government do business smarter, faster, and in our areas, smarter than the rest of the competitive world.

CEOCFO: *What should people remember about FTS International?*

Mr. Fitzgerald: In our world, we are wear lanyards for our badges. One thing I have always said is, if anyone is wearing my lanyard, I want people to immediately recognize that person is confident, talented, trustworthy, and they can get the job done. That is the kind of feedback I get today about the people who are members of my company. They cannot believe what great people we hire and the amount of talent we bring.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine



FTS International, LLC

For more information visit:

www.fts-intl.com

Contact:

John Fitzgerald

703-225-7709

Corporate@fts-intl.com