

Benefits and Federal Contract Partner for Building Proper Fringe Rates and Eliminating Costs from G&A



Jim Campbell - President

About Axim Fringe Solutions Group, LLC:

Our mission is simple, but our resolve to achieve that mission is unwavering and truly sets Axim FSG apart from any other firm in the country. The mission is:
Remain 100% consultative and non-biased when working for our clients.

Provide correct, accurate, and detailed information in a timely manner so our clients are the most informed and well educated regardless of industry or job type.

Create realistic "shared expectations" for our clients so that we provide what was promised and exceed our clients expectations of what was possible.

Always acknowledge that our clients are our partners and we need to first understand their business in order to accurately provide the expertise they need and deserve.

The goal of any company is to grow and succeed, but we take that one step further in that we want to assist all of our clients in their growth. By providing leading edge technology, a truly consultative approach, and a staff interaction that understands our clients business and practices, Axim FSG HELPS OUR CLIENTS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS!

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

CEOCFO: Mr. Campbell, would you tell us about Axim Fringe Solutions Group?

Mr. Campbell: Unlike other companies, we have devised a business model and practice around being a contract partner to companies that are subject to Service Contract Act and Davis-Bacon Act, required wage termination contracts. What also sets us apart from other companies is that we are a contractor, not just a vendor. Our expertise is in both benefits and federal contracting. Therefore, we know how to build benefit rates specifically for our clients and we know how to help them eliminate costs from G&A (General & Administrative) overhead. We build proper fringe rates using the mandated fringes so the contractor's employees get the most out of the fringe dollars that they earn every month. In addition, with the option of our service fees coming from fringe dollars, it allows us to have zero impact to the contractor's direct cost structure. That in a way makes AximFSG a true no-cost partner where we only add to our client's profitability by helping them get a better rate structure without sacrificing margin.

CEOCFO: Do your prospective clients understand that immediately or is there an aha moment when they understand the value?

Mr. Campbell: It varies based on who we are talking to. In HR, whom we typically work with when it comes to a benefits play, they initially do not understand our business model because they are less concerned about pricing. When you talk to a CFO, contracting officer, business development person, etc., they see our value proposition almost immediately. When we partner with a consulting firm that handles benefits, well then there can be a great deal of education as expected. For the broker market in general for benefits, they have very little idea since they do not understand contracting. Truth be told, the companies that would be considered our competition do not understand our model either and quite often they have called us to ask for help in order to sell their products.

CEOCFO: How did you come upon this concept and why were you sure it would work?

Mr. Campbell: My aha moment was that there were so many companies doing the same exact thing and they all used to work at the same place. Some people got smart and decided to create their own system by essentially stealing from their previous years experience at xyz company. I just thought with everybody doing the same thing and none of the contracting clients being happy about working with them then there has to be a better way to look at this. During a follow-up surgery from my injury in the military and I started looking into the FAR (Federal Acquisitions Regulation) and I had many people asking me about this prevailing wage thing and if I knew about it. Fortunately, I happened to meet a gentleman with a lot of experience in this industry who showed me where in the FAR I could do something more impactful.

CEOCFO: *Would you describe a common engagement for you and then something a little out of the ordinary?*

Mr. Campbell: The actual engagement is quite fluid. Most of the people involved, once we get to the right person, understand the fringe process, how to do the buildup and those types of things. We receive very little push back where people say they have a problem and they have to get low in this LPTA environment that they are working in but they cannot sacrifice anymore. They have eliminated as much G&A or overhead that they can and they have their traditional benefits that they are offering. They ask us how we can help. We go in and show them our platform, our understanding of the benefits world, and what benefits should be in place in what parts of the country. We show them how to properly project for a strategy one to four years out. We usually show that we can save a company between three and five percent of their projected cost in a contract. If they happen to use us as a teaming partner or subcontractor, we show them how they can meet small business set aside or services-disabled veteran-owned set-aside requirements and increase their profitability even further. It really depends on what their need is at that time. For example, we find with the large companies of fifteen or twenty thousand employees that they really understand their benefits but they cannot meet their small business or SDVOSB set aside requirements. Maybe they cannot find out what to do with this administrative burden known as fringe clients. The smaller contractors may have no idea about DoL or Affordable Care Act compliance and no idea about their benefit requirements. Large or small company, we can easily walk them through how to build a better and more consistent program in a day. They all start to understand it no matter what their need is.

“What also sets us apart from other companies is that we are also a contractor, not just a vendor. Our expertise is in both benefits and federal contracting.”- Jim Campbell

CEOCFO: *What are you looking at that the company would not even think goes into the mix?*

Mr. Campbell: The basic benefits things such as contributions and 401ks as well as how they are administrating leave and holidays. We look at out-year planning for their active contracts and their termination dates and how they will affect their renewals year over year. We look at the total value of contracts that they have not won and why they lost or where they are falling down. We can show them how if they had done contract xyz in partnership with us they would have won. We look at it more than just a benefits play and the total cost of doing business. We try to understand the business that they are in, the needs of their employees, their goals as well as where they want to grow and the agencies they are interested in working. We try to build solutions and strategies on a contract by contract basis.

CEOCFO: *How do you distinguish between what a company thinks they want, says they want to accomplish and what they really want?*

Mr. Campbell: We try to cut through the BS as soon as possible. Of course, everybody wants to make money in this business, so we tell them upfront that if they are interested in winning and they want to make money out of this contract to grow then this is what we can show them how to do.

CEOCFO: *How do you go about realizing what the solution should be?*

Mr. Campbell: Based on who they are and what they are looking for, that experience with that individual client is going to be specific. No two clients, even if they were working on the same contract, are going to be the same. And our experience would be different because you could have a fifty-person company going after a contract and a twenty-person company in different states and their benefits are completely different as well as the internal structures and how they go about payroll. It is a lot of play by ear and staying flexible enough to make quick changes. It is about understanding their specific situation and helping them with this price to win strategy without suffering and possibly losing money because they did not know what they were bidding.

CEOCFO: *Are people surprised that you are able to do this?*

Mr. Campbell: Everyday! I guy told me he had been doing this for 35 years and he had never heard about anything like this; I think this is the most important part. I have no problem proving the effectiveness because we designed our business model specifically for this and I have spent a lot of time and money on legal to prove it.

CEOCFO: *Are there times when there is nothing you can do for a company?*

Mr. Campbell: We came across a large player the other day that had everything under control and I told them I would be wasting their time and money. Some companies we are not a right fit. It can be a tough decision to make, but they respect our honesty.

CEOCFO: *How do companies find you?*

Mr. Campbell: We are word of mouth. We have expanded our digital marketing efforts greatly since we brought somebody in March and she has helped grow the business and our visibility tremendously over the last four months. Everything else has been word of mouth. Somebody might have lost a bid and they saw that we were on the winning team or they have heard about us because I am in the metro DC area. I sit on the national board of the Services Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business Council. I write a ton and read even more and I comment through things like LinkedIn. We

partner with some tremendous law firms that have used us as a resource. We have strategic partnerships with every one of the large consulting houses including some small benefits agencies across the country.

CEOCFO: *How do you stay ahead of potential government changes?*

Mr. Campbell: Something I heard a long time ago was stay two years ahead of the curve and you will always see the accident in front of you. The traditional thousand dollar hammer in government spending cannot continue in a down market.

CEOCFO: *Often it appears that the government does not care about spending, so how were you sure about cost-cutting now?*

Mr. Campbell: I think mostly I am just lucky and carefree and maybe I take too many chances. I had that ingrained feeling in me that there is a pendulum to government contracting and I have listened to people who are much smarter and more tenured than I am and they say it swings every five to seven years. They go from very tight to spend, spend, spend, back to very tight and then spend, spend, spend. I saw the pendulum swinging back to the very tight stage.

CEOCFO: *Where do you get your enthusiasm-it comes through loud and clear?*

Mr. Campbell: Everyone asks me that. I had the most positive mom in the history of the world. A nuclear bomb could have blown up in the back yard and she would have been like "That's a pretty light." She was always happy and never let people get her down. We went through our trials and tribulations but the one thing she always said is take a shot. She said do not live in the rear-view mirror and if it does not work then it did not work. I am not afraid to take shots and fail, so I just keep moving and go forward with conviction once I found something I wanted to do. If you like it you keep going and if you do not like it, just stop it and move on.

CEOCFO: *What might be different a year or two down the road at Axim Fringe Solutions Group?*

Mr. Campbell: It is going to be different because the healthcare landscape is greatly changing every day. We are going to have to be more consistent with our clients and our planning strategy so we are going to have to be much more in-tune to the global market and how many people are doing business overseas as well as people from overseas that want to do business in the US. We are going to have to focus more on the technological aspects in getting more folks influenced that way, so there is going to be expenses for that. Many folks in the industry that we focus on do not have internet or cell phones and they do not track things about their pay or compensation or benefits. Education and technological influence are going to be very big and ultimately having the right staff and with that comes time and cost. In a couple years we will be much the same firm with more muscle hopefully.

BIO: Jim Campbell, President

Upon an Honorable Discharge for Medical Reasons from the United States Marine Corps, Jim went to work for United Healthcare as the MD Small Group Representative. Jim was charged with bringing the UHC platform for small businesses back into the area. After a successful term with UHC, Jim went to work on the private brokerage side with a small area benefits and financial planning firm building a solid business and relationships. After 4 years, Jim left that small firm and started Integrated Benefits Group, LLC in January of 2007. In 2011, the IBG, LLC name was changed to Axim Global Strategies Group, LLC. Also in 2011, Jim started Axim Fringe Solutions Group, LLC in order to service the government contracting community that have Service Contract Act and Davis Bacon Act wage determination requirements.

Poised to build a Top 50 privately held firm, the Axim team remains committed to working for each client in a completely transparent and consultative manner, with the only goal being the accomplishment of our CLIENTS INITIATIVES.

Axim currently partners with some of the premier contracting names in the world as well as the industry leaders in HR, Compliance, Technology, and Finance. The commitment to always "stay ahead of the curve" and provide client specific solutions as a profitability partner allows the Axim Solution to provide what no other firm, regardless of size, can provide.



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