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## A Consulting Firm Offering an Extensive Portfolio in the Service Areas of Privacy and Security Compliance for the Healthcare Industry, CynergisTek Brings Relevant, Practical Insights and Guidance to Clients in a Disciplined and Reliable Manner

### Business Services IT Security Consulting

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**Michael H. McMillan**  
CEO

#### BIO:

Mac McMillan, FHIMSS, CISM is co-founder and CEO of CynergisTek, Inc., a firm specializing in the areas of information security and regulatory compliance in healthcare. He is the current Chair of the HIMSS Privacy & Security Policy Task Force. Mr. McMillan brings over 30 years of combined intelligence, security countermeasures and consulting experience to his position from both Government and pri-

vate sector positions. He has worked in the Healthcare industry since his retirement from the federal government in 2000 and has contributed regularly to organizations such as HIMSS, HCCA, AHIA, AHIMA, AAHSA, HFMA and AHLA and contributes regularly to the thought leadership around data security in healthcare. He served as Director of Security for two separate Defense Agencies, and sat on numerous interagency intelligence and security countermeasures committees while serving in the US Government. He is the former Chair, HIMSS Information Systems Security Working Group, and the HIMSS Privacy & Security Committee. He sits on the HIT Exchange and HCPro Editorial Advisory Boards, as well as the HealthTech Industry Advisory Board. He has contributed to more than 300 articles and postings in Healthcare IT magazines, healthcare IT blogs and other healthcare newsletters, etc. He presents regularly at conferences and other events, and was a contributing author to the HIMSS book, Information Security in Healthcare: Managing Risk. Mr. McMillan holds a Master of Arts degree in national security and strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College and a Bachelor of Science degree in education from Texas A&M University. He is a graduate of the of the Senior Officials in National Security program at the JF Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a 1993/4 Excellence in Government Fellow. He is retired from the U.S. Marine Corps.

#### About CynergisTek:

CynergisTek is a leading provider of information security management, regulatory compliance, IT audit, secu-

rity technology selection and implementation, and IT infrastructure architecture and design services and solutions for the healthcare, financial services and real estate industries. We offer an extensive portfolio of solutions in these core areas. We bring relevant and practical insights and guidance to our clients, we are disciplined in our methods, responsible stewards of our clients' resources, and generous in our service. For more information, visit [www.cynergistek.com](http://www.cynergistek.com).

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

**CEOCFO:** Mr. McMillan, what is the concept at CynergisTek?

**Mr. McMillan:** We are a consulting firm that provides privacy and security compliance services and solutions for the healthcare industry.

**CEOCFO:** Would you tell us about what you offer and how it is different than others?

**Mr. McMillan:** There are a number of security vendors in the market. We, on the other hand, are a very traditional security vendor that has chosen to specialize in the healthcare industry. For the last 10 years, that has been our focus. Our advantage for customers is that we are a company that has performed and delivered hundreds of privacy and security services into the healthcare market. We have a consultant staff that is not only certified with respect to their professions but many of them have also served in privacy, security compliance and audit roles in healthcare organizations. They understand healthcare in a detailed way. That makes a real difference. For

instance, when we do business in children's hospitals the first thing they want to know is whether we have done business in other children's hospitals and the answer is "yes." The same goes for academic medical centers, large health systems and rural health systems. It is meaningful to the industry to work with people who are not only at the top of their game with respect to their chosen profession—in our case privacy and security as it relates to information systems—but also understand their environment.

**CEOCFO:** What are some of the challenges and unknown components to security that you are able to identify and protect against?

**Mr. McMillan:** Healthcare is a very unique industry in that its culture is one of openness and support. You go to hospitals and expect that the doors are going to be open and that you are going to be cared for. At the same time, individuals also have an expectation of some level of privacy around their information. There is a struggle that exists between being an open environment and at the same time being able to appropriately address data security and privacy. It is a balancing act to manage on a personal and professional level. Healthcare is also unique because as an industry, other than the primary electronic health record, there is little regulation around developing IT systems or applications. Anyone who has skills as a developer can write a program and create the next tools or systems for healthcare with no real standard they have to adhere to in regards to privacy and security. You have healthcare providers who have literally hundreds, if not thousands, of products, systems and applications that are presented to them that may or may not meet their regulatory requirements. At the same time, healthcare today is one of the most regulated industries in America. There are many competing forces with respect to those regulations that they have to uphold. It is a complex, challenging environment to build a successful security program that does a good job of balancing those different forces.

**CEOCFO:** In general, is the healthcare industry aware of your history?

**Mr. McMillan:** An overwhelming number of folks we work with and who seek us out are looking for someone who has expertise and experience. We still generate a large portion of our business based on referrals and references. One of the things we hear over and over again from our clients is that they appreciate working with us because we recognize and understand the environments that we work in and we have something to add of value. By focusing on this industry, we gained a unique ability to create a body of knowledge that we are able to share with all of our customers. When we run into a situation, problem or challenge, we have seen it somewhere else before and we have several ways to deal with those issues. The ability to share that kind of practical, experiential information is invaluable because it speeds up the learning curve for

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them and makes it easier for them to deal with things in a confident manner, knowing they have the advantage of lessons learned.

**CEOCFO:** What is the key to successfully implementing a system? What are the lessons you have learned over time to ease the process?

**Mr. McMillan:** One of the biggest lessons that is in nearly every single instance when implementing a potentially successful system, is to treat the system as simply a technical issue, problem or IT project. Almost every system we have in a healthcare environment may be managed or implemented by IT, but IT is not the group who uses it. To be successful with implementations and systems, we learned long ago to focus on everyone who is involved with that system. It is not just the technology—it is the process and people. With our partners, we let them focus on the technology and solution in terms of implementing it in the environment. We worry about the

processes around the system that ultimately make it successful. We find that when folks deploy a new solution or technology and do not spend the time to embrace the workflow issues in the backend, they end up with expensive shelf-ware—a system that is implemented that users never quite understand to derive value from or use properly. That is a waste of technology and dollars.

**CEOCFO:** How do you reach potential customers?

**Mr. McMillan:** The biggest way that we reach customers is through educational events. We participate in various healthcare related associations. I do a lot of workshops and public speaking around security and privacy issues. We find that many of our clients like the fact that when they come in and engage with us, there is a transfer of knowledge and they are dealing with a partner that understands not only the industry, but the regulations and can teach them about successful implementation.

**CEOCFO:** Once you implement a system, what is the ongoing connection?

**Mr. McMillan:** That is another lesson learned that we derived directly from this industry. We learned several years ago that most of our CIOs are not interested in someone coming in, implementing a system and walking away. They want someone who is going to be with them after the system has been implemented or the service has been delivered. Long ago, we made a commitment that whenever we do a project at a hospital, whether it is a onetime project or an ongoing relationship, we will stay with them afterwards for a minimum of one year. We are always available to answer questions, review outcomes, and discuss aspects of the project or challenges that may arise.

**CEOCFO:** How is business these days?

**Mr. McMillan:** This year has literally been our best year ever. It started last quarter of last year and it has stayed strong so far through this portion of this year. I contribute much of our

success to the audit activity from OCR last year as well as the Omnibus Rule that recently came out and some of the other new regulations. We are seeing a real upswing in the amount of investments organizations are putting on privacy and security today.

**CEOCFO:** What makes CynergisTek unique to investors and people in the business community?

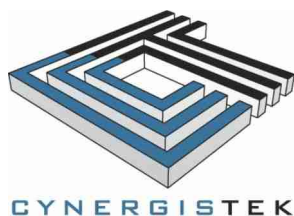
**Mr. McMillan:** We are unique because of our focus and expertise in this par-

ticular industry. If you are looking for someone who truly understands what it means to be compliant in healthcare and what it means to protect the data in systems, we are the right company. That has been a real differentiator for us and I cannot overstate that enough.

**CEOCFO:** Final thoughts?

**Mr. McMillan:** There is still a tremendous amount of growth for privacy and security in healthcare despite the fact that we have seen a real upswing in

investment and focus on security this year. We are still a long ways away from where we need to be and have a tremendous gap between where organizations should be and where they are today. There is a tremendous amount of opportunity out there for anyone who is interested in serving this industry and doing it right.



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