

Strong Customer Service has IT Services Firm, Highlight Technologies, LLC positioned to Continue Steady Growth delivering Program Management Support, Software and Systems Development Support and Security and Privacy Service to Federal Agencies

**Federal government
IT services sector
Technology
IT Support Services**

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**Rebecca Andino
CEO**

About

Highlight Technologies, LLC:

Highlight Technologies delivers innovative solutions to help agencies efficiently and appropriately manage critical and sensitive information.

Our core services are program management support, system and software development support, and information security and privacy.

We deliver these services with deep technical expertise, strong management and dedicated customer service.

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

CEOCFO: Ms. Andino, what is the focus of Highlight Technologies?

Ms. Andino: Highlight Technologies is an IT services firm. We provide program management support, software and systems development support and information, and security and privacy services to federal agencies.

CEOCFO: Why the decision to work with federal agencies?

Ms. Andino: We were formed by people that have a lot of experience supporting federal agencies, so we wanted to leverage our experience and provide that experience to government agencies at a very good value.

CEOCFO: What are some of the challenges of working with government agencies that you have learned to address and overcome?

Ms. Andino: In terms of the federal contracting environment, we are in a very uncertain time with respect to the federal budget. Therefore, we have had to adjust our staffing and forecasting to accommodate the government budget cycle.

CEOCFO: Can you give us a more specific idea of an agencies that you are working with and what you are doing with them day to day or what you are setting up for them?

Ms. Andino: For one government customer we are contracted to provide information security supports services. What we have done is help to convert the project into a perform-

ance-based contract. We have developed service level agreements and performance metrics that we report on, on a weekly and monthly basis. That has helped to demonstrate the value that our team provides to the agency.

CEOCFO: What are some of the areas that you bring a high level of expertise to that maybe other companies are not? What is the differentiator?

Ms. Andino: First and foremost, our company is very customer focused. If you ask any one of our customers about our performance, they would say that we are very responsive and we provide a high quality staff to each of our projects.

CEOCFO: Security is a huge issue everywhere. In terms of the services that you are providing, what does Highlight Technologies know that allows you to really get the job done?

Ms. Andino: We provide certified CISSP and other security certified staff that are appropriate to whatever security project that we have. We understand the federal certification and accreditation process and the requirements that are used to govern information security programs in government agencies. We have really in depth knowledge of what the government security requirements are. We hire staff and use processes that meet those needs.

CEOCFO: It indicates on your website www.highlighttech.com that you seem to have a very steady stream of government contracts. Are you bidding for these contracts? You mentioned being able to do things at a lower

cost; is that a primary concern when you are awarded a contract or do they understand your level of expertise as well? What is the main reason that they are choosing you?

Ms. Andino: Price is very important in this environment. With the current economic situation all the government budgets are getting reduced, therefore we do not take pricing competition lightly. However, in the awards that we have received recently we were told that we were selected because we have competitive pricing, but also because we offered the best solution. In our last two awards that we won we were told that: it was clear that we understood what the customer was looking for, we provided people that clearly met the needs of each of those projects, and that we provided strong management solutions that made the customers feel as if they were getting a good technical solution with a low risk management approach.

CEO CFO: When you implement a project how much time are actually spending on the location and how much customization?

Ms. Andino: From my project management training I have learned that the time that spend in planning a project is going to be critical in the outcome of your project, whether you are successful or whether you are not as successful. Therefore, we do provide a lot of time up front meeting customers to understand requirements and develop clear project plans that all the stakeholders understand. This is not necessarily billable time; this is time that I spend as the chief executive of the company providing oversight to

our contracts. That being said, much of our work that we do is performed on the government site. We will hire staff that performs information security and information technology services on site and they are required to be there full time. We have a lot of interaction in up front and during weekly meetings. We tend to have weekly calls with our teams. On almost all of our projects, except for the ones that are not located locally, we have monthly in person meetings with the customer.

CEO CFO: When you are evaluating staff to take on, over and above the technical expertise, how do you eval-

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uate whether they will really be able to work well with your clients?

Ms. Andino: We look for people that are flexible and that have strong inclinations for customer service. We definitely interview for that, because, as you said, it is not just “can you do the job”, but can you do the job in a way that represents our company well and that meets the needs of the customer in a way where we can work with our customer as a team.

CEO CFO: How is business these days?

Ms. Andino: Business is going well. We have more than doubled our revenue in 2011. We have doubled our

staff. We have several large proposals in our pipeline that, if we should win them, will grow our company significantly.

CEO CFO: Can you tell me a little bit about the newer areas you would like to be involved with?

Ms. Andino: We are very interested in pursuing opportunities within the FBI and USCIS. We had worked within Department of Justice and our senior management staff has supported several FBI programs. On the USCIS side, we have a prime contract at USCIS within RAIO, Refugee Asylum and International Operations. We are very interested in seeing how we can support some of the new Agile software development efforts that are being planned for USCIS.

CEO CFO: Why should people pay attention to Highlight Technologies today?

Ms. Andino: We are quickly and steadily growing. However, at the same time, we are maintaining focus on our core areas of IT services and as we grow we are being careful to mature our infrastructure, such as quality processing. If we continue according to our plan, we should be a very competitive small business for the next five years. When I say competitive I mean that for the size that we are I feel like we are well positioned to compete for and hopefully win some of the larger small business opportunities that will be coming out in the next five or so years.

