



ceocfointerviews.com
 © All rights reserved
 Issue: February 10, 2019



NATECH
 Native American Technology Corporation

NATECH Corporation is a Small Family-Owned Business serving the Federal Government and Department of Defense for 25 years with Program Management Support, Training Services, and Professional and Technical Services



**Cori Kelly
 President**

NATECH Corporation

www.natechcorp.com

Contact:
Cori Kelly
571-367-0933
cori.kelly@natechcorp.com

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

“Our specialty is providing people that have the right skill set and fit for the team they are supporting. We have a very personal touch as a family-owned business in making sure that each person is the right person for that job and that they have the tools that they need to do the job.” - Cori Kelly

CEOCFO: Ms. Kelly, what is NATECH?

Ms. Kelly: NATECH is a small, family owned business that has been doing government contracting for twenty-five years. We work in the federal market, primarily providing program management support training services and professional and technical services. Our main work provides full-time equivalent supplemental workforce, in other words – people who sit in government spaces and provide services directly to the government in their space.

CEOCFO: Are there specific agencies you tend to work with more than others? Are there particular types of contracts or positions?

Ms. Kelly: Our primary customers today are the US Army and the Federal Aviation Administration is where we have most of our positions. Additionally, we currently work with the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Homeland Security, and the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. We are just starting to get into working with the Intelligence community as well with work starting at National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency soon.

CEOCFO: Why have you chosen these particular areas and why are you getting into the Intelligence arena now?

Ms. Kelly: FAA was our first customer. My grandparents are the owners of NATECH. My grandmother was in the banking industry and my

grandfather retired the first time from the air force and retired from his second career with FAA. When they went into business together, they decided to focus their initial efforts with a place that they knew, which was FAA. Our entire time in business, we have been supporting the FAA. Since then, we have grown with new customers, particularly our work that has been growing rapidly is with the Army. We have decided to enter into the Intelligence Community because that is where my background is prior to joining NATECH and our skills and experience transfer well into that market. We are pursuing this work to broaden our portfolio and ensure that we are not single threaded in any particular area.

CEO CFO: Would you walk us through a couple of typical engagements?

Ms. Kelly: Our typical customer is looking for support because they either have a staffing need that is unique/difficult to find, or they are not sure whether it is a long-term need for their organization. That is one scenario where they might come to us. The other is for sustainability. They augment their government workforce with contract support to make sure that they are able to handle the volume of activity that they have going on in a particular office. Those are usually the primary reasons why a government customer would reach out to a contractor like us.

Our specialty is providing people that have the right skill set and fit for the team they are supporting. We have a very personal touch as a family-owned business in making sure that each person is the right person for that job and that they have the tools that they need to do the job.

CEO CFO: How are you able to bring the right talent today, when there is so much need for skilled people and so few people available to fill the positions?

Ms. Kelly: That is an ongoing challenge. Luckily there are a lot of people out there that are looking for something different. A lot of our workforce has retired from a government position or they have spent their career doing similar work and interested in continuing in a contractor role. Sometimes people are no longer happy working for a large company where they are treated as another number and they really enjoy the personal touch that we offer within our company. That is one of the ways we help bring the right talent to the job.

CEO CFO: How are you reaching out for prospective employees or contractors for NATECH?

Ms. Kelly: Like many other employers in our field, we use a lot of the online job boards to post our requisitions. Depending on the type of role we are looking for, we will often reach out to our existing employees for referrals. We find that people who are referred are often already a vetted candidate for us. Depending on the role, if the government is looking for people who do not require the same background and expertise as our senior-skilled workforce, then sometimes we will reach out to universities and use it as an opportunity to try to bring the next generation into the workforce.

CEOCFO: *How does NATECH's personal touch play out day to day?*

Ms. Kelly: As a small business, there are only a few of us in our corporate office and half of us are family. People are surprised when it is myself, the president of the company, reaching out to them or when they call our office and our Chief Financial Officer or Vice President of HR (who happen to be my aunts), answers the phone. We know people by name instead of by number.

We work with people who try to solve the problem because our employees have lives outside of work and we try to do what we can to work with them so their job helps them meet their personal needs as well as our contractual needs for our customers. We feel like if we can focus on our employees, they will take care of the rest and make sure that our customers get what they need.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned at NATECH about working with family?*

Ms. Kelly: I have learned that working together provides a great opportunity to stay connected with my family. Most of them live on the west coast and I am on the east coast, which is great for our business because it gives us coverage nationwide since our employees work everywhere between the two coasts. Also, as a family business, we are personally invested in the company's success.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about NATECH being recognized as a 2019 SBA, family owned Small Business of the Year?*

Ms. Kelly: It has been a real honor. I think the story that resonated with the people reviewing the submission saw a story where over time, this business has employed three generations of our family including my grandparents, my aunts, and now me. Small businesses in our market tend to not last that long. The sad truth is that there are a lot of small businesses that utilize SBA's 8-A program, and when they graduate have not prepared themselves for what they need to do to operate without the 8A credential. Our business was not only an 8A graduate that continued for many years after, but we have continued to grow and evolve through three generations of our family participating in the business.

CEOCFO: *How do you work with government agencies that many times see to have budget constraints?*

Ms. Kelly: I would say that there are always budget constraints. Customers often want more than what they can afford. We will work with them to find creative solutions on how to get them the best value for what they need. Sometimes that means we need to be creative in working with how we get the type of skill set that they need. We might suggest a blending of skill sets if it is a team that would have crossover training capabilities so that you do not have to rely on as many people to get the job done if someone can do multiple jobs together. We really try to work to find people who are not single threaded and have a variety of skill sets to help the government in this kind of budget constrained environment.

CEOCFO: *What surprised you since you took on the role of president at NATECH?*

Ms. Kelly: I have spent over twenty years in my career working in government and with large government contractors prior to joining NATECH. One thing I have learned since I stepped into the company was just how challenging it can be working as a small business when you have less resources and you do not have a subject matter expert in every topic like you do in a large defense contractor. I cannot just call my person who is an expert in whatever topic; we have to either do that research ourselves or we rely on expert consultants to help us when we do not know the answer. Sometimes we have to just work with the best information we have and move forward. Those are some of the keys that have helped us continue to evolve as a small business. I think that was the biggest learning curve.

CEOCFO: *How is business today?*

Ms. Kelly: It is great. We have grown 50% each of the last two years. We project that we will do around that same amount if not more this year.

CEOCFO: *Does history help when you are looking at contracting or subcontracting?*

Ms. Kelly: Absolutely. Customers that we work with are interested in the personal relationships that we have when we are building that initial engagement with them, however when it comes time of the actual request for proposal, we have to respond to using evidence of our performance. The personal relationships will only get you to the proposal. After that, you have to show the performance that you had over time and be able to relate that information to how this new customer will benefit from that experience.

CEOCFO: *With lots of companies to choose from, why NATECH?*

Ms. Kelly: NATECH is small but we are a mature business that has weathered through tough times and come out the other side successfully. Our industry as government contractors is temporary in nature. It is the hardest selling point of our job, yet we have had contracts that have lasted for five, ten or twenty years because we have customers that really enjoy working with us and have a trusted relationship.

Our customers really like the people we hire and because of those personal relationships – we have a good track record of keeping jobs sustained as long as the work is available. Additionally, the personal touch that I mentioned previously. We receive feedback from people all the time that they are really happy that we get to know them personally and that we are not rigid in our processes. We work with our employees to try to help solve their problems and make sure that they have what they need so that they can focus on their job.

