



Minerva Engineering's President Reflects on the Start of Our 18th Year of Business

Hanover, MD – February 13, 2015

As you may (or may not) know, Minerva Engineering turns 18 in the month of March, 2015. That's a pretty big deal. Actually, I thought it was a big deal when we reached 5 years. Honestly, at that point in time, I was glad that we had beaten the statistics for small business survival. Statistics from the SBA show that two-thirds of new companies survive at least two years and 44 percent survive at least four years. To think that we've been around for 18 years is pretty good! So, how did that happen? What are the keys to making it for 18 years and beyond?

Really Good People: Our employees are to be commended for their hard work and commitment to the customer and the company. I'm not Minerva Engineering, Don [Holmes, our CEO] is not Minerva Engineering – all of our employees are. They are the ones our customers think about when they think of Minerva. Good workers mean good work products and that means happy customers. Happy customers are more likely to invite us back.

Creating The Right Culture: We've always had a culture that fostered the kind of atmosphere that enhances cooperation and sense of a local "community." In a very real way, this goes back to the type of people we like to hire. You really have to be looking to be part of a company that's more than just a source of a paycheck. There are lots of *those* companies out there – we're not one of them. At Minerva we're really looking to find people who can buy into and act in accordance with our Guiding Principles and help, to the extent you want to, shape a growing company. Don and I have always said that we may be smart guys but we don't know everything and we *need* the input and help of our employees to be a part of shaping the company. This might mean that you have new business suggestions or perhaps ideas about enhancing benefits. Another key part of this culture is the recognition that our employees aren't just numbers in the corporate machine; they are people with unique skills, personalities and desires and they are not easily replaced. I like to think that this manifests as treating our employees with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Doing Our Very Best To Live Our Guiding Principles: You've probably heard me say it before, but those Guiding Principles are our magnetic north – as Stephen Covey (author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*) might say. They are fundamental to helping us create the right culture. I can't emphasize enough how important those Guiding Principles are. As a company, we work hard to live by those Guiding Principles every day, week, month and year.

It's not easy and we screw it up from time-to-time, but in the end our objective is to create the kind of atmosphere that's conducive to the way we, and our employees, want to live our lives. When you consider that you spend more of your waking moments with your co-workers than your family, you better like the atmosphere where you work. Living up to those Guiding Principles helps us foster the right kind of atmosphere.

Being Attentive To Managing The Business: This means so many things and includes managers that are keeping an eye on the fiscal elements of the company but are also keeping an eye on the health, welfare and morale of the staff. It means developing new business and it means managing the business we have. It means constantly being vigilant for risk in the business environment and doing what we can to plan for and managing those risks.

Refreshing The Direction Of The Company: We need to be renewing ourselves periodically for a variety of reasons. That means that we're sensitive to what's going on around us as well as what we're doing and trying to align those as much as possible. This creates opportunities for employment longevity, contractual stability and overall corporate health. We've gone through a few changes in our corporate direction in 18 years from trying to be the "subcontractor of choice" to being a prime contractor where 85% of our work comes from prime contracts and most recently "the era of focus" where we've honed our business focus on cyber operations and information security. These changes have often been guided by a collective realization by management and staff that the alignment of current skills, the marketplace and customer feedback suggest a change.

Remembering That Work Can Be Fun, Too: This manifests itself in a lot of ways and it's not so much a function of what the company does for the staff but what we, as staff members, do for each other. Remember - that person next to you has the same kind of issues to deal with in their lives that you do. Respect that and remember to be compassionate, understanding, reasonable and pragmatic in your approach to dealing with your coworkers, your work, your customers and yourself.

The long and the short of it is that we've been around for 18 years because this company, and the people in it, are worth keeping around and it requires us as managers and as employees to work to make it so.

So, at 18 years, I'd like to thank all our staff past and present for being part of this company and helping to bring our vision of being "the company people want to work at and that other organizations and agencies want to be associated with."

For those of you looking for something different in your company, check out our jobs postings. If you are interested in working for a company like Minerva Engineering, send an email or give a call.

- Robert