

Minerva Engineering Celebrates its 20th Anniversary – a Message from the President and Founder, Robert La Bella Hanover, MD – March 14, 2017



Minerva Engineering is 20 years old today. That's quite a milestone. When I think about the statistics which show that 50% of all businesses don't survive their first five years and only 40% survive to reach 10 years, achieving 20 years in business is pretty good. Twenty years has meant a lot to me personally, of course, when I started the company my oldest child was a little more than a year old and we were expecting our second. We have four now and it's hard not to think of Minerva as one of my progeny in the same way that my children are.

When I started Minerva Engineering, I had three basic objectives in mind: 1) I wanted to work on something interesting that served the nation and which got me up in the morning; 2) I wanted to work with people I liked, and 3) I wanted the company culture to reflect the way I wanted to live my life – which meant “flexibility” to me. In short, I wanted Minerva Engineering to be the kind of company I wanted to work at and I felt very strongly that other people had the same basic desires. I heard it from people all the time: they didn't know if their company would be around in another three months (much less three years); or their healthcare wasn't sufficient for their needs (if they even had it); or they were constantly being told by their management that “employees were our greatest resource” but then being treated with disrespect as if they didn't matter and frankly, many wondered regularly how they would take care of themselves and their families in that kind of climate.

It was the sense of uncertainty that struck me the most and I realized that some of the solution had to do with corporate stability and business acumen but the other, perhaps more essential part, had to do with communication and fostering relationships with the employees. I realized that if I, as the principal owner of the company could remove those feelings of uncertainty then I would have happier employees and I realized that Minerva Engineering needed to be not only a customer-focused company but an employee-focused company as well that adhered to a very simple algebra: happy employees make for better workers; better workers make for happier customers and of course happy customers tend to invite you back – and that makes management happy. As a result, the Corporate Vision became: “Minerva Engineering will be the company that people want to work at and that other organizations and Agencies want to be associated with”. From this simple premise came the Guiding Principles which we, as a company, try to live up to every day. These Guiding Principles are our magnetic north – the compass whereby we navigate the company – and are paraphrased here:

- Treat people with the dignity and respect they deserve;
- Foster open, honest and clear communication;
- Do what makes sense (my personal favorite);
- Always seek to exceed our customer expectations;
- Always seek to behave to the highest ethical standards, and finally,

- Recognize that the employees have needs and priorities that have nothing to do with the company or our customers and that if we can help them succeed in those areas, we are helping to create happier employees.

We have quite a few employees that are reaching their 15th, 18th and even 20th year milestones even as we have many employees that have arrived in the last few years along with our relatively recent growth spurt and are celebrating their 3 and 5 year anniversaries. It has been my greatest pleasure, and I am deeply honored, that so many people have put their faith in the company and committed their time and energy to making it what it is today. After all, when our customers think about Minerva Engineering, they don't think about me or Don Holmes, our CEO – they think about the Minerva staff they work with every single day. Our employees *are* Minerva Engineering and whether they've been here two days, 10 months or 20 years, our employees all contribute to the successes that we, as a business, have enjoyed and I like to think that they too have succeeded as well.

Like any business, we've had our ups and downs but upon reaching our 20th year in business, I want to thank all the employees present and past for their efforts to make us the kind of company that people want to work at and that other organizations and Agencies want to be associated with.

- Robert La Bella, President and Founder, Minerva Engineering

Minerva Engineering, a Department of Defense Nunn-Perry Award winner, is a certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) providing information security products and services that support defense-in-depth strategies featuring technologies and processes to harden, defend and secure complex systems for the Intelligence Community, Department of Defense and other federal agencies.

Minerva Engineering, an Equal Opportunity Employer with a robust benefits program, is headquartered in Hanover, MD and is hiring for a large variety of open positions. For more information, visit www.minervaengineering.com.