

the secret to her success **award-winning CEO** **shares her perspective**

Blackhawk Management Corporation, a Woman-owned Small Disadvantaged Business providing support to the Air Force Outreach Program Office, among other Air Force customers, was recently honored by the Small Business Administration as the Small Business Subcontractor of the Year for Region VI, which is made up of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The company has more than 250 employees operating at nine operating sites across the United States as well as several overseas locations. Among its core competencies are engineering, information technology, logistics and maintenance and program management. We recently spoke with Linda Moorehead, the Blackhawk President and CEO.

Editor: What has been your experience working with the Air Force?

Moorehead: Blackhawk has been deeply involved with Air Force work in many areas for the past 12 years, supporting everything from aircraft hardware modifications for the Air Force Materiel Command to contract closeout at the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center. Under our current contracts we are supporting the Air Force Special Operations Command, the Air Intelligence Agency, the Air Force Cryptological Support Center and the Air Force Outreach



Linda Moorehead

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Program Office. In addition, we were recently awarded a major contract as part of a winning team providing technical and management support to the Air Force Materiel Command's Electronic System Center and its associated wings around the country.

Editor: How do you feel that your efforts have helped support the Air Force warfighter?

Moorehead: Blackhawk employees directly and indirectly support Air Force warfighters in a number of ways. We currently are a Small Business Prime Contractor on the Systems Engineering and Technical Assistance contract in which we directly support the Air Force Special Operations Command and its warfighters. Support is provided to AFSOC and their subordinate units in a variety of areas including the following: Management and Professional Support Services; Studies, Analyses, and Evaluations; and Engineering and Technical Services. Blackhawk provides support both stateside and overseas. In addition, for more than five years, we have directly support the Air Force warfighter through a security system modernization Public Key Infrastructure Program under the Air Force Cryptological Support Center in San Antonio. This contract was recently awarded for another three years. And, of course, our Information Technology Network Support functions support the Air Force Outreach Program Office. As you can see, our

work is in direct support of AFSOC warfighters worldwide, while other Blackhawk employees accomplish equally demanding and critical staff support functions as well as highly important network support efforts. Numerous Blackhawk employees are currently serving in Iraq under our Army Contract providing supply and logistics support—which directly and indirectly supports all military personnel, including Air Force, Marine and Navy in Iraq.

Editor: How do you keep your people in Iraq focused on their jobs and not worrying about their families back home?

Moorehead: Most of our employees are prior service members and about 60 percent have been to Iraq before, either as service members or contractors. All personnel are briefed as to the hazards and dangers associated with the job prior to being hired. They understand that the customer and the service we provided is their first priority. We provide their families with contact information for the Program Manager and other members of the Blackhawk Team who can assist them with any family issues while their spouse is deployed. All our employees have access to the internet or cell phones to help them stay in contact with their families. Each of our sites has a Site Leader who has almost instant access to the Project Leader, located with the Multi-National Corps Headquarters in Bagdad, who can use

various resources to assist the employee in case of an emergency. Employees know that we have a well-defined system back in the United States that can help them out should is any family issues need to be addressed.

Editor: What is the biggest lesson you would pass on to other small businesses?

Moorehead: The biggest lesson that I would pass on to other small businesses is to make sure you manage your money. Small changes in expenditures or income can place a small business in a precarious position of not meeting financial obligations to employees and vendors. Either of these will affect the viability of the business in terms of providing excellent customer service. Making sure that your expenditures are in line with your income is an almost daily job for small business top management. Cash flow analysis sometimes has to be performed on an almost daily basis. It is a lot of work, but it simply has to be done. Secondly, all businesses small or large benefits from these key elements: providing the highest of customer satisfaction and employing qualified employees who are happy to come to work everyday. *(Photo courtesy Don Carico, Lakewood Photography, Houston)*