

Q&A with USfalcon, Inc.

Vice President Pre-Award Center
and S3 Program Director

John Black

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USfalcon, Inc., formerly Mill City Connections, Inc. (MCCI), was recently awarded the Strategic Services Sourcing (S3) contract. S3 supports the U.S. Army, Communications-Electronics Life Cycle Management Command (C-E LCMC) at Fort Monmouth, NJ and Aberdeen Proving Grounds, MD in coordination with the Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) community. As one of seven prime contractors, USfalcon will compete with Booz Allen and Hamilton, Computer Sciences Corporation, CACI Technologies, Lockheed Martin, Sensor Technologies, and ViaTech for \$19.25 billion in task orders over the next ten years. Mr. John Black, USfalcon, Inc. Vice President and S3 Program Director recently spoke with 3Dsolve about the S3 program, and small business opportunities in government contracting.

In your own words, tell me about USfalcon.

USfalcon is a Veteran company, made up of current and former Army leaders, providing service to a primarily Army customer base. The top 10 leaders in the company are retired Colonels or Lieutenant Colonels who are looking to build this company by continuing to provide high-quality, best-value services. The company started out by word-of-mouth to our Army customers, and looks to expand to the Air Force, Navy, and even commercial customers.

Originally, the company was a hardware reselling company of six employees. When I joined in August of 2004, I was about the 11th employee. Since then the company has grown to 72 employees as of August 2006, where 75 percent of the employee base has some sort of military experience (Army, Marines, Air Force, etc.).

Since winning the S3 award in March, we have been going after task orders. We've already won two and have another four or five in the queue.

Can you talk specifically about the S3 initiative?

S3 is a large, Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ), Army-based contract that was awarded to seven prime contractors supporting the CE LCMC out of Fort Monmouth, NJ.

There were a lot of services contracts (Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs), GSA Schedules, and other DoD contracts) that were expiring. Quite literally \$10-11 billion flows through Fort Monmouth every year for services and materials. The Acquisition Center there created the S3 competition. S3 was originally supposed to be awarded to 10 primes, but was actually awarded to only seven prime contractors: four large businesses and three small businesses (including USfalcon).

So, how did USfalcon go after this proposal?

We decided that our best approach was to pull together a "best of breed" collection of partners. We reached out to other companies that Peter (von Jess) and the rest of our management team knew. We didn't necessarily look for companies that were as well known in the larger DoD community. Instead, we looked for companies with a proven track record and core capabilities that complemented the rest of the team. In the end, we built a team, of predominantly Small Businesses, that can respond to all of the S3 requirements. Together, we have the right skill sets to do so, and believe that Team USfalcon is the Small Business Partner of Choice.

How many companies are members of the USfalcon, Inc. S3 team?

It's a large number. The original proposal submitted included 54 companies. Now, after receiving the S3 award we have been approached by dozens of companies to join our team as vendors. There is a full list on our website (www.usfalcon.com), but I think it's upwards of 90 companies now.

How will all of those companies work together? What was the vision you had in mind of pulling together these best-in-breed companies?

If you're familiar with the large companies in this industry, for example Lockheed Martin, Booz Allen and Hamilton, CSC; that's who were going up against.

As tasks orders come out we have a great bunch of small businesses that deliver the same high quality (as the large companies). These small businesses can offer customers what they want at a better value for the government. Today I'm working on one (task order) that combines two small companies that will go head-to-head with one of the Large Business Teams. You never know if we are going to win or not... Only time will tell. This is not a sprint; it's a ten year marathon.

What role does simulation learning play specifically in regards to the S3 contract, and also within the military in general?

The military today is full of a generation of kids who grew up on video games. Clearly we are a nation at war—an Army at war. While the Army must always be budget conscious, they face even more financial constraints during wartime. Training budgets and funding allocated to those programs often have to take a backseat behind paying for new equipment, supplies, etc.

Simulation technology offers a more cost effective way to achieve training goals. You cannot put everybody in tanks, Bradleys or Stryker vehicles for full training operations out in the field. You are burning too much gas, buying too many spare parts, taking soldiers out to the field for too long ... 3D simulation becomes critical in training soldiers.

Do you know what role simulation learning will play in the S3 contract, or is that yet to be determined?

That is yet to be determined. We have a broad customer base and as we get to know our customers and what they need when, I'll have a better idea of when requirements might come out for 3D simulation. At any given day, an RTEP could pop up to which we would have to respond with some sort of 3D simulation solution. We certainly have our eyes open for that requirement, and I think it is going to be quite a necessity. 3D simulation is going to expand, especially if the war continues and there is even more pressure to reduce training costs.

What other trends do you see happening within the military and initiatives like the S3 award?

Speaking from the contractor's side, the really large traditional companies are going to feel the heat to provide the very same service at a lower price. There is always a lot of pressure at those large companies to maintain large revenues. Obviously, the large companies build the ships

and planes; and **will always have a place with the military** but today, more so than ever before, there is a great opportunity for smaller businesses.

Up to \$11 billion flows through Fort Monmouth each year. There are a lot of companies out there, most small businesses. Within the Defense Contracting industry it is tough to figure out what's going to happen. Every time the Army or one of the services gets a new leader, doctrine changes, contracts change and requirements change. Right now the Army is going through another transformation. It used to take the Army 10-11 years to roll out a new technology. That is definitely not the case now. Today, with more modularity and downsizing of total forces, there is a greater demand for new technologies to meet a variety of needs. This need for cutting edge technology and innovation open up a bunch of new opportunities for small businesses that have the flexibility to deliver more quickly and cost effectively.

Do you think small businesses are more innovative and can bring those technologies to market quicker?

Absolutely! They are definitely more flexible. I'm not saying that small businesses are always more innovative but I think they can be as innovative as larger companies with lower costs and lower overhead.

About John Black

Graduating from the United States Military Academy in 1983 and later from Carnegie Mellon University with his MBA, John Black served in the Army in a variety of missions in the Field Artillery branch before retiring in 2003 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. After retiring from the Army, Mr. Black worked for Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) as a Program Manager (PM) for the U.S. Army's Communications-Electronics Life Cycle Management Command (C-E LCMC) Rapid Response (CR2) contract. In just 17 months at CSC, Mr. Black's program won 80 tasks orders totaling more than \$500 million of contract ceiling. Following great success at CSC, Mr. Black joined Mill City Connections, Inc. (MCCI) in August 2004, later becoming USfalcon, Inc. in January 2006. Mr. Black is the USfalcon, Inc. Vice President of the Pre-Award Center and the S3 Program Director.