

Full-Service Network Integration and Engineering



Christopher Dunn - CEO

ANS is a veteran owned small business firm specializing in providing next generation network infrastructure, security, and managed services for commercial and government clients of all sizes. A full-service network integration and engineering firm, our reputation for excellence in the networking arena and intelligence community is unsurpassed. We listen to and learn the client's business from the inside out in order to provide capable scalable solutions, within budget, to support their needs and expectations. The ANS team has decades of experience in WAN/LAN network security consulting, design, installation, and service. We offer a complete range of solutions including consulting, analysis, and design through implementation and support.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: *Mr. Dunn, your website shows your goal is to be the premiere IT services and solutions provider. How are you working to get there?*

Mr. Dunn: We are hiring and training the best talent to solve the most complex problems our customers have that revolve around transporting their critical data.

CEOCFO: *What do you look for technically but also the intangibles?*

Mr. Dunn: How they diagnose a problem, do they understand the technology not just a vendors box. The desire to be the best, love and live the technology. Most engineers don't have the soft skills, how to talk to a customer and truly understand what is it they are looking for. Trying to hire talented engineers that are passionate about technology and how it solves our customers' problems is the challenge.

CEOCFO: *Who is using your services?*

Mr. Dunn: Our customers are federal and DoD agencies and a few commercial customers.

CEOCFO: *Do you prefer the federal realm or would you like to see the range broaden?*

Mr. Dunn: I would like to see a split of 75% for the government and 25% commercial. We used to have a split like that but the commercial market is much different, the sales cycle is much quicker. It is hard to forecast so we backed away and we are currently fine tuning our service offerings that will cross pollinate to the commercial side.

CEOCFO: *Many people feel the federal government has some of those same issues. What have you learned over the years to navigate the waters successfully?*

Mr. Dunn: I have learned that you must be honest and true to the customer. You have to listen. One of the rules that my staff and I live by is to play with your hands above the table. It is something that many companies will not do; they are looking at ways to help the shareholder vice the customer. They will chase the revenue and the short-term revenue but we will not do that. It is not about revenue or profit but about solving the problem and doing the right thing. If you do the right thing, money follows. I have learned that you have to be patient with the federal government. It takes time to navigate the federal government's procurement cycle.

CEOCFO: *What types of projects might people call for?*

Mr. Dunn: An agency or another contractor will call us when they are having network infrastructure Internet problems; they cannot transfer data from point "a" to point "b". They will call us to do an analysis or to look at what is going wrong within the enterprise network.

CEOCFO: *How does an agency know when to give up with their resources and look elsewhere and are you able to use what they have worked on?*

Mr. Dunn: We hope that it is a collaborative environment between private sector and public sector. I found that the government has a gap and they have “seniors” which are government workers higher up in the chain. When you have a young group; there is one thing that the young group understands and that is technology. They do not understand the mission of what the agencies do. You are going to see a problem within government as the seniors retire because the younger workers don’t understand the mission.

CEOCFO: *When people call Applied Network Solutions is it because they have exhausted their own resources?*

Mr. Dunn: I think they have exhausted their own resources and I think when we get called in to help or when other contractors call us they know what they are getting from ANS. We don’t stray from our Core offerings so if it is a network/security issue we know what we are doing.

CEOCFO: *Once you are called and people are implementing your changes is there ever a question if they will carry through or is it almost desperation time?*

Mr. Dunn: That is always a possibility. Some people want a specific vendor or specific technology and they do not want to change or they do not want to try something new. There are people that do what we do already but I do not think they do it with our focus. What I like to say we are is, if you look at AT&T or Verizon and if you take away the wireless commercial stuff, we are like a mini AT&T and Verizon. The nice thing is they both call us to help them.

“[Christopher Dunn’s] business philosophy is simple, ‘play with your hands above the table and good things will happen’, ‘mission first, profit later.’”

- Christopher Dunn

CEOCFO: *Are you able to proactively make suggestions to fix the problem?*

Mr. Dunn: Absolutely!

CEOCFO: *Is the fact that you are proactive one of the reasons that people like your service?*

Mr. Dunn: I think so. I am not telling, suggestion or recommending a solution for my benefit; it is for their benefit but I would benefit from it because they are going to call me again when they want another recommendation. If you do the right thing and recommend the right things, you can only screw the customer one time and you are never going to get that customer back. I want the customer to always call me when they have a problem and I want to solve their problem. Remember, its not about the money, its about the customer problem and mission.

CEOCFO: *How do you get that philosophy across to a potential customer?*

Mr. Dunn: I do not know. What happens is I am very passionate when I talk to a customer; I am very passionate about solving the problems the right way and do not want a shareholder or a profit margin to dictate what we are trying to solve.

CEOCFO: *Was that your philosophy from the beginning?*

Mr. Dunn: Absolutely! We have not changed in the fourteen years that we have been in business, Mission First.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned over time that has changed your approach?*

Mr. Dunn: My philosophy is different from most; it’s about the customer not profit. That is tough to find people that are focused on mission vice money. My approach with each customer is the same, be honest and listen. If we can’t fix it we will tell them.

CEOCFO: *In what way do you give back?*

Mr. Dunn: We donate like crazy. We donate to the MDSA because it affected one of our employees. We donate to the Wounded Warriors. We donate to the National Allergy because I have employees whose kids cannot drink milk. We support the local economy with its sponsorships and it is the right thing to do.

CEOCFO: *What is ahead and how will you be implementing the strategy to work more with corporate rather than government?*

Mr. Dunn: The strategy is we are laying out the framework and platform that services both. We are going to decide what is the corporate customer that we are going to go after; is it the under 20 million or under 100 million. One of the things we do not do inside the government is we do not chase a specific agency as often as we chase a specific technology. We are revamping some of our technology offerings and we are going to deliver them via the cloud. We have always been able to do that but have not focused on the commercial side.

CEOCFO: *How is business now?*

Mr. Dunn: Business is steady. The future assuming all the stars align my goal is to at least double by 2014 or 2015. Last year was the higher goal but due to economic budget and some strategies that were never implemented and getting the right people in the right people on the bus. I think we are poised to do good things. It always comes down to people. My 2014 goal is to communicate much better and get people on the bus; the only time the bus is going to stop from this day forward is to let people off and I make it clear every day.

CEOCFO: *Why pay attention to Applied Network Solutions?*

Mr. Dunn: We play with our hands above the table. It is about the customer and did I also say we are very, very, very good at what we do.

BIO: Chris founded Applied Network Solutions, Inc. in 1999. He has more than 25 years of proven leadership and technical experience supporting Federal and Commercial clients. As the Chief Executive Officer, Chris is responsible for providing the company vision while ensuring maximum customer and employee satisfaction. Part of his success is attributed to his passion for interacting with clients, employees and partners on a regular basis and working tirelessly to satisfy their needs. He also sets the tone for the company's values, ethics and culture. His business philosophy is simple, "play with your hands above the table and good things will happen", "mission first, profit later."

Prior to founding ANS, Chris had tenures at Lockheed-Martin and EDS where he was considered a subject matter expert in network engineering, operations and cyber security environments. Chris began his career in the Army, supporting the White House Communications Agency (WHCA), before moving to the private sector in 1990.

Chris earned his B.S. in Information Systems with a concentration in Networking and System Analysis and Design from the University Maryland Baltimore County. He is certified by the Program Management Institute as Program Management Professional.



Applied Network Solutions Inc.
9891 Broken Land Parkway Suite 100
Columbia, Maryland 21046
443.517.1110
www.ansfederal.com