

## Constituent Services for the U.S. Federal Government



**Ben Lanius - CEO**

### **About HighPoint Global**

HighPoint is a leading provider of training, content development, contact center solutions and quality assurance services to Federal Government customers and their citizen constituents. HighPoint is a privately held company founded in 2006 that has been experiencing exponential growth – growing a small business with revenues of about \$1.5 million to more than \$100 million in revenue in 2013. The 2014 American Business Awards named HighPoint as one of the Stevie® Awardees for the Fastest Growing Companies in America. HighPoint was also recognized as one of Inc. Magazine's Top 500 Fastest Growing Companies in America in 2014.

In 2013, HighPoint is one of the top five providers of constituent support services, and one of the fastest growing managed services providers to the Federal government. HighPoint provides game changing strategic project and performance management to our customers. We partner with our clients to understand issues, create solutions, and implement innovative and effective strategies with measurable results.

We are a nationally recognized Contact Center Optimization services provider, specializing in innovative solutions that enable our clients to optimize the service they provide to their constituents through high-quality training development and delivery, content writing and scripting, and quality assurance services. HighPoint exceeds customer expectations – we give them exactly what they expected, just better.

Much of our work directly benefits the local communities in which we operate. Many of our people also live in those communities, and we want them to be proud of what we do. For our business to thrive, we need communities to trust us to work in the right way and make a difference in their lives. We actively invest in the community through donations, gifts in kind, and employee time every year. The support, growth and development of communities across the country is a core value that drives us to be the best and make a difference.

HighPoint is a privately held company founded in 2006 and headquartered in Indianapolis with offices in Baltimore and Reston, Virginia. HighPoint has experienced exponential growth of over 8500 percent in the past few years. For additional information about HighPoint, visit <http://www.highpointglobal.com/>

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

**CEOCFO: Mr. Lanius, what is the concept at HighPoint Global?**

**Mr. Lanius:** We provide constituent services, which means customer service to the citizens of the U.S., primarily by serving the federal government. We help our clients better communicate and provide services to their customers, and their clients so that they can have exemplary customer service.

**CEOCFO: Would you give us an example of a common engagement for you and maybe something a little more outside of the box so that we can understand the range of what you are actually doing?**

**Mr. Lanius:** For example, we have a client in the federal government space that is responsible for communications with their constituents or the citizens of the US. They run a contact center, so we provide several services to support that contact center. We do not run the contact center, but they have about 30 contact centers and 30,000 call center agents located throughout the United States. We provide training for the contact center agents. We also provide call scripting for them. For example, if you call the contact-center and you ask specifically about an item, then those agents will look up the scripts in the regard to the responses that they are to have. We create those scripts. We also perform quality assurance activities. For example, when you call into a call center it says this call may be recorded for quality assurance or quality purposes. People actually listen to those, and that is what we do. We listen to those calls, we score those calls, and then we look for opportunities for improvements to the contact center to improve the contact center experience for the end

consumer. That is a good, strong example of how we provide services that help our customers improve their customer service.

**CEOCFO: *Why the decision to work as a federal contractor? Did it develop opportunistically or was it the plan from the beginning?***

**Mr. Lanius:** It was pretty much the plan from the beginning. In 2006 when the company started, we really started out as a project turnaround company specifically in the federal government space. That is where we started. It really evolved from there from helping the contracting community to directly providing services to the federal government.

**CEOCFO: *Are you actually working for the government or for the companies that you are helping or monitoring?***

**Mr. Lanius:** We work directly for the government. For example, it is government contact centers and government projects that relate directly to consumers. It could be a website, a contact center or any kind of touch points between the government and the citizen. That is where we assist.

**“We were recently named in the Inc. Magazine Top 500 Fastest Growing Companies in America.” - Ben Lanius**

**CEOCFO: *If someone is running a call center on a contract for the government and you come in to monitor them, are the intermediary companies happy to see you or do you get some resistance?***

**Mr. Lanius:** Absolutely. We could be seen as a threat, and the government wants that third party look into their customer service operation to make sure that the contractor that they are using is actually providing the service that they say they are going to. We really try hard to be a partner with the call center, so what we want to do is work with the contact center before we go to the government and show them some things that we are seeing and things we think they should do to improve. Then we will partner with the contact center to do that, so then we when go back to the government, we can tell them we worked with the contact center, here is what we saw, here was our recommendations, and they also provided assistance on these recommendations. Then what we want to do of course is pilot those recommendations and measure those recommendations after we have implemented them. That benefits HighPoint because we can show the government or company where we have improved the contact center, but it also helps the contact center because then their numbers improve. The contact centers see it as a benefit as well to not have an adversarial relationship with us. When it works out best, it works out best for all.

**CEOCFO: *I am assuming that they have to give you access to everything that is part of their contract?***

**Mr. Lanius:** Yes, correct. For example, we actually have call monitoring systems. We actually run those systems, so those are on our premises so that we have a full non-impeded view into what is going on.

**CEOCFO: *Does the government hold contact centers to the same standards that a private company might be held to as far as the level of customer service?***

**Mr. Lanius:** Yes, they do. When you think about it, the federal government's customer base is every citizen in the country. From a customer service standpoint and from a standpoint of how big their customer base is, it is enormous. For the scope of the work that they do, they do a very good job in customer service. They constantly monitor themselves and they constantly look for ways to improve and make things better. In some of the contact centers that we work with, they have really evolved over time from just a call center operation to a more contact center operation. They want to find out what the best way is for the citizens to communicate with them and for them to communicate back. They have made significant progress recently on technology like web services, web chat, and email communications.

**CEOCFO: *Are there many companies that provide the kind of service HighPoint Global does?***

**Mr. Lanius:** I think the companies that we are in competition with, there are probably eight companies in our space. In our classification, we are in the top five, so we are one of the top five providers of constituent services to the federal government.

**CEOCFO: *How do you navigate some of the challenges working with the government?***

**Mr. Lanius:** We have many very good, strong people in our company, so I think what makes us successful is that we have a couple of different types of people that we hire. One is that we hire people who have experience working in the federal marketplace, so they realize the pressures and the customer space and they really understand what the customer space looks like and how to navigate that and work through that. The other type of people who we hire are people who are more from the industry that have good industry background and good industry knowledge.

**CEOCFO: *When you are first assessing a project, do you have a feel for what is wrong immediately? What might you tend to find out later on that explains, mitigates or makes a difference?***

**Mr. Lanius:** Initially, we are really listening a lot to our client, and we are also listening to the contact center professionals. We get a ton of immediate feedback on what they think is going wrong. It is kind of interesting. Most of the discussions

say here are the things we think we are doing well, but here are the things that we are really challenged with and need help with. What we do is we will take that information, we will listen to that, and we will put together a plan to verify and validate.

**CEOCFO: Do you find that government agencies tend to follow your recommendations in many cases or does funding for change become a challenge for them?**

**Mr. Lanius:** It really depends. Many of our recommendations are within the scope and context of current funding and activities. We have learned to navigate through many situations in regard to what makes the most financial sense and how we can quickly enable our customer to navigate through that quickly to be able to find their biggest bang for their buck. Sometimes the recommendations we make are possibly bigger in scope than that, and it goes outside of those financial implications. Maybe some of the other internal activities of our client causes them to have to pause on something.

**CEOCFO: Would you tell us about giving back for HighPoint and why it is important for you personally and as a company?**

**Mr. Lanius:** We have in our core values, called HighPoint C.A.R.E.S., and it is an acrostic of things that are important to our company. One of the items there is 'S' for Service, which is basically giving back to the community. We have a great employee group that spends a great deal of effort and time in giving back to the community, and they want to do that. They want to participate in fundraisers for their community whether it is in any of our offices, whether it is in Indianapolis, Baltimore, or the D.C. area. They really want to give back, so as a company, we really foster that environment. We want to help our associates give back to their community, so it is important to me because in many of our focus areas, it is on areas that we have impact in our family but also that other people inside of our company are also impacted by many of the same things that we are as our family.

**CEOCFO: How is business these days?**

**Mr. Lanius:** It is doing very well. We are doing very well as a company. We were a niche boutique project management turnaround firm and I believe we are up to about 250 associates right now and we are making \$100 million in revenues annually. Things are really taking off for us and we are continuing to focus on our clients and putting them first. We think that if we continue to keep doing that, we are going to continue to grow more. We have our sights set on even bigger things. I think we are going to be three times the size we are now in three to five years, so I am focused on that goal, our company is focused on that goal, and we are going to keep working hard to get there.

**CEOCFO: What has been different in the past year or two for HighPoint Global?**

**Mr. Lanius:** We have earned some new contracts, which have been larger than what we have had in the past. That has really been the major difference. We now have more of a focus on business development and growing our business. Before, we were sort of maintaining and growing, but once we earned some newer business, it really enabled us to provide more focus and attention on business development. There was one contract that came out that provided us with significant growth, and we did a "bet the company strategy" to secure the new business. We asked if we really wanted to get bigger and grow and if we do that it is going to consume a ton of dollars and people's time to go after that and win that. We did it, we won it, and that has provided us with the growth opportunity we have today. We were recently named in the Inc. Magazine Top 500 Fastest Growing Companies in America.

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**BIO:** Ben Lanius founded HighPoint from his basement office in 2006. Over the course of several years building a reputation for management excellence, HighPoint has grown from a small handful of dedicated professionals to hundreds of high value associates and contract personnel providing that same management excellence on a large scale to government agencies. As result of Ben's leadership, HighPoint has emerged as one of the top five providers of constituent services to the Federal government.

Ben remains the driving force behind every aspect of HighPoint. He provides hands-on leader for our client work, full lifecycle project implementations and corporate affairs. In addition to the typical more strategic CEO functional roles, Ben is involved with the operation of every aspect of the company. As an accomplished Executive and Program Manager (PMP certified) with over 20 years of experience planning, strategizing and executing of large-scale full cycle solutions, Ben understands that that success starts with the details. This comes from his background managing high profile accounts implementing SAP, Siebel and custom software applications. He understands that effective consulting, planning, execution and projects troubleshooting all start with attention to detail and he expects the same from all HighPoint associates, regardless of the function they perform.

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## **HighPoint Global**

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