

Specialized Software Development and Engineering Services for the Federal Government



Julie Pak
President

CEOCFO: *Ms. Pak, would you tell us the concept and philosophy behind RazorX2?*

Ms. Pak: RazorX2 provides specialized software development and engineering services for federal government customers. We are customer-focused, dedicated to each mission, and we provide the best-quality contractor performers. That is the reason for our motto, "Sharp Minds. Sharp People."

CEOCFO: *What comes under the specialized software and services categories?*

Ms. Pak: RazorX2 provides customized software solutions that cater to virtually any of our government customers' needs. All government clients have specific parameters such as independent networks, clearance requirements, or cultural knowledge of the government site. RazorX2 creates in-house software solutions, network configurations, help desk services, and provides project management expertise and support with these parameters in mind.

CEOCFO: *What might be a typical engagement?*

Ms. Pak: I mentioned software, hardware, and engineering support, but in essence, RazorX2 provides staff augmentation for government customers. A typical engagement includes bidding on federal contracts and/or submitting candidates to job openings at specific agencies. Once the contracts are secured, then RazorX2'ers are placed on-site with the government staff to assist, facilitate, create, and deploy, their mission capabilities.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned along the way about the challenges of working with the government?*

Ms. Pak: Oftentimes when people think of the government sector, they envision inefficiencies and bureaucracy. A few of our challenges fall in line with those obstacles, but now that I have been in the government sector for almost 15 years, I understand why those decision-making requirements are in-place. And though they are also impediments to moving at the pace of industry, we understand the specialized needs of our federal government customers and make the technological and cultural adjustments necessary to perform our jobs well.

Something else I have learned along the way is to never underestimate or overestimate an opportunity or network connection. I have been in numerous situations where I am eager about the potential of "X" only to discover it was not what I expected at all. On the other hand, I have *almost* dismissed opportunities that were actually extremely enterprising and innovative.

Finally, I wish there were more executive-level women in the industry. I firmly believe that the challenges that women face in the office, on the home front and in society, in general (especially if you are a working mom), are different from the ones encountered by men. It was not immediately apparent to me when I started RazorX2, but I have since learned that this is something extremely important to me: I do my best to set a good example for everyone, men and women, on my team. My professional emphasis is to not only work hard and do your job well but to also be fair, have integrity, and be the kind of person you would want your mother, brother, or daughter to work with. Treat people well. Be respectful. Be kind.

CEOCFO: *The tagline on your site is "Sharp Minds, Sharp People" how do you attract the talent that you want for your organization?*

Ms. Pak: Like-minded people with similar exceptional capabilities are drawn to each other. Because RazorX2'ers are indispensable assets to their project teams, this inherently makes people want to know, "Who do they work for?" We have been fortunate in that most of our employees are referrals by other employees. There is no better compliment to RazorX2 or our team members than our professional reputations serving as our best recruiting tool.

CEOCFO: *How can you create something for a federal agency that lives up to your abilities, without the federal drag on making it efficient?*

Ms. Pak: Creating efficiencies and making sure that our products are best in class, is our standard, regardless of whether we serve the government space or the private sector. Of course, due to federal rules, regulations, and security parameters, there is a drag on efficiencies, but that does not prevent us from putting our best people and services forward. As defense contractors, we must understand customer requirements and provide them with workable solutions to their problems. Our adaptability allows us to produce project deliverables, cost savings, improved schedules, and dictate future requirements. Regardless of bureaucracy, RazorX2 provides better products and engineering services so our customers can have confidence in the success of their missions.

CEOCFO: *When you are devising an application for a client, how do you take into account all the new technologies and programs to provide what is best today, knowing there could be something new down the line that could make a difference?*

Ms. Pak: Staying abreast of new technologies and trends is not always practical in the public sector. The reasons are varied. Some are the obvious ones like bureaucracy and the time it takes to get products approved for internal use. Some are the more subtle ones like origination of code and recognizing possible malicious intent. Ultimately, our job as defense contractors is to advise on the best practices, technologies, tools, methodologies, and resources that are available to the government agency we support. Of course, there is an aspect of future planning for the next biggest and greatest technology, but the realities of the government and the realities of our mission teams require a dependency on what is available *right now*. We work within those parameters and we continue to be successful every day.

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CEOCFO: *How do you integrate the appropriate security?*

Ms. Pak: For us that is an easy question and a hard one. The easy part is there are very strict rules, regulations and policies in place, when working for the government; we know exactly what our parameters are, which makes defining the scope of work easier. Because a regulations board already thought about all the “what if?” and worst-case scenarios, which results in the stringent rules we must obey, our only concern becomes implementation. “Protect our network” becomes much less nebulous and overwhelming. However, the implementation aspect is not always very easy. We must ensure all security protocols are met while using the tools and technologies that are available. And by “available”, I mean whatever tools, technologies, and patches have already been vetted for use within that specific agency. So, if we are missing a mandatory and necessary security patch, we must go through a procurement process that can sometimes include extensive paperwork, review board approvals, and purchase authorizations.

CEOCFO: *What has surprised you as the company has developed?*

Ms. Pak: The most pleasant surprise is that after 10 years we have had an amazing retention rate in our employees. The fact that our employees continue to be happy, engaged, and challenged, is something that goes beyond just a benefits package. RazorX2 offers a sense of community and a warm and friendly environment that is genuine. It is hard to fake sincerity, and in a sector where company hopping for the highest wage is common, we are getting the sense that our employees are recognizing the benefits of a *total package* and not just a compensation package. We are the No. 2 company on the Washington Business Journal’s “Best Places To Work” list. This recognition was 100% based on employee feedback, so I am proud that my team is happy and excited about not only what is happening now but also what is to come.

CEOCFO: *Did you realize from the beginning, the importance of taking care of your employees or at did you learn that as time went on?*

Mr. Pak: For me, taking care of my first employee was just as important and serious as taking on any future employees and their dependents. The overwhelming sense of responsibility is the same. The thought of RazorX2 having a direct impact on livelihoods and income for everyday things like mortgages, car payments, tuition, daycare, food, etc. was a heavy dose of reality. This newfound realization of life-impact is something I embraced early on. It made me work so much harder, not for just myself, but because someone was entrusting me with that kind of responsibility. Add on the next

employee and then it just begins to grow exponentially. But to be honest, I do not trust anyone but myself to take care of my team members. In my mind, they are in the best hands because I know what I am capable of and I know what I can do for them. I know that I will always go above and beyond for them. I think that they recognize that, or more importantly *feel it*, which is why they continue to be a part of the RazorX2 story.

CEOCFO: *What might be different a year from now?*

Ms. Pak: One year is not a lot of time to enact major change. Fortunately, for us, our business model is working. Our business and growth development plans are working. We have had tremendous opportunities with multiple federal government agencies. The best indicator of success is not just the bottom line but also the fact that more people want to join our team and be a part of what we are doing. A year from now we will be a company with a very similar corporate culture that highlights our close-knit and family-friendly values ... except there will be more of us.

CEOCFO: *Final thoughts?*

Ms. Pak: Ultimately the RazorX2 “product” is the RazorX2 person. All of our customers not only benefit from the quality of our products and services but also the quality of our people. A RazorX2’er is someone who, from day one, will look around and recognize areas of improvement. A RazorX2’er is there to help. A RazorX2’er is there to contribute. Our customers cannot help but notice a new boost of energy to their teams. Our professionalism is not just about job titles but adding a team player spirit, positive attitude, and assertiveness that will benefit any project team. We are Sharp Minds. Sharp People.

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



RazorX2

For more information visit:

<http://www.razorX2.net>

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