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Fortuna Business Management Consulting - Helping Clients Hire Veterans and Connecting Veterans with High-Quality Job Opportunities Post-Military Transition



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CEOCFO: *Mr. Smith, what is the idea behind Fortuna and what is the focus now?*

Mr. Smith:

I initially founded Fortuna as a consultant with the aim of telling people what they needed to hear instead of what they wanted to hear in order to help them improve. Having worked as a PMO (Project Management Office) director, I noticed how people would often avoid making the best technical decisions by simply telling their customers and business partners what they wanted to hear. This was the impetus for Fortuna, as I wanted to help people by providing honest and valuable advice. I had previously worked with a few consultant companies that did not prioritize the business development side of their employees, and I made sure that Fortuna would value both sides equally.

After becoming certified as a Veteran-Owned Business, I realized how challenging the transition out of military service was for many veterans. Personally, military service is deeply important to me, as my family has a long history of serving dating all the way back to the Revolutionary War. With three generations of Jack Smiths having served, taking care of soldiers became a cornerstone of our business. Our certifications have helped us to assist our clients in solving problems at scale while also providing us with an opportunity to give back to the veteran community. We aim to help clients hire veterans and connect veterans with high-quality job opportunities post-military transition.

CEOCFO: *When might a company turn for you for help, what might they be looking for and how do you craft a solution. What might you look at regarding a company that less knowledgeable people do not take into consideration?*

Mr. Smith:

At Fortuna, our unique approach to solving technical problems is part of our solution. We take a process-oriented approach, which means that we don't start with the technology or the people only. Instead, we begin by understanding what the company does and how they do it, making sure that everything they're doing is adding value to their customers

or assets. By starting with this understanding, we can optimize existing technologies in the environment, rather than throwing in a new technology. Our approach involves early discovery, where we understand what the company is trying to accomplish, why they're doing it, and how they're doing it.

Our approach is just one of the reasons why companies call us. We're also known for our veteran placement services, which allow companies to hire veterans quickly and easily. Our partnerships and relationships with the military transfer across the globe to anywhere there is a military installation, so we can help increase veteran hiring exponentially. We tell our customers that if they want to hire veterans tomorrow to call us today.

Additionally, we are one of the leading on-demand, team-building organizations for DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), and we can do so at scale. In fact, we've hired as many as 300 people in a single weekend. We were one of the fastest-growing veteran businesses in America last year, and we're excited to continue solving scale problems for others.

CEO/COO: *How do you reach out?*

Mr. Smith:

We're actively working on getting the word out about our mission to help veterans find high-quality jobs. Recently, we received certification from NaVOBA, the National Veteran-Owned Business Association, which is the recognized veteran certification for the private sector. This means that publicly traded companies with DEI spend initiatives now recognize our certification, and we're encouraging them to hire more veterans in their communities. To achieve this goal, we're making an effort to show up at places where companies are looking for help and provide them with the tools and resources to hire veterans.

"At Fortuna, we work with many different industries, but our primary focus is on taking care of veterans. One of the most amazing things about veterans is that they come from all walks of life. When we hire and support veterans, we're also supporting women, minorities, and other diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) categories because veterans encompass such a diverse group of people. This allows us to create a safe space where everyone feels welcome and valued." Jack Smith

We're also excited to announce the launch of our new podcast, Purpose Driven Prosperity, which will be available later this month. Our podcast will allow us to reach a wider audience and share our message with more people.

Our ultimate aim is to help veterans find meaningful and rewarding careers after their military service, and we're passionate about spreading the word about our mission. We're committed to making a positive impact in the lives of veterans, and we're actively working to achieve our goal of connecting veterans with high-quality jobs.

CEO/COO: *Do you find that more organizations are looking to hire veterans today and do they recognize the value or is that still something that is missed by a lot of people?*

Mr. Smith:

It's clear that veteran hiring and support is a valuable aspect of diversity and inclusion that has been overlooked in the past, with many companies only recently recognizing its value. While progress has been made in other diversity categories such as gender and ethnicity, we have forgotten about veterans and there is a significant catch-up effort required to address the gaps in their lives. Many veterans were not in control of their military service and may not understand how their skills can be applied to civilian life.

Fortunately, companies are beginning to realize that veterans have unique and valuable skills that can benefit their businesses, even if they communicate and act differently than non-veteran employees. In fact, one in five veteran-owned businesses succeed, compared to just one in ten small businesses that are non-veteran owned. Veterans know how to handle failure and get back up to try again, and this resilience is a key factor in their success.

While corporations are starting to recognize the value of hiring veterans, they often don't know how to integrate this group effectively. This is where we come in, as we specialize in helping companies understand how to hire and support veterans in a way that benefits everyone involved. By connecting veterans with high-quality job opportunities and

facilitating the hiring process, we can help companies reap the benefits of veteran skills and experience, ultimately leading to greater success for all parties involved.

CEOCFO: *How might you help an organization understand the value of veterans and how to extrapolate from what they have done to what they can do?*

Mr. Smith:

Much of our work involves educating veterans on how to effectively present themselves to communities and corporations, as it can be challenging to teach non-veterans how to understand and communicate with veterans. Instead of placing the burden on these groups, we believe that it's more impactful to teach veterans how to value themselves and tell their stories more effectively, which is why we partner with veterans to provide this education.

One of the ways we're doing this is by working with the Transition Assistance Program at various military bases where we have job opportunities available. We visit twice a week to educate veterans on how to apply for these jobs and how to effectively communicate their skills and experiences to potential employers. Currently, we're focusing on Fort Bragg and are actively working to expand to three additional locations across the country.

As we continue to grow, we're seeking out new opportunities for regional job centralization and partnerships with communities that are eager to hire veterans in their area. Our goal is to provide veterans with the support and resources they need to secure high-quality job opportunities that leverage their unique skills and experiences.

CEOCFO: *What did you learn from your military background about how to be successful in business?*

Mr. Smith:

I think what helps all veterans is not about how you get there; it is that you get there. We say at Fortuna that, "Nothing is ever as good or as bad as it seems." You always got to keep marching on and soldiering forward as it were. It is not about being right, it is about what happens when something does not go right. Veterans really know how to dust themselves off and just keep moving forward because you have an objective that you have to meet.

What's important is understanding that success isn't about achieving it the first time, but rather, it's about getting there eventually, no matter how many times you fall down. One of our favorite quotes is "Success means falling down seven times and getting up eight." This resilience and determination is a key factor in the success of many veterans, and we strive to support and empower them in their journeys. We believe that with the right support and resources, veterans can overcome any obstacle and achieve their goals.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned over time at Fortuna about working with organizations, working with veterans and what has changed in your approach?*

Mr. Smith:

At Fortuna, we prioritize people above all else. I constantly remind my team that making money is not worth it if we're not making a positive impact in the world. I've assembled a team of individuals who share this philosophy, and we strive to embody these values in everything we do.

Overall, I believe that the business world is becoming more human-centered. We're seeing a shift away from prioritizing the bottom line and towards prioritizing kindness and empathy in management decisions. While this shift is not yet universal, it's becoming increasingly common for callous or poor choices to feel foreign and out of place in the workplace.

For me, this is the most beautiful change we're seeing. People are starting to matter more than profits in the business world, and companies are beginning to recognize the impact they have on their communities. At Fortuna, we're proud to be a part of this shift and are committed to making a positive impact on the world through our work.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about your approach to DEI and where do things like political ideology come into the mix when you are trying to get people to be more open and accepting?*

Mr. Smith:

As a government-serving organization, we don't have the opportunity to express a political opinion. At Fortuna, we work with many different industries, but our primary focus is on taking care of veterans. One of the most amazing things about veterans is that they come from all walks of life. When we hire and support veterans, we're also supporting women,

minorities, and other diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) categories because veterans encompass such a diverse group of people. This allows us to create a safe space where everyone feels welcome and valued.

From a cultural perspective, our organization is very empowering and accountable. We all share a common mission of wanting to help veterans and make a positive impact in the world. We hold each other accountable to the commitments we've made, knowing that if we all work together effectively, we can achieve our goals and succeed as a team. This sense of accountability and commitment is at the core of our culture, and it's what allows us to be so effective in our work.

CEOCFO: *How do you know when someone is right for Fortuna?*

Mr. Smith:

The beauty of questions is that they reveal what people are thinking about and what's important to them. When people ask questions, especially the first and second questions, it can tell us a lot about whether they're a good fit for Fortuna. If the questions are all about "me" and focused on things like salary or personal gain, then it's probably not a good fit. We're looking for people who genuinely care about taking care of others.

We want to work with people who say things like, "I'm not trying to get every dollar out of every deal." When the first questions they ask are about the company culture, what it's like working with others, or how they can be successful and overcome challenges, those are the kinds of questions that show us that someone is a good fit for Fortuna. We're looking for people who are motivated by the opportunity to help others and make a positive impact in the world.

CEOCFO: *You are involved in a lot of things as CEO; how do you focus in the areas you need to when there is so much opportunity?*

Mr. Smith:

Having the right team around me is crucial. I'm fortunate to have an amazing team that can handle a lot, which allows us to take on many projects. However, they also know when to say no and tell me that we need to hold off and grow more slowly. For example, the podcast has been in the works for a long time, but we had to put it on hold for a while to focus on fixing some internal problems. Now that we've resolved those issues, we're able to move forward with the podcast and other initiatives.

As a problem solver, I'm always looking for ways to move forward and make progress, but my team knows how to tell me when it's not the right time and when we need to be patient in order to be successful. Their ability to say no when necessary is a crucial part of our success.

CEOCFO: *Are you seeking partnerships, acquisitions or any funding as you grow?*

Mr. Smith:

Yes, all of that is true. We're proud to be one of the fastest-growing veteran-owned businesses in America, but it's not easy to fund that kind of fast growth, especially when you are like me and don't try to get every dollar out of every deal. While we have most of our financing needs covered, we are actively exploring opportunities to bring in additional funding. I've been having conversations with private equity firms and exploring the possibility of taking on minority stakes in the company to give us some extra support and resources.

We have some exciting new contracts in the works, but they are all government contracts, which means it can take a while to get started. Although we're confident that we'll have the funding we need to support our growth, we're still being strategic about our hiring process. We need to hire more recruiters, salespeople, and account admins to keep up with demand, but we can't afford to do so just yet.

We're always looking for ways to accelerate our growth and lean into new opportunities. We have some unique strategies for hiring veterans that we believe can make a real difference, and we're eager to share our insights with others.

CEOCFO: *Why pay attention to Fortuna, and what might someone looking at the company either as a partner, investor or client, not recognize that they really need to know?*

Mr. Smith:

I think what sets us apart is our human-centered approach. It's hard to quantify in dollars and cents, but every time we've faced difficult financial situations, everyone has been willing to take pay cuts across the board instead of cutting

jobs. They understand that it's better to stick together and keep fighting when things get tough. There's good news and bad news on a daily basis, but when your team is united, it's one unit. It all comes from our mission, which is right there upfront.

We talk about how more money means more mission, which is taking care of our people, customers, and the communities we're a part of. More money allows us to do that and helps us bridge the gap to veterans. I think that's the magic and secret sauce - the heart and human side of what we do. It's not just about data and business, it's about our mission and taking care of each other.

