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total office solutions®

And Its Family of "Anywhere" Companies

FURNISH • TECH • MOVE • LIQUIDATE • DECOM

Total Office Solutions – Trusted by Businesses for their Moving and Furniture Solutions Needs Anywhere Worldwide



Michael Monette
CEO, Co-Founder & Co-Principal

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CEOCFO: Mr. Monette, how did you get started with Total Office Solutions?

Mr. Monette: First, the use of the term "you" starting Total Office Solutions wouldn't be respectful of the "we", as in Linda and I, who made that decision, invested our lives, and sacrificed so much to be an American family business story. My story is about an accidental entrepreneur, happily working, getting fired for being right, waking up the next morning committed to never being fired for being right again. My beginnings before that were the life of a poor kid out of Montana, South Dakota. I got out of high school, impulsively went into the Air Force, where I found my best life. I went to Weapons Control Systems school for the Phantom F4D, straight to Thailand, Vietnam, and England. I served in the military for six years, deployed five times, came back to the United States, and settled in Dallas, Texas. I came to Dallas chasing a girl named Charlene Anne, married her, and found myself divorced ten years later. I worked in high-tech during the day, went to college at night, and became an electrical engineer. I started my first company, "Systems Edge," when the IBM PC was first introduced, doing early peer-to-peer twisted cable networking. My only real competitor in the city was a person that we all know well, Mr. Mark Cuban. The wife I talked about, after a decade of my going to school at night, wasn't quite up for the entrepreneur's life. She left. At just about the same moment, I found out that I was born to be in sales. I started to work for a Bell Atlantic subsidiary, Sorbus. I was selling a product where we repaired and maintained IBM mainframes, competing with IBM. I was there for about eleven months. I was invited to my first national sales meeting of 1,400 people. The first five minutes there, I was given a major sales award. The president then stood up twenty feet from me and started his keynote speech with "PCs are a fad; mainframes are still the future." Impulsively, I stood up and asked him to substantiate that while we were all here together. I took the red eye back to Dallas the next morning and was released from my employment by my manager. It was sudden, unplanned joblessness from having had the youthful spirit of just telling the truth; the truth didn't serve me well.

Just before being fired, I had been to a sales call and then went on a date with a single mom divorcee named Linda, and now here I was back in Dallas, unemployed. I went to see her for lunch, shared my economic circumstance, and pitched her on "I like you a lot, I think there is something here, and I am inviting you to explore that with me. I told her I had an idea, starting Move Solutions, a tech company that would disconnect, reconnect, and do topology changes with PCs, meaning I was not going to look for a job. Her response was to call me later that afternoon and tell me that she had set our first appointment together with the president of their company. We have worked together, parented together, for the 39 years since. She worked at night for a year while working her own job during the day. When we had our first "no money" day, she wrote a check with her savings on it. She is the foundation of all that we are. We have two wonderful daughters, both adults, who work in our family-owned business. One is 45 years old, Amy Linton, and one is 34, Megan McDaniel. They are widely and publicly acknowledged as some of the most competent and capable people in our industry. They are both educated, married, and have beautiful families.

CEOCFO: *When did you start your business?*

Mr. Monette: We started in June 1987 during the savings & loan crisis.

"Today, Total Office Solutions is the holding company for Move Solutions, Furniture Solutions Now, TechTeam Solutions and Office Furniture Plus. We are a dramatically capable and large office furniture dealer serving clients throughout the U.S. and Canada. We are known in the Southwestern United States as the dominant office mover. We are the highest user of inventive technology in our industry. We are a family of what we call the 'anywhere companies, all serving on a common technology platform.' We serve as both a Senior Partner and the largest "booking" Partner of OMA (Office Moving Alliance), our nation's most dependable logistics and moving platform for B-B moving needs. We can serve our clients in Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, brick and mortar or we can serve them through our network of contracted partners anywhere on the planet." Michael Monette

CEOCFO: *Were you a moving company initially?*

Mr. Monette: We have never been "just" a moving company. Where the idea for Total Office Solutions came from was an event that took place when I was in the early months of Move Solutions, offering purely technical services to failing and recovering banks. Our logo showed the letter "O" in Move in the shape of the symbol of an electron. One of my large clients, before Move Solutions, was Interfirst Bank. At the time of the Savings & Loan crisis, Interfirst Bank and Republic Bank were the last two Texas-owned banks in the state. They were failing. Somebody came up with the idea that if you merged two weak banks into a strong bank, you would get a strong bank: First Republic Bank. Four mergers later, it is known as Bank of America. When we started Move Solutions, I approached my old competitor, General Electric, to provide technical move support. I was turned away. They did their first move support that weekend, called me back on Monday and said they wanted to talk to me again. Over the next several years, we went on to move, disconnect and reconnect about 52 thousand PCs and intelligent monitors for them.

In the middle of being just a technology company, we would be in facilities and big offices very late at night and on weekends. We were there providing move-related technological services while watching the movers fussing with each other, watching the installers angry over the furniture, and simply being exposed to multi-contractor dysfunction. One day I had a young bank vice president call me at 2:00 a.m., saying, "Please, come and help me." I drove to their office downtown and found different companies arguing with each other. I used some of those hard-earned military leadership skills, got them all on the same page, got them completed and out of that building and made this guy feel safe. I woke up the next morning with the idea of what if we did all of that as a single entity. That was the morning that the strategy of Total Office Solutions and its Family of Anywhere Companies was born.

Today, Total Office Solutions is the holding company for Move Solutions, Furniture Solutions Now, TechTeam Solutions and Office Furniture Plus. We are a dramatically capable and large office furniture dealer serving clients throughout the U.S. and Canada. We are known in the Southwestern United States as the dominant office mover. We are the highest user of inventive technology in our industry. We are a family of what we call the 'anywhere companies, all serving on a common technology platform.' We serve as both a Senior Partner and the largest "booking" Partner of OMA (Office Moving Alliance), our nation's most dependable logistics and moving platform for B-B moving needs. We can serve our

clients in Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, brick and mortar or we can serve them through our network of contracted partners anywhere on the planet.

CEOCFO: *Are most of the services you offer through partnerships?*

Mr. Monette: No. Total Office Solutions and the other Anywhere Companies are wholly owned by Linda and me. The partners are relationships through the Office Moving Alliance entity.

CEOCFO: *Did your subsidiaries come through acquisitions?*

Mr. Monette: We started every one of the Total Office Solutions Anywhere family of companies from scratch. I was an electrical engineer, a military veteran, so I have that structured, rational, almost "build it and they shall come" mindset. I focus on words like persistent, consistent, tactical and strategic. We are extreme process adherents. Some of our growth came from Anywhere companies acquiring small firms in their "corner of the room". In each case where we have done that, we pick up someone who has tremendous goodwill in the community. Their reputation and brand were priceless.

CEOCFO: *How many employees do you have?*

Mr. Monette: The company has nearly 300 W-2 employees.

CEOCFO: *Is there any competition in this space that offers the comprehensiveness of Total Office Solutions?*

Mr. Monette: Well, this is a bit of an odd answer. There is no one in my space who competes with me by telling the truth. We own our companies, not referring to them as "ours" when they are just contracted suppliers. As I have previously described our family of Anywhere Companies to you, we own them and operate them without debt. We operate completely true to our own process. That is true throughout the degree of commercial insurance we provide, the banking relationships we provide. Twenty-five percent of my employees have been with me for at least 28 years. If there is something that has been invented in the office moving world in the last 30 years, we invented it. We are very good at dealing with B2B transactions; unlike nearly every mover in the industry, we don't do anything with residential moving. We are a pure B2B platform. As an example, several years ago, we moved Toyota to Dallas. Everybody thought we moved them from California to Dallas. In truth, we moved them from 92 locations to Dallas. We did that with perfection. We have a very large financial entity that we work with. We just finished selling them furniture, assisting in color and make and model specification. We just completely outfitted a 12-story building, which ended two days ago, while moving the entirety of the 1,600 employees. In that same time frame, there is a major new bank here in Dallas that we moved 1,900 employees for. There is a firm that is in the temp space business, perhaps the largest in the country, and we do all their work, most of which is provided with less than five days' notice. In fact, starting tomorrow, we are going to do about \$800,000 of services for them in the midst of Manhattan in three different projects. Those projects that were ordered one week ago are happening concurrently and will be completed by November 30th.

I say I don't have a competitor because my typical competitors use temporary and contract labor "paid by the job" companies, while we use W-2 employees. You hire the competitor company, who then hire people they don't know anything about, and present them as their employees when they are not. This is rampant in our industry. We recently lost a large project on price, only to be called two days before the project start with the question of, "Can you still perform our project?" This was a large bank, a bank whose security department had performed just a little background checking, immediately showing the environment I described above. We performed the project with two days' notice; we have a client for life.

CEOCFO: *Do you own your own fleet?*

Mr. Monette: Right now, in this interview, I am by chance driving in front of our Dallas headquarters. It is 400,000 square feet of client service space. It is a two-year-old building. It has the largest office furniture showroom in the United States and Canada. We manage and lead our other companies out of this building as well. We have a brand-new fleet there and in our other cities. That fleet is a full-maintenance lease fleet. Instead of owning it and being responsible for it, we manage it as a full maintenance lease with a national entity. As part of that lease, if we have a truck that is in use with a client, they are contractually obligated to replace that truck in two hours if it has a maintenance issue.

We are completely focused on best practice service for our customers. We use a fire engine front end with a double cab truck so we can send a driver and six employees, removing the need for crew transportation vehicles, and then a 24 ft.

body that is all air-ride, E-track, double secured, and instead of a lift gate, we use 4,000 pound rail gates that goes up and down in perfect balance.

CEOCFO: *Who designs all these things?*

Mr. Monette: We do!

CEOCFO: *You've captured a lot of business so far, where will growth come from in 2026?*

Mr. Monette: That is the beautiful part. We are at a time in our country where everybody is "pretty people" and pretty people don't like to get dirty. Our business happens at weekends; it happens at night and you get dirty. There is a thing called MAC (moves, adds, changes) that happens during the day inside the buildings. In large part, our industry is invisible to the world. There is opportunity everywhere. I will give you a quick math example; Dallas/Ft. Worth is a region that has 250 thousand employers. Of those 250 thousand employers, 99% are in leased buildings. Of that 99%, 97% are in three, five and seven-year leases. There are ten and fifteen-year leases, but they are far fewer in number. There is not normally a future in chasing giant bid jobs. The closer you get, the smaller the returns are.

We focus on what we call "middle-little", those three, five and seven-year leases where we go in and find ourselves working with the owners, the partners and the people that live in the space. We focus on providing infrastructure that can do countless jobs at the same time. We don't rent anything; we own everything that we touch in your facility. When you look at growth, in those 250,000 employers, 97% of it is in three, five and seven-year leases. Every single company buys everything that we sell. We are surrounded and drowning in opportunity, but you must be able to do what you sign up to do. We can. We do.

CEOCFO: *What is the geographic range for your services?*

Mr. Monette: We will move anybody, anywhere and anytime. We do a great deal of work in Canada. I am one of the three or four founders of Office Mover Alliance, and as a result, I have been involved in establishing OMA Europe. We can do projects in any urban center in the Western hemisphere. We have worked in Beijing, many years ago, we did a project in Somalia where we were replacing furniture at the US embassy, and the United States Marines had to pull my crew out under fire.

CEOCFO: *When you are moving a large corporation, do you get involved with the employee residential moving and helping them or is it strictly the business?*

Mr. Monette: Just strictly the business. We are not a residential mover. We are not skilled at dealing with concerned housewives. We are a B2B enterprise. We work very hard to be ***best of class*** in that class.

CEOCFO: *How does being a veteran come into play in how you run your business, and what about having women-owned business?*

Mr. Monette: My answer is not meant to be dramatic. It is the truth. There was a time in my life when I lived amongst heroes, and every day, people died. Where does that transfer into our business? The process-adherent procedure base is the foundation of everything we do, just like the military. I lived for six years of my life where if you didn't adhere to the process and if you didn't know your procedure, then people died, people died that you knew. I am a fanatic about process-driven procedure, adherence to the expected. In the middle of that, I am very proud that we now have a firm that people want to work in and that every single day I can look around and know that no matter how bad that day might be, nobody dies that day. That is what the military brought to our lives, awareness. We have several veterans who work for us. In the *Dallas Business Journal*, we just had a whole page for Veterans' Day. We had team members on that page from every military group, including the Coast Guard. These guys are me; I am them. They are very important to us.

My wife and partner, Linda, is the majority owner of the definition "majority-owned woman business". You might find the "why" interesting. We don't really look for business set-aside business for women-owned businesses. Nine or ten years ago, my wife and I recognized that we were getting older. We looked around and we recognized that people our age were getting divorced. I have two loves in my life, my family and my business. I took my wife to dinner, and I presented her with a package of paper wrapped in red ribbon, giving her the majority ownership of the firm so she would know that she could never be at risk. She was leading it anyway; I am the pretty face focused on sales and tomorrow. Our women-owned business is more of a love story than seeking additional business.

CEOCFO: *Is your wife Linda a co-founder and co-principal of Total Office Solutions?*

Mr. Monette: She is, and she is the Senior Partner of multi-company administration. An example of Linda and her group's important work is that they are responsible for internally what we call all things percentage.' Workers' compensation, Texas Workforce Commission, that type of thing. These are regulatory institutions that grade you and if you don't grade out well, they disproportionately penalize you with "percentage of", so Linda protects our flank.

CEOCFO: *Where do your daughters fit in the plan?*

Mr. Monette: My daughter Amy is the general manager of the Dallas/Ft. Worth region and is very responsible for the conduct of everything we do that we bring to bear to serve our clientele. She has a beautiful daughter. She works carefully with the controller and with the president of Move Solutions.

Megan is the younger of the two daughters. She has three beautiful children. She went to school and got her bachelor's and master's degrees. She is the Vice President of National Sales. She is in the Office Moving Alliance that I described, that serves Planet Earth. She just received, for the fourth year in a row, the award for being the highest-grossing salesperson in OMA.

Where Megan is a sales mind, Amy is a process mind. I laugh at them all the time and tell them that the two of them together make a whole person. Their place in our business? We are a family; we lead and manage a family-owned and operated business.

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