

Interview With Edward Tuorinsky, CEO and President of DTS Consulting

“The military is still a buddy system — and that lesson applies to small business. If you can’t play well with the team, you won’t be here long.”

Set-Aside Alert: Can you tell us how “intentional leadership” has shaped your approach to both hiring and client relationships in a space driven by deliverables and deadlines?

Ed Tuorinsky: Since its inception, we have built DTS to be a ‘people first’ culture focused on developing strong partnerships with our clients. That starts with our people. Our leadership focuses on doing the right thing for our employees’ needs. We care about our customers’ needs, and we tell them the truth.

DTS is in the services business with a culture that we’ve built over the years. I want people to come in and grow with us. If our employees succeed and find other opportunities in the federal market, we understand that. We are proud of the people who have moved on to find success elsewhere. We want to bring people into the organization and ensure they are working and learning from our educational programs, with tuition assistance, certifications, and career progression opportunities.

It’s a small world. Our culture at DTS extends beyond the offices. It’s important to have positive relationships in our industry. We want our people to grow and have positive experiences with us, and move to wherever their career takes them.

To us, our culture comes from our leaders and filters down to how we work with our customers. We want to partner with them. Our goal is to help them solve problems. People hire DTS for a reason. We want to add great value to our partnerships and work with good

people.

Set-Aside Alert: As a veteran-owned company, what advice would you give to a recently transitioned service member looking to launch a federal cyber business?

Ed Tuorinsky: Honestly, the military trains you with a certain approach, which is great. That training instills fundamental good ethics and good work ethics. However, GovCon is a different world. It doesn’t operate the same way. My advice is to understand the value you bring with your military leadership skills and experience. It’s difficult for new entrants because not every business operates with the same mission-driven value-based approach.

Many people coming into our industry sometimes don’t understand the value and skills they bring to the table from their military experience. They often undervalue their skills because the civilian market can downplay them. I tell people to know where they came from, and how they earned their current position. I recommend using those skills to propel themselves into the next phase of their careers.

The other aspect of advancing their careers is to work with other veteran-owned companies and people who have made the transition. The bond of military service is something that you can build a foundation on to have open, honest conversations about transitioning from a role in the military to the GovCon sector. The military is still a buddy system.

On the practical side, there are a million certifications. Those are big pieces of the puzzle, especially in government contracting. My goal is to work with a great team. You may have all the certifications and degrees from top-level programs or universities, but are you a team player? That is foundational to military culture. The whole team has to succeed. The military teaches you to have flexibility to pick up slack if a team member is behind or cover a job that’s a few levels below yours to help cover the workload.

Those lessons apply to small businesses. Small firms are not as robust. They don’t have as many people to flex and cover customers’ needs. That flexibility is essential for a small team. DTS was founded on a team approach of helping out our co-workers. If you can’t play well with the team, you’re probably not going to be a part of our team for very long.

Set-Aside Alert: What’s the biggest misconception small federal contractors still have about CMMC in 2025? What lessons did DTS learn through helping early clients through CMMC 2.0 preparations that could benefit the rest of the market now?

Ed Tuorinsky: The biggest misconception surrounds human nature. Everyone wants to buy a tool or hire a company that handles the compliance for them. There are a lot of great

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tools out there to help you. There are great companies that provide assistance to create a full cybersecurity program. The problem is that you're entering into an agreement with the federal government. There is a lot of paperwork involved that is being signed off on by an authority in the organization who is ultimately responsible for the program. You can't just hand it off and walk away.

You can bring in a lot of people and use a lot of tools. They can definitely help, but your company should be overseen and managed by the senior leadership. CMMC isn't something that you check the box and put away for a year or three before you do it again. CMMC is a program that is ever evolving, and to meet the intent of NIST 800 and DoD requirements, you need to develop a program that integrates processes, procedures, and technology.

You also need to monitor and track your compliance as your company evolves based on the needs of your clients. DoD is looking for companies that take compliance seriously. The process of updating their programs, procedures and technologies was a requirement three years ago when many people believed that setting up a new platform or a data center was one-and-done. Many now realize that this is an everyday task. It's not plug-and-play.

Set-Aside Alert: With so much uncertainty in the federal budget and procurement cycles, how is DTS positioning itself to stay resilient and relevant in the next 12–18 months? What's the next company goal you want to achieve heading into 2026?

Ed Tuorinsky: In today's ever-changing landscape, long-term strategic planning into 2026 and 2027 can be challenging. The federal market is in a period of transition, and change has become part of the daily operating environment. As a veteran-owned business, adaptability is part of who we are, and it has enabled us to remain consistently compliant year after year. There is tremendous opportunity that comes with adapting quickly and anticipating where priorities will shift. People used to be jealous of the federal DoD side with five-year contracts. Those times have changed, but DTS is well-positioned to meet the new environment and to help others do the same

As this administration resets its priorities, the trick is going to be investing time and money into the areas the administration favors and providing solutions for the federal government. I still believe that the government understands the value of industry. The industrial base understands the innovation that small federal businesses bring to the table. It's a great opportunity to drive business and achieve mission goals.

There will be continued emphasis on that defense industrial base to deliver results. I want DoD to be saying, 'DTS solves problems. DTS delivers solutions. They get results.' Over the next 12 to 18 months, we want to be recognized as a premier cybersecurity provider delivering consistent, high-quality outcomes to the federal government. The buzzword of the year is reduce, reduce, reduce. AI is definitely going to be part of the process, but it won't be a simple, all-encompassing solution.

As we talked about with CMMC, there's no magic bullet for these problems. The ultimate goal is to be the best in the world. The government and DoD want to have the best military. They want to have the most efficient government. They also want to serve the taxpayers efficiently. As a small business, focus on providing the services and value your clients need and deliver. There are plenty of opportunities for companies to innovate and drive solutions for the government.

About Edward Tuorinsky

Edward Tuorinsky, a Service-Disabled Veteran, brings nearly two decades of experience to DTS in areas of leadership, management consulting and information technology services.

Tuorinsky has served on the National Veteran Small Business Coalition (NVSBC) National Board of Directors and the National Small Business Association (NSBA) Leadership Council.

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