

Veterans, their companies navigate tougher times

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Minimizing risk by broadening business is the strategy some veteran-owned businesses are using for survival in this economy.

"Diversity is part of the key to the whole successful model of government contracting," said Moses L. Harvin, owner of American Services Technology and a new enterprise, One Source Office Products, which together have about 100 employees.

The office products company offers 12,000 products online and could help bring in new business at a time when government contracts are becoming fewer and less lucrative.

"This economy and the world market are taking a downturn," said Harvin, a panelist at Wednesday's Veterans Business Conference at the King Center in Melbourne.

Harvin, who said his company favors veterans when hiring, added that veterans who plan to start businesses now must be prepared for headwinds.

"So, perseverance is the key," he said. "Make sure you have a business plan and stick to it. And never give up."

Though the job market is tight, veterans can find employment if they have the right skills and if they concentrate on businesses that contract for the federal government and favor the skills veterans have acquired during their service, experts said Wednesday.

"Some of our customers are (in Iraq and Afghanistan), so it's very useful for us to hire veterans," said keynote speaker Phil Monkress, CEO of All Points Logistics.

Monkress said his company, headquartered in Titusville, has about a dozen openings and hopes to fill those positions with veterans. Software engineering and software development are several in-demand jobs for veterans today.

"I've been there, so I understand what they went through," said Monkress, a former Navy SEAL. "They understand a certain type of structure."

The Small Business Development Center at Brevard Community College organizes the annual conference to assist veterans in taking advantage of the government and industry programs designed to help them.

Veteran-owned businesses are struggling as the U.S. economy seems unable to get its footing.

"There is uncertainty in government contracts and they don't last forever," said Victoria Peak, the center's director.

One Merritt Island medical staffing company has diversified to reduce its dependence on military medical programs.

"We're branching out into the engineering world, IT services and environmental -- all ways that make sense to us," said Rich Hall, CFO and CIO of Luke & Associates.

The government contractor with more than 1,300 employees nationwide was founded in 2004 and grew quickly. Luke has about 125 job openings nationwide and gives preference to "They understand the military environment, so it's just a great fit for us," Hall said.

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To Be Continued ...



File photo

Timothy Michaud

'Based upon my investigation as a criminal investigator with the Craven County Sheriff's Department there is probable cause to arrest Timothy Michaud for sexual assault on R(xxxx) Michaud.'

John Whitfield
May 7, 2010



Brevard County Sheriff's Office photo

'I need to report suspected abuse.'

Dana Delaney Loyd
aka Theresa Smith
to Florida Abuse Hotline
at 11:12 a.m., April 29, 2015



Brevard County Sheriff's Office photo

'Loyalty is everything to me!!!'
Sheriff Robert Wayne Ivey
to Dana Delaney Loyd
at 5:19 p.m., April 29, 2015