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SPRING/SUMMER 2023

West Virginia's Fastest-growing Company Wants Something Better



Brandon Downey
Trilogy Innovations

Brandon Downey is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Trilogy Innovations and has been a technologist and leader in the software development and systems engineering field for more than 25 years. Working with customers across federal and state governments, academia, and the petroleum industries, he provides strategy on IT digital transformations, cloud computing solutions, and custom software development. Downey's passion is teaching the youth and leaders of tomorrow and helping forge a new identity for West Virginia. He earned undergraduate degrees in computer engineering and computer science as well as a master's degree in software engineering from West Virginia University.

Any business owner would probably say there is no secret recipe that leads to success, but there is an ingredient that stands out in the business landscape at Trilogy Innovations, Inc. That ingredient for this SBA Certified 8(a) small and minority-owned and certified SBA HUBZone systems and software engineering company, simply put, is that Trilogy wants to make the world better — in every possible way.

“Some of our goals are similar to many, many other businesses,” said Trilogy President and CEO Brandon Downey. “A strong work ethic, an unwavering commitment to excellence, attracting the most highly skilled and talented personnel, and even defining the company by earning a reputation for quality and service — there are lots of companies that have those goals. However, we believe something that has led to our success thus far is that we absolutely want to make the most positive impact we can on the world around us. For our customers, for our state, for our community, for our future generations, we want to be better.”

The growth of the IT services sector is the reflection of a fast-moving world, where technical solutions in a variety of industries across the private and public sectors is a must. Using its own formula in offering services, including cybersecurity, data analytics, software integration, cloud services, biometrics, and applications services, has propelled the company upward since its inception in 2010.



In mid-2022, Trilogy was notified by *Inc.* magazine that it had been named #590 in its esteemed list of the 5,000 fastest-growing companies in the nation. Additionally, this company, headquartered in Bridgeport, West Virginia, and with offices in Morgantown, West Virginia, was named the fastest-growing company in the state and the 31st fastest-growing IT services company in the U.S.

Yet, that desire to do better and to be better is what has made Trilogy's journey such a unique one. A prime example of that desire is the Tech Yeah Conference, an event created by Trilogy co-founders, President and CEO, Brandon Downey, and Vice President and COO, Randy Cottle, to restate the importance of cooperation and collaboration in West Virginia's technology sector to continue growth, promote partnerships, and invite new opportunities. The inaugural conference in August 2022 saw nearly 300 attendees from dozens of companies and organizations ranging from the FBI, NASA, and the National Energy Technology Laboratory to small, large, and startup companies.

“Collaboration and cooperation have been at the core of the technology industry's growth in West Virginia for more than three decades,” Cottle said, “and they will continue to be critical components for growth going forward. This conference provided speakers from federal anchor organizations located in North Central West Virginia and created an environment where attendees could float ideas of partnerships. Federal anchors have relied on partnerships with large, small,



and startup companies since they first located here, and the need for that kind of collaboration is stronger than ever.”

Downey said West Virginia-based companies are more than capable of playing the role of subcontractors and prime contractors for government contracts, and pointed to Morgantown-based Civil-Military Innovation Institute (CMI2) as an example. Businesses like CMI2, he said, represent a new economy in West Virginia.

“CMI2 is a non-profit defense innovation organization and contractor that has created an environment of innovation through collaboration between service members and researchers, and their organization bridges the gaps in defense innovation and creates functional solutions to support the warfighter. CMI2 is not in Northern Virginia or anywhere along the Washington Beltway. The company is in Morgantown, West Virginia,” said Downey.

Cottle said partnerships and collaboration are key to further development of a “data-driven West Virginia,” but that these partnerships do not mean West Virginia companies cannot handle the roles of prime contractors.

“We can do more collectively in West Virginia than we can do individually,” Cottle said. “That strength comes from partnerships. There are finite numbers of government contracts. Large companies come in and have the capability to grab the contract and then subcontract West Virginia companies to do the work. Why not award the West Virginia companies the contracts to begin with?”

The co-founders both emphasized a growing and strengthening workforce in the IT services sector in West Virginia, in part due to Trilogy’s involvement with higher education. As the company

has participated in career fairs at Marshall University and West Virginia University in search of top talent, it has also contributed in unique ways to WVU, ranging from speakers to masters classes to contributions to the National Science Foundation-funded ACCESS (Attracting and Cultivating Cybersecurity Experts and Scholars through Scholarships) program.



Brandon Downey, President and CEO; and Randy Cottle, Vice President and COO

The National Science Foundation put up \$1 million for its S-STEM program, which addresses the need for a high-quality STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) workforce in areas of national priorities. Among those areas is cybersecurity, where the funding is applied for high-

achieving undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need.

“We saw two ways to get involved in the ACCESS program at WVU: to deliver seminars to students on cybersecurity-related topics and to offer internship opportunities to these students,” Downey said. “We decided to do both.”

This academic year alone, Cottle and Downey have met with students, faculty, and administrators at WVU on several occasions. From educating students on career paths to seminars led by Trilogy subject matter experts like senior software engineer, Jonathan Beaver, Trilogy has developed a reputation for student interaction. Now in its third year, the company’s internship program with WVU attracted nearly 150 applicants for four to five technology and human resources spots.

“We want to do the things not everybody does to bolster the new economy in our community, our state, our region, and in our business sector,” Cottle explained. “By doing better, we believe we are being better, and that has a positive ripple effect. We’re simply determined to lead by example.” ▽

