



Your Technology Solutions Provider

Richard Lewis

President and CEO

RTL Networks, Inc.

POSITION STATEMENT

My vision of the position:

Courage, Leadership, Work-ethic, Integrity, Determination and Ingenuity are all traits the military instills or enhances within everyone who puts on a uniform. To me these are more than just great sounding words for recruiting posters. These are value propositions offered by veteran and service disabled veterans and the businesses they own. We add value, and I would consider it an honor to represent and advocate for my peer VOSB and SDVOSB firms, as part of NVSBC's effort to position our military experience as a competitive advantage and ensure veteran owned small businesses are given first consideration for federal, prime and subcontract procurement opportunities.



Your Technology Solutions Provider

What is the critical issue that NVSBC members are facing that you think needs to be addressed under your participation on the Board?

It is not uncommon for those leaving the military to experience difficulty conforming to civilian life and corporate America. This is why I participated as a mentor in the inaugural Boots-to-Suits program offered by the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the University of Colorado to assist veterans with resume development, networking skills, interview techniques and other functions associated with assimilating into the civilian workforce. I was happy to see those vets we worked with succeed and move on; but, the reality is that many vets are not able to assimilate or thrive in corporate America, and for them business ownership one of the few viable options.

According to Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (and other research organizations) approximately 49.7% of WWII vets and 40% of Korean War vets became business owners. However, since 9/11 the rate of military veterans who start their own businesses has reduced drastically. Some attribute this to the new GI Bill's lack of a low interest business loan component. Others attribute this decrease to the loss of manufacturing and other easy to access jobs that allowed vets to learn the skills necessary to open a business. But, regardless of the reason, it is clear that more support is currently needed to assist vets in starting and sustaining businesses and one of the best ways to support any business is to ensure access to opportunity and revenue. This is why the existence of organizations like the NVSBC is so important.

If allowed the privilege of serving on the NVSBC board of directors, I would leverage my experience as a successful SDVOSB owner to support the organization's efforts to educate and advise legislators, large prime contractors and government own how to ensure veteran and service disabled veteran owned business are afforded adequate attention and preference in the government acquisition and purchasing processes. I would take this position these activities very seriously, as I believe, for the reasons stated above, this is the most critical issue facing NVSBC members.

