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Stafford Veteran Business Owner lives the American Dream Motivation and SBA Assistance are key to his Business Success

STAFFORD, Va. – Only 19 and fresh off the plane from Ecuador, he spoke very little English and would take on any job to stay afloat before eventually joining the Marines. This was the decision that would forever change his life both as a person and a businessman.

Cesar Nader is proof the American dream is alive and well today.

Although born in the United States, his mother moved them back to her native Ecuador when he was a young boy to be closer to her family. Opportunities in Ecuador for a single mother with young children were almost non-existent. They struggled for many years just to make ends meet. With little opportunity and chance for success Nader knew he had to return to the U.S. After his high school graduation, he asked his grandfather to help him return. His grandfather made a deal with him: earn \$200 without asking family and friends for money and he would pay the rest. This was the first step in Nader's American dream.

“I had no idea what I was going to do when I got to America,” said Nader. “I knew I had this urge to get there, no matter what. I worked a couple of jobs just to make a little bit of money to survive. It wasn't enough, but it was a great feeling to be back in the U.S.”

After a few months of struggle, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. Nader saw it as his first option, not a last option. He knew everything he made would be earned - his success would be completely up to him. He rose from private to gunnery sergeant in a little under eight years. Eventually, he was commissioned as an officer, completed an undergraduate degree and later a master's degree.

Having more than twenty years devoted to the Marine Corps, it was time for a change. Nader retired and was a civilian once again. With a desire to succeed, his search for a civilian career began with the direction, education and skills the military provided him for civilian life.

“After more than 200 phone screenings, 40 face-to-face interviews across the country and 11 job offers, one of the interviewers said I couldn't be hired,” said Nader. “He saw me as the bus driver, not a rider.”

This was the first time the idea of owning a business presented itself to Nader.

Nader's first business flipping homes was very profitable. He bought homes, fixed them up and sold them. Remembering his impoverished past, he focused on finding homes for low-income

families. However, he still wanted to do more. Considering his military background and experience, why not be a defense contractor?

X Corp Solutions would be his next venture.

Through Nader's personal and professional network, signs pointed at joining the U.S. Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development Program a program helping disadvantaged businesses get a foothold in federal government contracting. Businesses can be in the program a total of nine years, four years in a development stage and a five-year transition stage. The program also helps participants maintain a balance of commercial and government business. The overall program goal is to graduate 8(a) firms that will go on to thrive in a competitive business environment.

Nader's company began at his kitchen table in 2011. It would be his biggest risk in life because it would directly affect his family. He would shut down a very profitable business and open up a risky venture in a very uncertain time in government contracting. He knew the military, but did not know government contracting. He would need all the help he could get. Nader spent many hours on the SBA's webpage watching training sessions and reading everything he could to get off the ground.

Once the plan was put in motion, Nader set out to become one of SBA's 8(a) government contractors. He joined the program in 2012 as a provider of top secret services in foreign language, intelligence and cyber security, training and education development and engineering support services to the defense community.

Because of determination, Nader has landed a number of contracts. In 2014, X Corps Solutions was awarded contracts allowing him to grow to over \$3 million in revenues. Contracts like this helped grow his company from three to more than 30 employees in just over three years in business.

"X Corp Solutions is the most compelling evidence that the SBA and its resources are an equalizing element. They have helped level the playing field and provide a true place at the table in federal contracting space for companies like us," said Nader.

Getting started is not as easy as you might think, but new government contractors can get help a number of different ways. One way is having a mentor.

X Corp participates in the Department of Defense, Office of Small Business' mentor-protégée program with GRS Inc. GRS' role as a mentor is to help X Corp eventually compete for prime contracts and subcontract awards. So far, the relationship is working out for both companies.

"Cesar has great business sense and vision," said Tony Williams, CEO of GRS Inc. "He has distinguished X Corp from other companies because of his discipline, honesty and integrity. You just don't come across it as much as you do with him. He will give you the shirt off his back. I am happy have him as a teammate."

As in business, success in the military relies on a good mentorship structure, and Nader is sharing the wealth. Nader met Eddie Pena early in their careers, with some of the same duty stations, same military schooling and they even retired around the same time. Remaining friends throughout their careers, they talked frequently - so much that Nader encouraged and challenged

Pena to start his own business, which he gladly accepted. He recently started his company with mentoring from Nader.

“I am really surprised about the amount of success in a short amount of time,” said Pena. “Cesar has always been about helping other Marines and service members. He has created a network just for that purpose especially focusing on starting and running a business. He believes in success by helping others be successful.”

From getting off that plane as a teenager to starting X Corp, Nader’s success did not happen overnight. His enthusiasm has been rewarded through contracts and a growing reputation to get the job done. Nader’s accomplishments have not gone to his head. He always remembers where he has been, giving back whenever possible by passing down knowledge for the next generation of entrepreneurs. With the help of the SBA and its 8(a) Business Development Program, Cesar Nader has proven that the American Dream remains alive and well.



CAPTION: President and CEO of X Corps Solutions, Inc. gives direction to staff members Tabitha Henderson and Tori Oakley during a meeting in Stafford, Va.

OF NOTE: For more information or one-on-one interviews, contact Matthew Nowak, SBA’s Richmond District Office Public Affairs Specialist (matthew.nowak@sba.gov)

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