

**Small Business Spotlight**

# Fuse Integration—Blending Design, Technology & Military Experience

**M**et Sumner Lee, the CEO of Fuse Integration, a technology firm specializing in building network systems primarily for aircraft. With a background as a Navy H-46 helicopter pilot and over a decade of leading Fuse since its founding in 2010, Lee has cultivated a company that thrives on innovation, resilience and a deep connection to the needs of military users. “We have just over 100 people, and nearly 40% of us are veterans,” Lee shares. “I love hiring veterans because of their resiliency, capabilities and knowledge.”

Lee’s journey from military service to successful business leadership results from leveraging unique experiences and skills. After his time flying helicopters in San



Diego and working with Navy Technology Development Command (now NAVWAR), Lee saw an opportunity to blend his love for design with military technology. Treating his time in the Navy Acquisition and DoD environment like an MBA, he later earned a formal MBA from USC and worked at a design firm.

“I’ve always been really centered around design,” he explains. Fuse Integration was born from Lee’s vision of merging user-centric

design principles with defense technology, a combination that has propelled the company’s growth and success across multiple platforms.

Fuse Integration’s process revolves around what Lee calls “warfighter-focused engineering and design.” This involves applying design thinking concepts drawn from Lee’s experience in design-centric environments to develop solutions truly centered on military users’ needs.

“When we start a project, we don’t just dive into engineering,” Lee says. “We sit down with the users to understand their workflow and mission needs, ensuring the technology we develop makes their lives easier.”

One of the unique aspects of Fuse Integration is its relentless commitment to maintaining a connection with the end-users. “Sometimes we have to fight to get in front of the userse,” Lee admits. “We’ll go to great lengths, even if it means going sideways compared to typical acquisition processes, to ensure that we’re engaging with the warfighters from the start of a project to its completion.” This hands-on approach allows Fuse to continuously refine its products based on direct feedback from those who rely on them in critical missions.

Reflecting on why veterans excel as entrepreneurs, Lee highlights the resilience and toughness cultivated through military service.

“Veterans have gone through tough situations—whether on a ship in the Pacific, in a desert fighting hole or flying a bomber over the North Pole,” he says. “They bring a resilience and knowledge that’s hard to find elsewhere.”

For veterans considering the leap into entrepreneurship, Lee’s advice is to trust their instincts. Drawing from his own experience, he recounts a spontaneous flight test that led to significant insights and successful program development for NAVAIR.

“That kind of instinct to take action is one of the hardest but best lessons in business.”

As Fuse Integration continues to grow and expand its reach across Navy surveillance aircraft, tactical fighters, bombers, ground systems and unmanned vehicles, Lee remains focused on his core philosophy and personal motto:

“Get shit done.”

This no-nonsense approach, paired with a dedication to delivering what users need, drives Fuse’s success and cements its unique position in the industry.

For Lee and his team, the journey is far from over. “We’re having a lot of fun right now, growing and delivering on platforms. We’re out there every day, delivering what our users need.” With a firm commitment to user-centric design and a strong foundation in military experience, Fuse Integration is not just another tech company—it’s a mission-driven force dedicated to empowering those who serve. ■