

Top 10 CFOs share top GovCon tips for 2009

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Jaytee Kanwal of CNSIIt's a scene ripped from Syriana or Wall Street, only this time with the good guys in the lead: Four corporate execs, all friends, are playing a high-powered game of racquetball when inspiration strikes. "We really need to start something on our own, " says one. The year is 1994, and one by one, they leave their corporate jobs to found a small consulting firm. From CNSI's

humble beginnings— it generated \$25, 000 in revenue its first year, or as CFO Jaytee Kanwal points out, \$24, 697, to be exact— the Rockville, Md.-based company has gone on to become a leading provider of full-service IT solutions to commercial and government clients. Along the way, Kanwal has demonstrated a killer backhand as the company's CFO; he helped CNSI generate \$160 million in revenue in 2008 alone. From accounting to finance, pricing to recruiting, plus a whole range of other responsibilities in between, Kanwal has worked steadfastly behind-the-scenes to ensure the company's growth. "As a founding partner, Jaytee has played a critical role in CNSI's success, " says the company's CEO, B. Chatterjee. "With an innate ability to reconcile the business needs with the financial — while maintaining a focus on the future — Jaytee proactively identifies risks and mitigation strategies that guarantee future success." Kanwal brings a "constant eye" to every project. He navigates the intricacies of pricing while another partner focuses on business strategy and the capture process. Kanwal also holds mandatory monthly financial reviews, a practice which began in earnest after CNSI landed its first contract with the U.S. Census Bureau back in 1996. Kanwal's Tip for 2009: Diversify Kanwal is quick to shoot down any suggestion that the government contracting community will be fairly sheltered amid U.S. economic woes. "Diversification is the name of the game, the more you can diversify the less your portfolio is going to get hit, " says Kanwal. In CNSI's case, with clients across multiple agencies on both the federal and state side, it's projected to see its revenue increase between 10 and 11 percent by the end of 2009 — yet another example of the "risk and mitigation" strategies Kanwal brings to the game.