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Infusing values taken directly from his Hawaiian culture – cooperation, leadership, family, generosity and harmony – Vaughn Vasconcellos opened Akimeka LLC, in 1997. Armed with \$35,000 and his vision of creating a small business that could provide innovative information technology for the military medical industry, Vaughn sought out the assistance of SBA’s Small Business Development Center. There, he received helpful technical advice which helped him develop the business. He also took advantage of SBA’s 8(a) program, which provides business development and federal contract support to small disadvantaged businesses.

Today, Akimeka has grown from a Hawaii company with 20 employees in 2001 to a firm with a staff of 161 with offices in Texas, Florida and Washington, D.C. The company has been able to sustain strong profitability and has grown revenues to almost \$20 million, with a 54 percent increase in the revenue base in the past five years.

Through a supportive and values-driven leadership, Akimeka has developed into a sound company that provides cutting-edge technology systems to federal agencies and the military. Some Akimeka projects include the Joint Medical Asset Repository program that tracks military medical supply inventories. Medical units in Iraq and Afghanistan use the company’s Joint Medical Work Station surveillance software to track systemic outbreaks of disease among the troops.

Several years ago, the company developed a Web-based telemedicine application for community health centers on the island of Hawaii. This electronic medical record tracked patient encounters in remote locations and shared the information with healthcare providers, dramatically improving the delivery of healthcare to patients. Akimeka is also focused on introducing information technology systems that support military medical operations and help provide enhanced medical response and care. A company team is in the process of developing the Joint Medical Readiness Tool that will support rapid medical response nationwide for emergencies, including pandemic outbreaks and terrorist attacks.

A West Point graduate who was raised by his grandmother and aunt, Vaughn learned early in life the importance of serving his community. In 2004, he organized the Alaka’ina Foundation, a non-profit organization that creates leadership and education programs for Native Hawaiian children. He also serves on the boards of several non-profit organizations.

