

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
SBIR/STTR TRANSITION PROGRAM
SPOTLIGHT

Company: VIRTUVIA, LLC (dba CoachMePlus)
 Website: <http://www.coachmeplus.com>

POC: Kevin Dawidowicz
 Phone: 716-866-6560

Address: Tri-Main Center 2495 Main St,
 Suite 401 Buffalo, NY 14214

CoachMePlus: Helping the Navy Optimize, Prioritize Sailors' Health & Wellness

By Julie Scuderi

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program has long been a steppingstone for high-tech small businesses looking to further develop their sought-after innovations. For CoachMePlus, however, the path to success was slightly different. Already a nation-wide success in the sports and fitness industry, the Buffalo-based small business leveraged the federal SBIR program to fill a pressing Navy need.

CoachMePlus, along with Department of Defense (DoD) teaming partner TIAG, successfully delivered to the Navy a working software platform and hardware prototype called the Human Performance Self-Serve Kiosk (HPSSK), designed to share human performance and other wellness information such as nutrition, sleep, fatigue, readiness, physical training and more. The technology provides a holistic view of the Sailor's wellness and fitness by seamlessly integrating with commercially available trackers including smart watches, phones and tablets. This kiosk and corresponding app serve as a single data collection point and allow the Navy to easily track and assess key data and information that helps to optimize performance of the force.

When the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) originally released an SBIR solicitation in 2017 seeking these requirements, the Navy had no real means to track and store this type of data in a single platform. At the time, CoachMePlus



CoachMePlus' SBIR technology tracks fleet members throughout the readiness cycle, informing key command decision makers to support mission and training adjustments. This helps leaders to measure human performance and uncover trends, develop insights, reduce risk and customize training programs.

had been working in the sports industry for six years and had made a name for itself by working with the Buffalo Bills and other National Football League (NFL) and professional sports teams. The company's core philosophy was centered around the fact that if you could digitally connect a user with a "coach"—somebody to hold you accountable and keep you moving toward your fitness goals—then the outcome would always be more favorable than if left to one's own devices.

"Having a partner in accountability who is invested in your fitness outcomes is a key piece of the whole puzzle and why we exist," explains Kevin Dawidowicz, co-founder and president

SPOTLIGHT

CoachMePlus: Helping the Navy Optimize, Prioritize Sailors' Health & Wellness... (continued)



Photo courtesy of CoachMePlus

CoachMePlus' mobile app experience, which was part of the Navy SBIR deliverable, allows both coaches and users to connect on workouts, nutrition, hydration, wellness, testing and more.

at CoachMePlus. “Technology cannot do this alone and we design our platform to enhance a relationship—not replace it.”

Although the team had never ventured into government contracting before, they understood the need of the customer, and knew they could customize and evolve their existing technology to fill that gap. CoachMePlus also identified a need to accelerate development in a DoD-secure environment and partnered with TIAG, a Reston, Va.-based technology solutions provider with vast experience in secure technology solutions and telehealth platforms in the DoD.

“When you have all holistic human performance information in one place, you can begin to build a full view of your wellness and your health,” says Dawidowicz. “The Navy was

dealing with the problem of having disparate sources of human performance information siloed across the organization—and to have it all in one place is very helpful. We aimed to simplify this information collection and analysis and make it accessible to the user.”

A Phase II SBIR contract soon followed the first, and the result was a fully-functioning HPSSK that displays all the essential human performance information the Navy was seeking, and serves as an individualized educational platform for users ashore and at sea. DoD-specific functionality was also perfected in Phase II to track nutrition and provide educational learning management tools for the Sailor and administrators. The mobile app experience empowers users with a robust fitness/nutrition profile. Additionally, it supports seamless transition to and from the mobile app with the end goal of a working solution in a disconnected shipboard environment.

The transition to Phase III was a natural extension of the success and is currently underway with integration into multiple Navy applications. The first is a pilot with the Navy Delayed Entry Program (DEP).

CoachMePlus' HPSSK pilot program will be used to help automate some of the recruiters' processes and move the tracking of engagements away from paper and into a sustainable digital system. The pilot looks to put information in the recruiter's hands in real-time for the first time ever and improve their ability to serve as the recruit's accountability partner. The study is designed to improve retention in recruits and is being conducted over a year-long period.

A Phase III contract was also awarded to CoachMePlus to provide remote fitness training for airmen through the Ohio Air National Guard. This contract will focus on up to 2,400 airmen and will aim to improve fitness standards and scores, increase compliance on fitness activities and learn from usage patterns to improve the platform.

CoachMePlus is also engaged in a pilot with the U.S. Army Reserve Command for the health and holistic fitness (H2F) program, and the company is working with the Army Recovery Care Program on a five-year program rolling out soon.

With ample opportunities and government doors opening for CoachMePlus, the company is glad it decided to go after that initial SBIR bid, and is also thankful for the guidance and assistance it received along the way.

"When we got the original SBIR in 2017, we were brand new to government contracting," recalls Dawidowicz. "The Navy STP was extremely helpful and allowed us to really get a grasp of the scope working within the military. Most people just don't know where to start when it comes to the complexities of working with customers in the military, but we built a great relationship with our technical point of contact, Mr. Christopher S. Bailey, and the SBIR program. This helped guide us through the process, taught us how procurement happens, how to identify customers, budgeting, and really put us through a bit of a boot camp of working with the Department of Defense, and that was incredible."

Dawidowicz credits the Navy SBIR funding with helping his company and technology get to where it is today and providing its customers with improved products and services. CoachMePlus is now able to offer an entire set of nutritional and content management tools that didn't exist before.

"If you look at the altruistic view of the SBIR program, it's there to improve the product and make it available for government use, but also eventually to other commercial customers," adds Dawidowicz. "And that's exactly what we did. SBIR really helped us to step up our game."

For more information, visit the company website at:

COACHMEPLUS 

<https://coachmeplus.com/>