

As a Technology Services Distributor (TSD), vTec operates within what is usually known or described as “the channel.” Adjectives like “wholesale” or “indirect sales” are sometimes used to describe this industry, and those are probably helpful descriptors. What I love about the channel is that it enables entrepreneurs across a variety of geographies, skill sets, and experiences, to truly build and grow meaningful businesses. Some of the terms often attributed to these entrepreneurs are VARs (Value Added Re-Sellers), MSPs (Managed Service Providers), or as we call them “Advisors.” Regardless of the name, our reason for existing is that we think entrepreneurial activity is the very foundation of the American economy. In general, we exist to help entrepreneurs. More specifically, we exist to help veterans make the leap into business ownership within the realm of telecom/IT/cybersecurity.

As a TSD, we have both direct and indirect partnerships with hundreds of vendors and service providers. It is this vendor portfolio that is first and foremost what we bring to you the veteran entrepreneur. If you already own a business (any business), we hope you’ll consider us your one stop shop for all things technology. If you are considering getting into the IT / telecom / cyber consulting world, we hope you will take advantage of our vendor portfolio and all the expertise that comes with it.

In addition to our vendor portfolio, I hope that our experiences within the channel will be something you tap into, not because we know everything, but precisely because we have made plenty of mistakes along the way. Here are two of my biggest ones:

1. I was once the CEO of a small Telecom Expense Management company called Juvo Technologies. In that role, we partnered with a carrier out of Reno, NV that was focused on providing broadband access to rural health care facilities. I didn’t do a very good job vetting this carrier. They would eventually be fined by the [FCC for roughly \\$21M](#) for fraud. Juvo sank a lot of resources into this rural program, and while we had no legal responsibilities for having partnered with this carrier, it would take us a while to dig out from the hole.
2. I was once involved with a \$1M acquisition of a digital payments company that was losing roughly \$100K a month. We thought we could turn the company around within a quarter or two. Within a year, we were still losing money. Emotions amongst the leadership team were running high with fingers being pointed everywhere. I eventually left the company, not because I wanted to, but because I had failed to truly create a culture of accountability up and down the chain of command. In the money printing days following the Covid pandemic, with remote work becoming the norm, this company, which facilitated paying bills digitally/remotely, would sell for [\\$100M](#).

I mention these two instances to drive home a couple of points. First off, be careful of who you let take up positions on your left or right flanks (business partners, alliances, etc). Who you associate with will affect you. Secondly, there is a big difference between a mistake, and a moral failing. I hope that all within the vTec ecosystem know the difference. Not everyone I’ve worked with in the past has. Lastly, I mention these mistakes to drive home a reality that perhaps we have in common: not everything in life works out, but the entrepreneurial mindset is truly one of hope, a belief that tomorrow is worth waking up for, that opportunity exists if we are willing to take action.

It has become common for me to tell folks who ask me about my time in the military, that “I got way more out of the Marine Corps than the Marine Corps got out of me.” That is 100% true. After a short enlistment, I got accepted into the Naval Academy. I eventually got stationed in Hawaii as an Infantry officer. I got to see places I never would have without the military and I retain many great relationships because of my time as a Marine. I genuinely believe that my role at Vtec will eventually prove to be more “service” oriented than my time in the military, as our entire focus is on you, the veteran or military spouse who hears the “call of the entrepreneur” and is willing to jump into the fray of business ownership. While it might sound cheesy, I salute you.

Best of luck,

*John Matthew Schroder*