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Global Crossing gears up for cyber push

By Marjorie Censer

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[Global Crossing](#), the telecommunications company that quickly rose to prominence and then fell to bankruptcy, is hoping to dramatically expand its U.S. government business, particularly in the burgeoning cybersecurity field.

John A. Sutton, named general manager of the company's public sector last month, comes to Global Crossing from Fairfax-based contractor [ManTech International](#), where he was a senior vice president focused on cyber and technology work for defense and intelligence agencies.

Sutton said he welcomes the opportunity to open a new storefront for Global Crossing, seeking to move it from limited telecommunications work for the U.S. defense and intelligence communities to a much broader presence in telecommunications, cybersecurity and even cloud computing.

Global Crossing, which built the first private global fiber-optic-based network and now offers video, voice and data services to companies and carriers around the world, has had its share of past troubles. The company was founded in 1997 and rose to prominence in the telecommunications glory days but plunged in the bust, filing for bankruptcy in early 2002.

It emerged in late 2003 and is now majority-owned by Singapore government-owned Singapore Technologies Telemedia -- an arrangement that may pose a challenge as the company looks to the cybersecurity field.

Sutton, however, doesn't see the company's past as a hurdle as it trains its eye on the federal marketplace.

"I think it gives us a strength," he said, citing the "fortitude" of the company's leadership. John J. Legere, its chief executive, took Global Crossing into bankruptcy, oversaw its restructuring and still heads the firm. Global Crossing is based in Bermuda but has its main offices in New Jersey.

Michael J. Miller, vice president of the company's global security and federal programs and a long-time Global Crossing employee, has also joined the federal team.

"We've had to be nimble," Miller said. "You don't want to be perceived as this company with a rocky past."

Though Global Crossing already works as a subcontractor on federal programs -- including the large telecommunications and networking upgrade program Networx -- Sutton said the company plans to win a mix of contracts, some as a prime contractor and some as a subcontractor.

In entering the cybersecurity market, he will rely on the company's experience monitoring its internal networks and operations as well as its commercial credentials.

"The government customer loves to see commercial success," Sutton said. "That is a huge thing for us."

He also plans to draw on his connections. A government contracting veteran, Sutton previously worked at information technology firm McDonald Bradley before it was acquired by ManTech and in the uniformed services practice area of IT company Integic.

Sutton declined to say how many people Global Crossing has hired to build its federal business -- run out of its Reston office -- but said the company is "rapidly and aggressively" expanding its team.

Robert D. Kipps, managing director of McLean-based investment firm KippsDeSanto, said there's an obvious connection between communications providers and the cybersecurity market.

"It also is one of the hottest areas in the federal market based on anticipated future spending," he said of cyber.

But Global Crossing will face a competitive pool -- and may have a stigma to overcome because it is owned by a foreign company, Kipps said.

"They are jumping into the same pool that Verizon and AT&T and other domestic providers are doing as well," he said. "It's not a surprise that [Global Crossing is] interested in that; their competition is interested in that as well."