



# FIRE-FX

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REDEFINING HOME  
ENTERTAINMENT





When Larry Allhands witnessed the destruction of his prized Blu-ray DVD collection at the hands of his toddler son in 2011, it spurred him to search for a digitized media service to prevent such an event from happening again.

“I started investigating the market to see what was out there, but there was nothing that met our needs, so I decided to just build

one myself,” he says. “As a technologist, I built one from scratch and ended up showing it to my now partner, Dave Putman – he and I both serve as US Army Signal Warrant Officers for the Texas National Guard – and he was blown away.”

“He wanted to start selling it immediately, but I was reluctant because it was just a hobby of mine. We decided to take it to a law-





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yer and when he reviewed it, he said, ‘Don’t bother paying me – just give me one of these instead.’ And when my lawyer didn’t want money, I realized we had a product.”

This led to the creation of FIRE-FX – an award-winning high-performance home theatre media player and storage system development and manufacturing company. FIRE-FX assimilates industry leading tech-

nologies to provide users with the ultimate home entertainment experience at an affordable price. Larry quickly received validation that he made the right decision to market the product.

“We went to our first tradeshow to see what our competitors were doing in comparison to us, and they were so far behind, it wasn’t even funny,” he recalls. “In fact, some of our



biggest competitors spent a lot of time in our booth studying our interface and what our system could do, so we knew we had something.”

## PERPETUAL OPTIMIZATION

FIRE-FX merges award-winning software with advanced PC components to deliver top-of-the-line devices – powered by cloud computing – that allow users to replicate the authentic cinematic experience from the comfort of their own home. As a small company, they employ the Agile Software Development Methodology to fine-tune their

products quickly and efficiently, ensuring they are always on the cutting edge.

“Agile methodology allows us to perform iterative and incremental changes on our products as we continue to develop,” Larry explains. “Getting feedback directly from customers allows us to really move quickly in a way that larger companies can’t do, and build superior product lines that really meet our customers’ needs and desires.”

Over the years, they have used this data to optimize their product line to further sepa-



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### Wired Interfaces

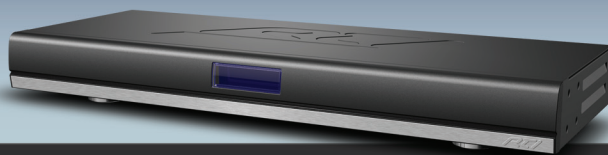
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rate themselves from the competition. For example, their first system acted as an all-in-one media player and storage device, but after roughly 10 months on the market they realized that it “wasn’t going to fly” as a storage device, so they ended up creating a separate unit for that purpose.

“Now we have the HUB – a NAS (Network Attached Storage) that’s more than just a ‘dumb’ storage device,” says Larry. “Most NAS devices just store and serve media, but ours has proprietary intelligence built into it that allows it to do many things that a standalone NAS normally doesn’t do.” The Hub comes in two variations – the DHUB

(Desktop) Series and the RHUB (Rackmount) Series.

Complimenting the HUB are the media players. These also come in two series – the DPLAY (Desktop) Series and the RPLAY (Rackmount) Series – which work synergistically with the HUB to generate a “much faster and much more stable system than anything on the market.”

They have also recently added the UPLAY Universal Player to their product line, which allows users to just replace the players in their current media systems without having to purchase an entirely new storage system







too. “It’s an inexpensive upgrade that gives immediate performance increases to make it look like you’ve upgraded the whole system, when all you’ve done is put a new player in,” Larry reveals. “By doing that we’ve actually kind of disrupted the market, and we’re taking over accounts from some of our big competitors as a result.”

Above all else, the company’s product line is highly regarded for its user-friendly interface. FIRE-FX went to great lengths to ensure that “you don’t have to touch anything” once the devices are plugged in.

“We took a holistic approach to our market because we’re selling directly to professional integrators who are selling to their

customers,” Larry clarifies. “As such, we have two customers that we need to satisfy, so we wanted to build a product that people love and integrators really want to install. Market data shows that system integrators recommend the product between 80-90% of the time on a project, so they’re really the decision makers.”

“We decided to automate as much of the network configuration as possible to make it ‘plug-and-play’ for the integrators so it would be a product they would love to install,” he adds. “You just start up the HUB, get it on the network and plug the player in. The player then automatically finds the HUB, mounts the drive and updates the database. There’s no configuration required.”





“Our mission is to create amazing media systems that integrators enjoy installing as much as their customers love using. We’re all about giving them the fastest and most intuitive way to store, control and experience their media content.”

## BADGE OF HONOUR

In just a few short years, FIRE-FX has garnered a great deal of industry recognition. In January alone, they received both the 2015 Media Server Product of the Year award from Electronic House Magazine and the 2015 Media Management Product of the Year accolade at the CEA Mark of Excel-

lence Awards – the second consecutive year they’ve won the award – for their innovative UPLAY Universal Player. Larry points out it’s a “badge of honour” to be in the company of other industry giants such as Savant, Elan, Crestron and Sony.

“It’s really exciting to be recognized by our industry as a small business,” he proclaims. “We’re recognized daily by our customers and when they buy our product, we know it’s a vote for us. But when you have industry professionals recognizing our product for the excellent work we’ve put into it, it means a lot to our business. We’re going to strive





to continue to earn these accolades through hard work and dedication.”

With the market trending in an upward fashion, it certainly seems as though they will have ample opportunity to continue making an impact. According to Larry, the average income of the typical installer increased by 27% last year and the average growth rate is projected to be between 5-7% moving forward.

“We’re in a growing industry and we’re going to expand our business, operations and product line accordingly,” he says. “We are

actually the only media player that can display Mandarin, simple Chinese and Korean characters, so there’s just so much we can do internationally. Right now we’re totally focused on North America, but the demand has forced our hand to go into other markets overseas and we’re excited to do it.”

Admirably, Larry indicates that FIRE-FX will become increasingly supportive of their “brothers in arms” as the company continues to flourish in the coming years.

“We’re a veteran-owned and operated business, so we’re going to continue showing our support anyway we can, whether it’s hiring them when they get out or supporting them while they’re in,” he affirms. “We’re also strong supporters of the PTSD Foundation of America and Camp Hope, their treatment facility in Houston. We have donated equipment to setup media servers in temporary housing and child care facilities for soldiers and their families to enjoy while they’re staying there. Our bond to the military is still strong and still very important to us, so that’s something we’ll always do.”









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# COMMITTED AND CONNECTED

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*With over 100 years of collective experience in IT, wireless and tower, Kineticom continues to evolve. Built on a corporate culture rooted in trust and authenticity that is dedicated to recruiting technical talent and human capital, the San Diego-based company has grown its geographic footprint that delivers consistency, care and success for their contractors and clients.*

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As technology becomes an ever-growing and ever-changing presence in the global economy, flexibility in today's workforce is a valuable commodity. When it comes to finding top-talent with the valuable expertise you're searching for, it can be a challenge on many different levels. Adapting to these challenges and implementing the right processes and procedures to conquer them is what Kineticom does – and has been doing for the past 15 years.

Their rise to prominence has been a swift one. What began as a single headquartered location in San Diego now spans 47 states and 5 provinces. With a specific focus on technology recruitment and service delivery in the IT, wireless and tower industries, Kineticom are considered industry-frontrunners. Building long-term relationships and understanding the importance of engagement and retention as a





*From left to right – Top Row: Southwest Regional Director Scott Shandle, West Region Recruitment Manager Trevor Yates, CEO Mike Wager, Managing Director, Canada Mark Healy, Front Row: East Region Recruitment Manager Meghan Pfeiffer, CFO Casey Marquand, Southeast Regional Director Jessica Collins, Human Resources Director Ann Fitzgerald, VP Business Development Blair Bode, Controller Jennifer Hawk*

growth opportunity has helped the company garner some well-deserved notoriety within numerous industry circles.

CEO Mike Wager, CFO Casey Marquand and VP of Business Development Blair Bode, wholeheartedly believe in the mantra of building client and contractor relationships - a process that involves multiple layers and illustrates the importance of teamwork,

clear communication channels and accountability.

“From the contractor standpoint, we offer multiple points of contact that each serves a different purpose in the contractors’ career with Kineticom,” Bode said. “The recruiter helps put them on projects and serves as the point of contact for any industry related information, discussions regarding their cur-



rent projects and identifying their next project. The talent care contact is responsible for any HR-related questions – medical/dental benefits that we offer, as well as time sheets and pay related questions. The salesperson has a direct relationship with the client that the contractor may want to reach out to. It’s about having all your bases covered.”

## OPEN AND AUTHENTIC

Forging a rapport and obtaining a true grasp of the industry that Kineticom is serving creates a seamless path of progression on all ends of the career search and spectrum. On the client side of things, Kineticom internal culture of openness and authenticity further drives their commitment to individual advancement.

“We work extremely closely with our clients to identify what challenges they’re facing, so we can help eliminate and alleviate those problems they have in their market,” Bode said. “We work to provide an array of solutions to try and fit their business needs versus trying to put forth what we think is going to work for them – we try and tailor it to clients’ specific related challenges to make sure we fully understand what they’re going through.”

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With 50 internal employees, Kineticom remains heavily involved and invested in the entire project-life cycle at both the client and contractor end. The strong, close-knit and flexible corporate culture is a testament to the company's desire to consistently, effectively and efficiently deliver value, results and revenue.

“The field that we're in – technology, staffing and services is a pretty dynamic and exciting space to be in,” Wager says. “Every day presents some new opportunities and challenges. The nature of the roles and the ser-

vices we provide require everybody to work very closely as a team. We spend a lot of time and energy to make sure that happens. We're definitely a high-energy and collaborative environment that attracts people who are motivated by working as part of a team.”

## TECHNOLOGICAL SHIFT

By having a proactive and innovative stance in dealing with technological shifts Kineticom is held in high regard and high demand. Using their experience of working overseas – where technological advancements are developed – and introduced at a faster rate,

Kineticom is well-versed to stay ahead of the ever-changing technological curve moving forward.

“Having operations in the UK at one time, we were fortunate enough to be at the forefront of technology that was happening in Europe before it hit the States and so that help us align when 3G was being deployed in the USA,” Bode said. “Today we have an office and presence in Canada, so we’re able to utilize the technological advancements that have taken place ahead of Canada here in the

USA, before they enter Canada so we’re able to be ahead of the curve in Canada as well.”

## PRAISE FOR THE PEOPLE

When it comes to awards and recognition, Kineticom continues to clean-up. Their bold, passionate and ambitious attitude towards providing quality staffing and services has been consistently praised by Oregon-based organization Inavero, who named Kineticom a Best of Staffing award winner for the last 4-5 years running – both for best talent satisfaction and best client satisfaction -







amongst a set of other accolades.

“This puts us in the top 1% of staffing companies in each category in terms of service to our customers and global contractors,” Wager said.

“There were also two other awards we won for the San Diego Business Journal’s 2015 Book of Lists,” Marquand said. “We were #33 for Largest Private Company Headquartered in San Diego as well as #26 for companies

headquartered in downtown San Diego.”

Driven by their ISO-certification that holds them to a higher standard of uniformity across the talent search process, Wager believes that the core focus on staff augmentation continues to drive Kineticom and is an integral benefit of working with their agency.

“We provide individuals with certain skills to meet our clients’ needs,” he says.

“The company was founded on the abil-

ity to understand the clients' requirements and identifying, recruiting, deploying and retaining the right talent so that our clients' can successfully complete their project efforts. We can explore and execute as a dedi-



cated team or also at times a combined team between Kineticom talent and the clients' talent.”

## PROVEN TRACK RECORD

While marketing and technology go hand-in-hand in developing a brand, the meteoric growth of Kineticom over the past 15 years has been no fluke. Their track record and passion, integrity and trust that goes into their work speaks for itself.

“The greatest marketing asset that we have for our company is word of mouth; both amongst the client base and the contractors that we employ,” Wager said. “It’s a very small community among the carriers, the OEMS and the integrators. We’ve been at it since 2000 and when you perform well, people pass the word along.”

Relationships and longevity has been the key to Kineticom’s success. Moving forward, and with an eye towards the future, continuing to evolve their technological prowess remains a vital component.

“There is an on-going evolution in wireless technology,” Wager said. “A lot of deployed 4G and LTE; conversations are already being had around 5G, there are different geographies to bring online and to upgrade to latest technology as it exists today. On the IT side the list is limitless in terms of evolution and opportunity.”

Technological change is inevitable. But as Kineticom continues to prove – with the right relationships, the right people and the right talent - solutions and success is possible.



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