

Michael Morford

The Knudsen Institute

Michael Morford is the Founder, Chairman, and CEO of the Knudsen Institute. The Knudsen Institute is an Oklahoma-based 501(c)(3) applied research organization. The Institute's mission is to enable the surge capacity of the U.S. defense industrial base in support of our nation's warfighters by identifying and integrating manufacturers through an integrated approach of emerging technology, workforce, and policy solutions.



Michael is considered a subject matter expert on the issue of how small manufacturers engage with the US Department of Defense. It is his vision of policy and technology that drives the Institute. This includes the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Deep Machine Learning (dML), Large Data Analytics, and Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) to transform the U.S. Defense Industrial Base (DIB). His primary focus is how to couple this technology architecture with necessary changes to federal policy to more rapidly enable the surge capacity of the DIB by identifying and integrating SMMs at scale.

As the CEO, Michael spearheads relationships with defense leaders across the DOD spectrum to include U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Defense Logistics Agency, and the U.S. Navy. He also works directly with elected leaders and their staff on both sides of the aisle in Congress.

Prior to Knudsen, Michael was the founder and visionary of the base architecture for Sustainment Technologies Inc, a software platform seeking to improve the U.S. manufacturing base. Michael spun Sustainment out of VertiPrime Government Services, an AS9100 certified, precision manufacturing facility located in Duncan, Oklahoma. VertiPrime focuses on manufacturing structural airframe replacement parts for the U.S. Air Force's aging fleet of fighter jets and long-range bombers. It was his direct engagement with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Aviation as well as the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex (OC-ALC) at Tinker Air Force Base (AFB), Oklahoma that provided perspectives necessary to identify technology solutions. While at VertiPrime, he spearheaded the formation of a Joint Venture between VertiPrime and AllClear Aerospace & Defense, a large defense prime contractor headquartered in Pleasanton, CA. This led to becoming formally recognized into the Department of Defense Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP).

Michael's knowledge and skill set stem from his tenure as a Wall Street investment banker as well as a decorated U.S. Army logistics officer. In the Army, he was a US Army Captain and disabled veteran of the Iraqi War. He served as a war-planner for the 377 Theater Support Command and is a 2001 recipient of the Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award presented by the Chief of Staff of the US Army.