

# Gene McCulley

Sanford, Florida



[StackFrame](#)

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## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Gene McCulley:*

Before launching StackFrame in 2004, Gene McCulley worked as an independent contractor for several large companies throughout Central Florida. Having been exposed to various industries and projects as a contractor, McCulley had some ideas for projects that he couldn't do alone. StackFrame, a developer of mobile and web-based applications and provider of IT services, would afford him the opportunity to assemble a team of developers and designers capable of pushing into new areas, such as networking software.

When McCulley first launched StackFrame, he was the only employee. He primarily worked from his home office. Today, StackFrame is located in downtown Sanford and employs a team of eight highly skilled individuals. Last year, McCulley sold off StackFrame's Defense Division,

responsible for the development of software for use in military training simulators, to focus on other areas. McCulley explained, "It got to a point where there was a climate change in that industry," he said. "It made it hard for a company of my size to grow. The lead times to get projects funded became longer and longer. It wasn't a good use of our capital to keep trying to grow that part of the business. For us, it's easier to grow the commercial side."

In a crowded field of similar companies and exaggerated attempts, by others, to stand out from the competition, McCulley's strategy is pretty straightforward. "We work hard and smart and look for clients with interesting problems," he said. "We have a small team of talented and tenacious folks. We pay very close attention to the needs of our clients and we let our work speak for itself. We don't market our services. Our work comes from word-of-mouth and is based on our excellent reputation."

Producing quality work and attracting new business was never a struggle for McCulley. His challenges, although far from unique, were of a different nature. "Going from a consultant to an employer/manager was a challenge," he said. "In fact, it's still something at which I could be much better. Most people don't fully appreciate how hard it is to manage and develop other people."

Looking ahead, McCulley sees a future full of many uncertainties. "Things are changing so fast," he said. "In terms of tech but also in terms of the advancements in artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data, and data science. The future is about positioning yourself in such a way that you're still useful and relevant to your clients. For

example, we used to do a lot of IT admin work. Thanks to cloud commoditization by Amazon Web Services and other providers, much of that work is no longer relevant."

McCulley also gave us some interesting insight in regards to the availability of human capital and how that's changing as remote employment increases. "Required skills are changing so fast that not enough people have them," he said. "It's difficult to compete with large companies, on the basis of compensation, for the individuals that have the skills you're looking for. It used to be that in order to work for a Google or an Amazon, you had to be located in a region like Silicon Valley, Boston, Austin, or New York. With more and more people working remotely, that's no longer the case. That means someone living in Orlando could potentially work for a large company based in Boston and get paid a much larger salary than what a local company could offer. As an employer, it's a challenge, but as a technologist, it's a promising trend."

What advice does McCulley have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "Think like an entrepreneur, even if you're an employee working for someone else," he said. "Approach employment situations from an entrepreneurial mindset. You don't have to own your own business to benefit like an entrepreneur. Companies are realizing that to stay relevant and on top of things they have to capture that entrepreneurial spirit with staff and leverage that. You don't have to go create an LLC. Some organizations promote an "intrapreneurial" mindset, encouraging the employees who value the freedom and creativity that comes with being an entrepreneur. Think about what you really want and consider all options on how to get there."

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