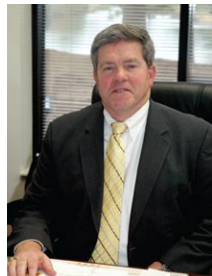


Hampton Roads innovators

ITA International LLC

Serving Those in the Arena

When Michael Melo was 12 years old, his father gave him a quote from Teddy Roosevelt. It was Roosevelt's



famous personal call-to-action that noted it's not the naysayers and critics that matter, but the doers, those who are "In the Arena." For Melo, Roosevelt's advice became

more than just an incisive quote; it became an inspiration, a moral compass. After 23 years as a naval officer, Melo founded a government consulting firm with Roosevelt's words inspiring its name and motto.

"ITA stands for 'In the Arena,'" Melo says. "The focus of the company is on supporting those toiling *in the arena*. That arena can be a governmental organization or a private corporation. It can be in a classroom, on a ship or somewhere in Africa."

Yorktown-based ITA offers consulting, technical/operational support and training program development for a myriad of fields ranging from training for cultural competency, planning and analysis for crisis and security management, to providing direct operational support to clients in the field around the world. The company also provides consulting services for such endeavors as civil-military operations, expeditionary warfare, disaster relief, vulnerability assessment and anti-terrorism security.

"We operate like a business consultant would for a large corporation," says Melo. "We do the same thing for government agencies or other government

contractors. We solve their problems with our expertise."

ITA brings a meticulous four-step analytical process to each client's problems. As Melo explains it: "Up-front we analyze our client's mission and figure out what critical tasks need to be done. Then we create a plan for our client to train for those particular tasks. The third phase is to execute the training plan. In the fourth, we assess how effective the training was in achieving the client's mission. Then, we start all over again

"It is not the critic that counts...the credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena...who strives valiantly...who spends himself...So if he fails at least he fails while daring greatly so his place will not be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

—Teddy Roosevelt



refining the requirement so our client can accomplish the mission in their *arena*."

ITA is heavily involved in developing educational curricula. For example, it has conducted cultural and language training with the U.S. Navy to prepare sailors for operating with the Nigerian Navy. It has provided similar cultural programs in support of Civil Affairs teams operating in Africa and South America. Additionally, ITA trained U.S. Navy sailors in combat and boat handling skills in support of one

of the U. S. Navy's newest operational capabilities—the Riverine Force which is currently operating in Iraq. With a cadre of operationally adept and experienced personnel, ITA was integral to the establishment of the Navy's newest Type Command, the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command. ITA also works with state and local governments as well as large defense contractors that need small business support for their efforts.

ITA International Growing by Offering a Diversity of Skills

ITA's employees have an incredible diversity of backgrounds, which sets them apart from others in the government contracting field, according to Melo. ITA experts come from all branches of the military, and several have worked in the Departments of State, Energy and Defense.

"I like to say we hire athletes. By that, I mean people with a variety of skill sets," Melo says. "Each client has different needs. We can address those with our deep bench. We can reach out or reach across the company to find the right expertise. We make those diverse backgrounds work for our clients, often coming up with alternative and innovative solutions. Most importantly, we all know what it's like to be 'In the Arena.'"

Melo's approach has obviously worked. ITA has grown from one person in 2005 to over 80 personnel today. Such growth did not go unnoticed as ITA was named the 2008 Virginia Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year.

