

John R. “Buck” Surdu, Ph.D.

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Job Objective

Lead a team of engineers and scientists in the development of new technologies or new applications of technology, particularly the development of next-generation immersive entertainment and training.

Summary of Qualifications

- Certified Program Manager – demonstrated success in managing cost, schedule, and performance.
- Ph.D. in computer science.
- Visionary – able to conceive of long-term vision and *lead* an organization toward that vision.
- Innovative
 - Able to combine seemingly disparate technologies to create novel solutions.
 - Demonstrated ability to thrive in unstructured, entrepreneurial environments.
 - Focus on “yes, if...” not “no, because...”
- Strong people skills
 - Deal effectively with personnel through all strata of the organization.
 - Have successfully led teams of technical and non-technical people in the accomplishment of complex tasks.
 - Have effectively managed large organizational change as well as continuous process improvement
- Strong communications, collaboration, and conflict resolution skills.
- Trustworthy – hold the highest clearance level within the government.

Professional Accomplishments

Demonstrated Ability to Lead High-Tech Teams:

- Conceived, developed, pitched, and managed far-reaching research and development efforts, resulting in the creation of innovative operations planning and execution capabilities in just three years as a PM in the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).
- As the PM for the Army’s premier simulation technology software development program, delivered version 1.0, which met all requirements, on time and on budget.
- Acted as the prime integrator and led the efforts of a top-notch team of over 150 software developers from multiple companies, cutting two years off the time to create a next-generation simulation capability for training, operations, analysis, and experimentation.
- Managed foreign partnerships with the U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Singapore, resulting in millions of dollars in foreign sales.
- Level III certified in program management and also in information technology. This is the highest level of certification within the Department of Defense. Level II certified in systems planning, research, development, and engineering.

Innovative and visionary:

- Conceived a \$63M DARPA project to develop new science in the area of command and control of military operations, including improved human-computer interaction and decision support.
- Formulated research and development projects in mixed reality immersive training environments, software agent behavior, see-through contact lens computer displays for a variety of applications, and simulation technologies. These technologies are still under development but will reduce casualties in combat by better training soldier for their first combat experiences.
- Early adapter of innovative software development technologies, such as spiral development; agile methods; open-source and open-architecture; artificial intelligence; new simulation technologies; and JAVA, C++, and heavy use of XML before these were commonplace, resulting in the delivery of a major software project for one eighth of the original cost estimate.

Work History

- 2014 – present Senior Scientist, Cole Engineering Services, Inc.
- 2013 – 2014 Project manager for a highly-classified technology development program within the National Security Agency (NSA).
- 2011 – 2013 Chief, Commander's Action Group for both US Cyber Command and the NSA. Successfully formulated new concepts for cyberspace operations as well as executive-level policies and correspondence to members of Congress, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Office of the President.
- 2010 – 2011 Principal Military Deputy Director, US Army Communications Electronics Research, Development, and Engineering Center. Effectively managed the day-to-day operations of a 6000-person laboratory with a \$1B budget.
- 2010 (7 mos.) Science and Technology Advisor, US Forces Iraq. Coordinated the efforts of scientists and engineers to accelerate the development and deployment of new technologies, or new uses of existing technologies, to address capability gaps. Without formal reporting authority, accelerated the delivery of several innovative technologies directly from the laboratory to users well ahead of expected delivery dates.
- 2008 – 2010 Chief of Staff, Research, Development, and Engineering Command. Led and coordinated the activities of a diverse 300-person professional staff (of a 15,000-person organization), including human resources, intelligence, operations, resource management, logistics, information technology, global operations and support, and program development and management. Launched several initiatives to provide better insight and control of the \$6B research and development budget. Implemented several process improvements, which improved the effectiveness of the staff and the command's process for developing its research portfolio.
- 2006 – 2008 Program Manager at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), an entrepreneurial organization in which PMs are expected to conceive of new technologies that are 10 – 20 years in the future, develop the concepts, sell them to get funding, and execute the development to bring that technology to five years in the future. Turned the ideas from my dissertation into a \$63M development effort.
- 2003 – 2006 Product Manager of a large military simulation software development project, called One Semi-Automated Forces. Won two Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) software development awards and, despite predictions, delivered 3M lines of software on time and on budget.
- 1985 – 2003 Various Army assignments within the U.S. and overseas. These include acting as an assistant professor (United States Military Academy), senior research scientist, operations officer within a mechanized infantry brigade (a 1500-man unit), commanding a company (130-man unit), acting as the human resources manager and logistician within a 1200-man battalion, and leading a rifle platoon (40-man unit).

Education

- Program Manager's Course, Defense Acquisition University, Ft. Belvoir, VA
- Ph.D., Computer Science, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
- M.S., Computer Science, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL
- MBA, Columbus State University, Columbus, GA
- B.S., Computer Science, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY