

# THE INTERVIEW: MIKE FOREMAN



Many in the law enforcement profession dream not merely of retirement, but of one day having a successful second career in the private sector. That dream is not easily obtained. We turned to one of our emeritus board members, Mike Foreman, for his perspective on the topic. Mike retired as division chief after 30 years with the Orange County Sheriff's Office (FL), and has continued to serve the tactical operations community for the past 12 years with Point Blank Body Armor.

**Q: Many of our members know you as Mike Foreman, the face of Point Blank Body Armor. But can you tell us about your early experience in law enforcement and how that prepared you for the position you are in today?**

*A: The law enforcement profession will allow you to be prepared for many opportunities outside of law enforcement. Establishing a commitment to serving your community and fellow officers sets the highest standards in any profession. Integrity, ethics and honor are a foundation that will carry you throughout life. Officers are expected to live up to these values every day, while many others outside of law enforcement see these values only when convenient. Leadership, judgement, decision-making and effective communication skills are essential elements in all environments.*

**Q: What would you say is more stressful: law enforcement work or business?**

*A: Many things can cause stress, and (stress) manifests itself differently in every person. You will face both physical and emotional stress. Many people outside law enforcement make the statement that the law enforcement job must be so dangerous and stressful. Not to dismiss the threats that officers face today, but I have held that our training and mindset prepares us to face those threats and challenges better than anyone. Because of this, it is my belief that both internal and environmental stress can be better handled by those trained to face it. As stated, it is different for every person and I would stress that law enforcement agencies must offer post-traumatic stress counseling and peer group support to assist officers with the magnitude of critical events they will face.*

*The business environment can create a different type of stress based on the need to be profitable and the fact that the conduct and ethics of some people in the private sector are held to a different standard and not to the same level of accountability to which an officer is held.*

**Q: What was the most significant challenge you faced as you transitioned from law enforcement into the private sector?**

*A: Becoming a better listener. Throughout my law enforcement career I found that we are expected to take charge and tell people what we expect from them. In the private sector, everyone is a potential customer and they have an expectation that we are there to meet their needs. Our prior experience and opinions are not what they want. Listen and give them what they want.*

*In life, the more you give, the more you will get back. Your commitment as a law enforcement officer will go a long way, if you are willing to put the effort in. Accept nothing in life is easy or free.*

**Q: What advice would you give someone thinking of making the transition from the public to the private sector?**

*A: Take advantage of the training and all that is offered in your law enforcement career. Many assignments and promotional opportunities will give the chance to manage personnel, enhance your administrative skills and prepare you as a leader. Bottom line, do what you enjoy and make the most of every opportunity. The private sector is looking for personnel who have the values that law enforcement officers possess. Core values will be recognized in all sectors.*

**Q: Over the years you have assembled a diverse and creative team at Point Blank. What do you look for in prospective team members?**

*A: A well-rounded individual who is willing to go the distance to make a difference. If you are looking for a part-time job or 40-hour work week that does not require dedication in your second career, then Point Blank is not for you. Our team members must understand those that we serve.*

*We have a mission to produce the finest lifesaving product available. This is our commitment to our customers and anything short of 100 percent effort will not meet our expectation. Our job is to make it safer for every officer; nothing but the best will allow us to achieve our objectives.*

**Q: How does user input contribute to the development process at Point Blank?**

*A: We serve the law enforcement and military communities, and this is an honor and privilege. Each end user is our customer and we must listen and understand the needs. Through the input and active participation by the end-user community, we have been able to develop products that meet the needs of so many customers, such as patrol officers, K-9 officers, detectives, narcotics officers, tactical officers, infantry soldiers and special operations operators. We engage every type of personnel and appreciate the input. This feedback and advice has allowed us to produce the best body armor in the world and literally thousands of different types of systems for every assignment in law enforcement or the military. This process continues to evolve and we are here to meet those demands.*

**Q: How has your relationship with the NTOA changed the way you do business?**

*A: The NTOA's ultimate goal is to improve public safety and domestic security through training, education and tactical excellence. The NTOA has elevated the professionalism of the tactical community and has made a difference. Having the opportunity to serve on the board of the NTOA since 1997 has allowed me the opportunity to witness great men and women making a difference in the lives of the law enforcement community. We share a similar mission: a steadfast commitment to improving officer safety. ■*

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