

KMS'S proprietary project management system has allowed the fast growing firm to stay connected and remain effective and efficient in a time of being remote.

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## *THRIVING IN* *UNCERTAIN TIMES*





## KMS'S TECH DRIVEN APPROACH TO PROGRAM MANAGEMENT WAS NEW AND INNOVATIVE. NOW IT'S ESSENTIAL.



The name, logo, and office space may have changed, but for this Birmingham business, the mission has remained the same since its founding in 2011.

KMS, formerly known as Kemp Management Solutions, is a program management and consulting firm dedicated to helping clients navigate the nuances of a project or large program. But KMS isn't your typical project management firm.

After spending much of his career working for large companies focused on large-scale, complex construction projects, Mike Kemp, president and CEO of KMS, saw an opportunity to bring a level of expertise to a different sector of the market. Kemp's idea was to create a company that focused on smaller projects at a high volume for clients that have widespread footprints, whether it be a campus, multiple campuses, or a

geographic region. This allowed them to really provide a high level of service to their clients, working in their best interest to define scope, budget, schedule, and performance standards.

This unique focus gave KMS the opportunity to partner with

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several incredible organizations, beginning with their first client - Auburn University. Getting their start in higher education allowed



them to move into other arenas, working with clients such as IberiaBank, the ALDOT, Regions Bank, and Medical Properties Trust, just to name a few. Those clients helped usher in new growth and expansion, building quite the impressive portfolio.

With that growth came a new realization. In order to continue being innovative, their

focus would have to shift to technology. This sparked the idea to create their own proprietary project management system. Most software currently used in the construction



space is centered around building and managing large-scale projects. Partnering with a group of students at the University of Alabama to build beta software, KMS utilized their own teammates to use, test, and refine the prototype before teaming up with Birmingham-based Airship to build the software that they use today.

What's possibly the most incredible aspect of the project is that, when the program was developed two years ago, no one could have imagined the heightened dependency we would all have on technology throughout the coronavirus pandemic. "When COVID happened is when we really realized the value of technology, and having the ability to stay connected and remain effective and efficient in a time of being remote, it's been amazing," commented Kemp. "It prepared us for when COVID hit. In terms of execution of the work, it was a non-event for us." Kemp credits his director of business operations, James Kemp, for the seamless transition from in person to virtual work, helping to create a culture of innovative thinking since his joining the team almost 5 years ago.

Innovation and forward thinking,



though, aren't new practices for Kemp. At 23, he started his first business as a pipe and valve distributor for American Cast Iron Pipe Co. (ACIPCo) in Birmingham, working on projects throughout the southeastern region. After almost eight years, Kemp decided to close his business to broaden his knowledge in business and construction by returning to large construction management firm. "I was probably one of five, if not one of three, African-American VPs of a construction company that's over \$500 million who ran a balance sheet, or a division," said Kemp. "It was a pretty big deal in construction, especially in the southeast in a company that size."

Throughout his career, Kemp used every job as a learning experience to prepare him for where he is today. Learning from the mistakes of his first business, he came to value the importance of relationships and mentors who are engaged in the business. During his time in leadership of a large scale construction company, he watched and learned from talented leaders who led first-class organizations. All of this paved the way to successfully leading KMS.

### COVER

James, Ursula, and Mike Kemp (left to right), remain dedicated to helping clients.

### LEFT PAGE

**Top Left:** In November, KMS debuted new branding, including a new name and logo.

**Bottom Left:** James Kemp, KMS director of business operations, played a pivotal role in the seamless transition from in person to virtual work.

**Right:** Mike Kemp, KMS president & CEO, spent years in leadership for a large scale construction company before starting KMS in 2011.

### THIS PAGE

In conjunction with the rebranding, KMS moved into a new office in the heart of Birmingham.

But success is just a fringe benefit of the true mission of KMS - to exceed the expectations of their clients while maintaining a strong connection to the community. "The technology and training and all that we have is the technical aspect of what we do," Kemp said. "The community part, what the company has grown into, has afforded us the opportunity to have an impact here in Birmingham as well as at the state level."

Kemp has built a team of innovative, forward thinkers to lead the company into this new chapter. In compiling his team, he took purposeful action in ensuring that there was diversity amongst its members. "The diversity of the team pushes the innovation," commented Kemp.

"Everyone is thinking differently and bringing different perspectives. It's been pretty amazing to watch."

In November 2020, KMS rolled out new branding as it relocated to an incredible office space in the heart of Birmingham. The logo, featuring strong lines and hues of blue

and red, represents confidence and stability grounded in leadership and trust. The color scheme and logo communicate what clients can expect from them the first time they see their brand.

While things may look a little different, KMS remains steadfast in providing seamless execution you can trust. **BA**

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