Eric Smith [1]

NASA SBIR/STTR Chief Customer Officer

For more than a decade, Eric Smith has blended technical, legal, and policy expertise to lead innovation small and large, from a hometown startup to the Federal government, always with customers' needs at the fore.

As NASA SBIR/STTR's first Chief Customer Officer, Eric Smith leads the team responsible for the program's enabling technology, data management, and customer experience, ensuring that the program designs its products and platforms with its customer's needs and goals as primary drivers. Prior to NASA, Eric Smith led enterprise digitalization at the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), redesigning and replacing legacy software and processes to improve internal and external customer experience, increase efficiency, and realize and measure growing economic impact. Eric Smith also helped to build the EDA's Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE) from its infancy around its core mission: to foster innovation and accelerate technology commercialization. There, he built a portfolio of $221 million invested across 224 grants designed to translate research into economic prosperity and managed the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, which recommends policies to increase access to capital and businesses formation.

Earlier in his career, Eric Smith focused on telecommunications technologies that power the Internet of Things and wireless infrastructure at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and was in-house counsel in the fintech industry. He holds a Juris Doctor from the Indiana University Maurer School of Law and a Bachelor of Science in computer science and mathematics, along with a technical translation certificate in German, from the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. He is licensed to practice in New York.