

Strategies for success and winning public contracts

Presented by
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Strategies for success and winning public contracts

- The world of small business enterprises as banker and director of Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program for over 30 years
- Hail to the Entrepreneurs, the “COE”
(They are our “unsung heroes”. Business is not for the faint of heart)

Strategies for success and winning public contracts

My presentation has two goals:

- 1. Highlighting the RESOURCES for you to thrive (public contracting equity/ policy programs)

AND

- 2. Encouraging you to be RESOURCEFUL

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RESOURCES

- There are contracting opportunities available to certified diverse suppliers, such as in the categories of (DBEs/MBEs/WBEs/DVBs/SBEs, etc.) by the public sector.
- That mission is based on CONTRACTING EQUITY. What is contracting equity? It is the process of creating the environment for businesses of historically under-utilized businesses to participate in government contracts.

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- There is a rich history of how public policies/initiatives and ACTS ensured that small businesses become a part of the economic fabric of America.
- It started just after the Great Recession.
 - President Hoover- “Reconstruction Finance Corporation “RFC” -1929
 - President Roosevelt- “Small War Plants Corporation” (SWPC)-1942- to provide products/supplies for WWII

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Office of Small Business-1945 (“SWPC” was dissolved after the war) created in the U.S. Dept. of Commerce

President Eisenhower consolidation-SBA-1953

President Nixon “Executive Order 11625-1972

President Carter-PL 95-507-1978

State of Wisconsin program-1983(upgraded 2006, 2009)

Private sector involvement (Chrysler, Ford and GM)- 1990’s

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- Providing opportunities is the goal of many programs. Your business must be “A going concern”.
- **How do we define success?** Success is being a viable entity. An entity that profitably provides goods and services to meet its customer’s need. (In public contracting with City, County, State and Federal Government they are your customers, **not** a handout exercise).

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- Although public policies/programs help, there are many structural issues affecting diverse suppliers. These are based on practices and regulations.
- Need to eliminate these through innovation and cultural changes bordering on internal (how the govt. does business) and external (how prime contractors, large do business) factors.

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- Examples of some barriers that impact diverse businesses:
 - Inadequate capital
 - Education/lack of skilled training
 - Lack of social capital
 - Overt discrimination
 - Absence of legacy/business inheritance

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**Can we solve some of these in your business?
Yes.**

- Have your “A,B,C” in place
- Continuous education/ skilled workers training
- Understand the role of social capital in the business world. (probably as important as financial capital)
- Seek teaming or partnering with prime contractors that fit. Knowledge matters.

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- Managing is the most important duties of a business owner. Learn to plan for the future.
 - For example: Jobs needed in the skilled trades in the next 10 years: **750,000**. What opportunities does this mean to you?

Skilled worker training opportunities may be the most important undertaking for a construction based company today.

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- Knowing your stuff is your best calling card (It is your best sales pitch is what prime vendors are seeking when they are searching for a sub, a partner to work with on public contracts).
- Respond to solicitations- (presence is golden) whether you are interested in the solicitation or not.

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- Since the 1990s, private sector firms have begun to embrace the concept of contracting equity. Diversity programs focus is to enforce “participation”. (Sub-contractors on projects with primes as part of contract requirements).
- The trend will continue. We need to be more creative.

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- Recent examples of innovative activities assisting diverse businesses to win public contracts in some jurisdictions. These include:
 - pilot projects with a limited dollar threshold
 - setting aggressive participation goals
 - separate goals for each targeted business
 - inclusion plans that indicate diverse firms utilization in their proposal

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- In conclusion,
 1. Ensure your business has the management and sufficient resources.
 2. Keep skills up to date.
 3. While “Contract equity” programs are there to help you in getting contracts, you need to step up to the plate.

You can do it.

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QUESTIONS

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