



Realizing Profitable Potential through Change

We Are ALL Diverse

Small businesses are constantly challenged to find ways of competing with their large counterparts. If you are a woman or minority, that challenge can sometimes seem overwhelming. We tend to think of diversity in terms of ethnicity. Though in reality, we are **ALL** diverse. There are no two individuals that have the same personality traits, experiences, education, thought processes and so on. Each of us is a diverse individual. Why focus on diversity? Those differences are positives, not negatives. We should be utilizing our differences strategically in the business world. Don't think of diversity in a negative way, but instead think of how our differences can enhance our competitive advantage when we form alliances. After all, that is what business is built upon... successful relationships.

Supplier Diversity is a requisite in Corporate America. Government contractors are required to report the diversity of their suppliers to the federal government. Diversity classifications include small business, woman-owned business, minority-owned business and disabled veteran-owned business. Being a diverse business does not guarantee you any special privileges; however, it can be a marketing tool. Your individual business may not be able to fulfill a government contract alone; however, alliances of companies may be able to meet the government contract requirements. There are government contracting opportunities and supplier diversity may be a way to qualify for those contracts. Whether you are large or small, diverse or nondiverse, creating alliances with diverse suppliers is a smart way to run your business. Relationships create win-win situations. It makes ethic and economic sense to do business with diverse companies. All partners in the alliance receive opportunities for contracts that they might not otherwise be able to fulfill and thereby each business grows. Without relationships, companies are limiting their ability to grow. We succeed in today's society through strategic alliances. We cannot be everything to everyone... no matter how large our organization may be. The most

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successful organizations realize the strength in relationships and build upon them.

Resources are available to help your diverse business, if you only know where to look. If you are a small business, two resources are the SBA (Small Business Administration) and SBDC (Small Business Development Center) websites and offices. If you are a woman-owned business, additional resources are NAWBO (National Association of Women Business Owners) and WBENC (Women's Business Enterprise National Council) websites. The NMSDC (National Minority Supplier Development Council) is an additional resource for minority-owned business enterprises. The above organizations are only a sample of the resources available to small businesses. Utilize the Internet or contact RPPC, Inc. for additional resources.

Don't forget to look within your own community. There are a number of opportunities for you to start developing a resource network for small businesses. The initial challenge is finding the resources, but by pooling your efforts with other small businesses then everyone is more successful. Do not view others as competition even if they are in a similar field. Find ways to build upon each other's synergies and create success for all. Everyone is diverse and learning from each other is the greatest benefit of a resource network. Would you like to form a resource network in your community? If so, contact Pam at pam@rppc.net for more information.

Resources:

SBA - www.sba.gov

NAWBO - www.nawbo.org

WBENC - www.wbenc.org

NMSDC - www.nmsdc.org

RPPC, Inc. - www.rppc.net

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