

THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

When women-owned business enterprises (WBEs) are a part of a corporation's supplier mix, opportunities for innovative partnerships emerge. Corporations can gain a competitive edge with procurement processes that open doors for WBEs and proactive efforts to connect them with the right decision makers.

BY SUSAN H. BURNELL

WBENC Offers Invaluable Resources

The Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) is the leading advocate for and authority on women's business enterprises as suppliers to the nation's corporations. WBENC, which celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2012, is the premier certifying organization for women-owned businesses. Highly strategic in its efforts, WBENC and its 14 Regional Partner Organizations are committed to helping women's businesses thrive.

"We focus on access to markets, including corporate and government contracts; access to capital; and improvement in the costs and benefits that affect small business owners' profitability," says WBENC President and Chief Executive Officer Pamela Prince-Eason.

Women's businesses have a positive impact on our economy, she explains. "We know that women business owners perceive gaps in the marketplace, create inventive solutions, and work passionately to deliver the best products and services to their clients. They also generate well-paying jobs, develop their employees and contribute to the well-being of their communities.

"As we look at best practices among our Corporate Members, we find commitment to supplier diversity starts at the top," says Prince-Eason. "The C-suite and managers at every step of the supply chain understand that broadening the pool of premier-quality suppliers will position the company



competitively, enhance its productivity and reduce costs."

Pitney Bowes: Supplier Diversity Fits Business Strategy

Laura Taylor is the current board chair for WBENC. Her role as vice president, Strategic Sourcing and Procurement Operations at Pitney Bowes Inc., includes indirect strategic sourcing, supplier relationship management, procurement operations and supplier diversity. Pitney Bowes actively supports WBENC and is a Corporate Member of the organization.

Pitney Bowes is a multibillion-dollar global technology company that has a rich history of diversity in its workforce and suppliers. "Our supplier diversity program is close to 20 years old," says Taylor, "and is aligned with our company's business strategies, as part of the overall diversity and inclusion focus. We believe that innovation, agility and market responsiveness are driven by having a workforce and supply chain that reflect

the diversity found in our global customer base. This is especially important when doing business with like-minded companies and governments.

"Access to certified women, minority and other diverse-owned businesses strengthens our program and enhances our supply chain," she adds. "Our relationship with WBENC is critical in providing us with a trusted resource for nearly 11,000 certified women-owned businesses. WBENC membership also provides our company with networking and educational opportunities in procurement and supplier diversity best practices."

Taylor also points out that WBENC makes it much more efficient to manage and grow supplier diversity at Pitney Bowes. "In its last fiscal year, Pitney Bowes' spending with suppliers through its supplier diversity program increased by 9%. There are wins on both sides as the company expands its connections with women-owned suppliers." ■

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Pitney Bowes
www.pb.com

Women's Business Enterprise
National Council (WBENC)
www.wbenc.org



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