



SCMBDC President John Murray welcomes mentors and protégés at the Capacity Building Initiative's kick-off luncheon for the 2011-2013 class.

## Mentors, protégés kick-off CBI class of 2013

The message to "protégés" was direct and straightforward. Don't expect a contract; do expect to build a relationship and develop new skills to grow your business. Know your business better than anyone else -- show passion. Be accountable and don't waste anyone's time.

"Mentors" were encouraged to get to know their protégés and be their champion. Make a commitment to help them take their business to the next level. Stay involved and keep lines of communications open.

These words of advice at the Capacity Building Initiative's (CBI) March 15 kick-off luncheon for the 2011-2013 class were delivered by individuals who know what they're talking about -- they were part of CBI's 2008-2010 class. The luncheon was sponsored by Nestlé and held at its offices in Glendale.

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The council launched the two-year initiative in 2008 to increase minority businesses' capacity through resources and one-on-one coaching provided by corporate mentors. The first class involved five corporate members -- AEG, Southern California Gas Co., San Diego Gas & Electric, Southern California Edison and The Walt Disney Company -- which partnered with seven protégés, or minority businesses.

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## Mark Your Calendars

**SCMBDC Toastmasters International**  
**April 7 and 21, 9 - 11 a.m.**  
**SCMBDC Headquarters**

Exclusively for certified MBEs, this learn-by-doing workshop helps participants (both seasoned and novices) hone speaking and leadership skills in a friendly and non-threatening atmosphere. Click here to pre-register.

**Healthcare Reform and California Small Business: How to take advantage of the new federal healthcare reform legislation**  
**April 28, 1 - 3 p.m.**  
**SCMBDC Headquarters**

David Chase, California Outreach Manager, Small Business Majority, will discuss aspects of federal healthcare reform most important to small businesses, including tax credits, the creation of a health insurance exchange, cost containment, and insurance reforms. No charge. Contact: Fernando Velasquez, fvelasquez@scmbdc.org or 213-689-6968.

Selected by mentors and the council, protégés receive strategic guidance and business advice, such as how to submit successful bids, access to key decision makers, technical assistance, ongoing evaluation of work performance, networking opportunities, and more.

The 2011-2013 class has been expanded and includes 12 mentors and 21 protégés, according to Lauren Knight, program manager, adding that more mentors and protégés may join CBI in the coming months, depending on mentors' needs.

"We have a more defined framework with this class," she adds. "Each mentor/protégé team will differ, but mentors have been provided the same set of 'best practices' from which to begin the mentoring process. Protégés must also attend an SCMBDC Communication Skills Live workshop within the first few months of the initiative since effective communication skills are an integral part of the growth process."

Knight noted that an important lesson learned from the first class is there needed to be a clearer explanation of the initiative. "This is a rigorous, two-year program that requires minority business owners to take time out of their already busy schedules to devote to the development of their company. Since all protégés are working with mentors who are executives, directors, and/or managers, compromises need to be made by either side when it comes to scheduling and other factors. Each participant needs to be prepared to embrace his or her role in the initiative."



*Marcus Moore, president and CEO of Genesis Professional Staffing, offers advice and words of encouragement to protégés. Moore participated in the initiative's 2008-2010 class.*

"One of the things we learned from the first class is managing expectations," adds SCMBDC President John W. Murray, Jr. "CBI participants should not expect to get a contract out of this. Instead, they should expect to gain skills to increase capacity and grow their business," he says, although he notes there were several examples of contracts awarded to protégés in the 2008-2010 class.

Mentors for the 2011-2013 class to date include: AEG, Los Angeles World Airports, MillerCoors, Nestlé, Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas Co., San Diego Gas & Electric, Technology Integration Group, The Walt Disney Company,

Turner Construction, VOLT, and Los Angeles Minority Business Opportunity Center.

Protégés include: Apex Builder Supplies, Capital International Communications, Coleman Construction, DHS Creative, Diego & Son Printing, DSG Mechanical Corp., Glow Electric, Hall of Fame Staffing, Ingenious Information Technology, IT-Tech Pro's, Johnson Electric, Kambrian, MARRS Services, Inc., OM Roofing, Pinpoint Resource Group, RMJ Tech, TNE Global, Trinus, Valdez Development, Vobecky Enterprises, and Zeesman Communications.

Over the next several months, corporate mentors will work individually with protégés in a variety of ways, including providing introductions to internal procurement decision makers and prime

**Communication Skills Live  
May 17 and 19, 9 - 11 a.m.  
SCMBDC Headquarters**

Receive personal coaching from accomplished entrepreneur, award-winning speech evaluator/member of Toastmasters International and USC professor. This is for entrepreneurs who want to optimize quality presentation skills and fatten profit margins. Both seasoned speakers and novices are welcome. Cost is \$35. Contact: Fernando Velasquez, fvelasquez@scmbdc.org or 213-689-6968.

**Supplier of the Year Awards Luncheon  
July 7, 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Omni Hotel, Los Angeles**

This event celebrates the outstanding performance of minority business enterprises in their contracts with SCMBDC corporate members. Under the program, suppliers are judged on their demonstrated growth, development and ability to create jobs; utilization of other minority suppliers; business performance in their contracts, including providing quality products and services, cost savings and innovative solutions; overcoming major obstacles and adversities, and community involvement.

**For more information about events, visit [www.scmbdc.org](http://www.scmbdc.org)**

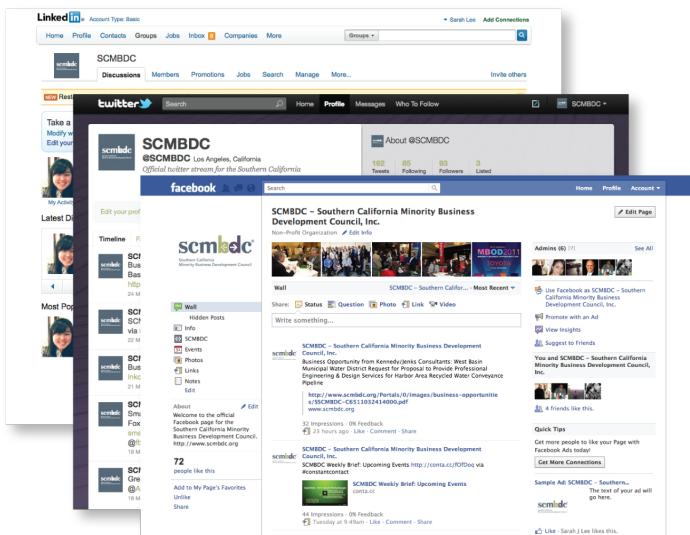
suppliers, improved marketing processes, educational opportunities that would expand their technical expertise, and more.

SCMBDC will also track the progress of meetings, monitor the initiative's progress, submit reports as requested by corporate members and organize meetings and workshops.

## Council takes advantage of social media

Like other businesses and organizations, SCMBDC is using social media to increase awareness, promote its programs and services, and build stronger relationships with its constituents.

The council is posting information on four social media sites -- LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and You Tube -- to provide a platform for information sharing and networking among corporate members and minority business enterprises (MBEs), according to Sarah Lee, graphic designer and programs specialist.



LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter are updated almost daily and include business opportunities, news reports about MBEs and the council, upcoming programs and event reminders, and relevant articles and links.

"The posts are slightly different based on the site. Business opportunities are posted on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, but Facebook and Twitter are updated more frequently with links to the Weekly Brief, Connections, and relevant business articles," says Lee, noting "members seem to appreciate the information SCMBDC is sharing.

"We received many positive responses through Twitter regarding Minority Business Opportunity Day in February during SCMBDC's Business Opportunity Ticker, which was a live feed of business opportunities during MBOD through Twitter," she adds.

The council began using social media nearly a year ago and has gained a steady following. "We are not expecting immediate, easily measurable results with social media. It takes time to build trust, make connections and build relationships," Lee says.

To connect with SCMBDC on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube, go to the council's website, [www.scmbdc.org](http://www.scmbdc.org).

## WISER videos offer insights on entrepreneurs

The council has countless successful business entrepreneurs who can serve as a resource and inspiration to other minority business enterprises (MBEs). Why not take advantage of their expertise and knowledge to benefit others?



That's the idea behind Women of Impact, Strength, and Entrepreneurial Resolve's (WISER) new video series. The series, launched this month, features women business owners sharing insights on the challenges of leading and managing a company. Each video runs about two minutes and can be viewed on the council's website.

"Through the series, MBEs can gain access to successful entrepreneurs and learn about such topics as leadership, managing employees, overcoming challenges, and more," according to Fernando Velasquez, director of programs. "The featured interviewees have inspiring stories and experiences that other MBEs can benefit from."

So far, the series includes interviews with Pat Watts, president and CEO of FCI Management Consultants, a full-service, energy/utility consulting company, and Bonnie Nijst, president and CEO of Zeesman Communications, Inc., a full-service brand strategy, marketing and design firm.

Both certified MBEs, Watts and Nijst have long-time associations with the council. Watts is currently chair of the council's Minority Business Enterprise Input Committee and Nijst serves as vice chair of the committee.

Other videos will be added later this year. To view the series, visit <http://scmbdc.tv/wiser>.

## Smart tips for MBEs

### *Rationale for using social media in business*

Social media websites, like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, are not only a great ways for people to stay in touch with one another, they're also great marketing tools for small and large businesses when implemented well.

These days, many companies are using social media as part of their overall marketing strategy to increase their brand image and awareness, develop stronger customer relationships, and improve their return on investment.

Here are a few reasons why you might consider using social media at your company:



**Build and extend your customer base.** You can reach a larger prospect and customer base using social media rather than traditional media, especially on sites like Facebook. You can engage and build relationships with existing and potential clients using daily wall posts -- 3 to 5 quality postings weekly, as a general rule.

**Create brand awareness.** Social media presents an incredible opportunity to generate brand awareness among a targeted

audience. Begin by researching what channels and tools your customers are using, and then start engaging and linking back to your own website. Many who follow the link may turn into future customers.

**Aid search marketing.** Enhance search marketing efforts by using a variety of social media platforms. The major options that appear in search engine results are YouTube, Flickr, Facebook and Twitter.

**Develop relationships with fans, supporters and the general public.** Social media can help support your biggest fans and influencers, who, in turn, can enhance the information that your prospects and customers gather and share.

**Keep tabs on your reputation.** With social media, you can monitor what's being said about your brand and/or products and services. While you're not involved in these discussions, you can see if positive support turns negative, and then take action to respond, if needed.

There's a tremendous amount of benefits to using social media in business, but not all social media tools are right for every small business. Before embarking on this journey, do some research to determine if it's right for you.

## News Briefs

### *SCMBDC featured in MBN USA*

The council and SCMBDC President John W. Murray, Jr. were prominently featured in a recent article in Minority Business News USA. In the article, Murray said he has no intention of unveiling any new initiatives this year, but that doesn't mean he plans to stand still.

"We have introduced and embraced a host of new initiatives over the past few years. However, our goal for 2011 is to refine our

effectiveness. If things are no longer working we need to make the sometimes tough decision to move on. And, of those things we do well, we want to do all we can to get better."

He continued by saying, "Our goal is to remain consistently creative in our approach to actively engage both MBEs and our corporate members. It's not enough to have the offering available -- they need to be desirable and effective."

Murray also said the council will continue to revisit its value proposition. "It's important to continually refine your understanding of where you add value...We need to be critical and make adjustments when needed....In addition to continually improving and evolving, we need to be able to articulate our value."

### ***Vobecky receives award***

Vobecky Enterprises, an SCMBDC-certified minority business enterprise, received the 2011 Professional Services Firm of the Year Award from the City of Los Angeles and the Minority Business Development Agency, a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The award was presented by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the Los Angeles City Council on March 18.

The celebration will continue in August in conjunction with the 16th Annual Minority Enterprise Development Week awards program in Washington, D.C. The goal of the MED week program and the award is not only to celebrate minority business success, but to provide real business growth opportunities and inspiration at both the local and national level for minority business.