

Helping MBEs build capacity

'Mentees' partner with 'mentors' to take on larger contracts



Council President John Murray addresses mentees and mentors at the graduation ceremony at Target Terrace in Los Angeles.

Many corporations have sizeable contracts to award minority business enterprises (MBEs), but it can be challenging finding suppliers that have the capacity, or skills, to handle the jobs.

That predicament -- shared by several SCMBDC corporate members -- served as the driving force behind the council's Capacity Building Initiative, a two-year program designed to help MBEs increase their capacity through resources and one-on-one coaching provided by corporate "mentors."

Launched in 2008, the initiative's goal was to increase MBE capacity and allow corporate members to share and utilize MBE participants. The initiative involved six corporate members -- AEG, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Southern California Gas Co., San Diego Gas & Electric, Southern California Edison and The Walt Disney Company -- which partnered with seven MBEs, or "mentees."

Mentees included FCI Management Consultants, Genesis Professional Staffing, Morrow Cable Construction, NK David Constructors, Southeast C&I Electric, Quality General Engineering and Thor Construction. Selected by mentors, mentees received 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.

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**Sept. 16, 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.
MWD headquarters in Los
Angeles.**

Generously sponsored by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and hosted by the SCMBDC Minority Business Enterprise Input Committee, this event is a unique twist from traditional trade fairs in that suppliers will be exhibitors. "The Power of Networking" is an excellent forum to connect Corporate America with suppliers doing business in Southern California. For details, contact Brisa Caceres at 213.689.6961 or bcaceres@scmbdc.org.

**Become the speaker and
leader you want to be
Aug. 19, Sept. 2, 16 and 30
9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
SCMBDC's office**

Part of SCMBDC Toastmasters International, this learn-by-doing workshop helps participants hone their presentation and leadership skills. Attendees learn skills such as the use of humor, gestures, eye contact, speech organization and overall delivery. To pre-register, contact Fernando Velasquez at fvelasquez@scmbdc.org or call 213-689-6968.



Corporate mentors (from left, back row): Donald Goldsberry, Ken Ashford, Dennis Thurston; front row: Yolanda Padilla, Carmen Herrera, Arnice Lamb, Scott Bosarge, Mahiri Wise, DeLynne Ano and John Arena.

During the program, which concluded last month, the council also organized communications skills and other workshops and monitored mentees' progress. Based on comments from program participants, "MBEs gained needed skills and knowledge to increase their business acumen and competitive profile, and thus, build capacity," according to Council President John W. Murray, Jr.

Randy Sall of Thor Construction, AEG's mentee, says, "We acquired management skills to take on large amounts of work in a short time frame and learned how to deal with cash flow, which was a big concern on these projects. We think it has put us in the limelight for other projects."

"I have my one-minute pitch down to a science," adds Patricia Watts of FCI Management Consultants, Edison's mentee. "Also, I believe I have a more strategic approach to marketing our products and services."



MBE mentees (from left): Francisco Salazar, Marco Villalpando, Patricia Watts, Virginia Parker, Richard Copeland and team, Marcus Moore and Luis Moreno.

**Leadership Awards Dinner
Oct. 15, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
The Beverly Hills Hotel**

Join us as we honor Michael Allman, president and CEO of Southern California Gas Co., with this year's Leadership Award. The award is given to an individual and/or corporation whose achievements and leadership in the business community have resulted in positive results for small and minority-owned businesses. For information, tickets or sponsorship opportunities, contact Shawn Smith at ssmith@scmbdc.org or (213) 689-6940.

For more information about these and other events, visit www.scmbdc.org



Need high-quality, affordable health insurance? Click here to learn more about our MBE Health Insurance Program.

Connect with SCMBDC



Bringing a corporate perspective, Carmen Herrera of San Diego Gas & Electric and Southern California Gas explains, "Mentees have shown growth and gained additional business from our company. One mentee grew their business with the company three-fold since the inception of the program and another won a multi-million dollar contract."

While the initiative's intent was not to necessarily give mentees additional business from corporate mentors, there were several examples of contracts awarded to mentees. For example, FCI, Edison's mentee, was awarded a contract by AEG and Southern California Gas. AEG's mentee, Thor Construction, was awarded a contract by Disney.

"One of the great things about the initiative was the one-on-one exposure to multiple competitive MBEs able to compete for and win procurement opportunities within AEG," adds Aura McCracken, manager of supplier diversity at AEG.

Reflecting on the past two years, Murray remembers a corporate mentor asking, 'Will these suppliers be better off than when we first launched the initiative?' "Based on early results and feedback, I believe the answer is 'yes,'" he says.

The council plans to continue the program in 2011 with a new class of MBEs and corporate mentors.

Website has new look, features

Diverse business professionals against a backdrop of images that define Southern California have been replaced with "SCMBDC" in bold, contemporary type. This is just one of the visible changes visitors see on the council's redesigned website, but there are also new features to improve accessibility for minority business enterprises (MBEs) and corporate members.



The council recently revamped its website in tandem with a new brand campaign, which includes a new logo unveiled last month. The new site places more emphasis on content "that's most

important and relevant to visitors," according to Christian Ramos, director of information technology, noting new features include a "minority business" section and one planned for corporate members.

"We wanted to make it clear that we serve two constituencies -- MBEs and corporate members. Having a section for each group allows us to target them individually and promote different programs and sponsorship opportunities," he adds.

Under the "minority business" tab, MBEs can access educational, involvement and online resources and tools through Business Development University; affordable health insurance through the council's MBE Health Insurance Program, and videos and webinars featuring guest speakers.

Previously, this information resided in separate areas on the website. By placing the content in one location, it's easier to find and it gives MBEs a more complete picture of the council's programs and services, Ramos adds.

The "corporate members" section, which will launch later this year, will offer information such as corporate membership benefits, involvement and partnership opportunities and business opportunity listings. It will also spotlight corporate supplier diversity programs, recognize outstanding "patrons of SCMBDC" and allow corporate members to share supplier diversity program case studies.

"We want to give corporate members more exposure than they've had in the past," Ramos adds. "Our goal is to become an information hub for both MBEs and corporate members."

In addition to a cleaner, more streamlined look, other features include:

- **Prioritized content:** Because most visitors to the site are interested in minority business certification, "Certification" has been relocated to the first left tab. The section includes FAQs, certification and recertification applications, certification benefits and application status.
- **Event tools:** If you're interested in attending a workshop, you can RSVP online, download a map with directions and add the event directly to your calendar.
- **Social media sign-up:** Invitations to join SCMBDC on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and You Tube are featured on the home page, allowing the council to use social media to communicate with interested parties and drive traffic to the website.

The council is currently working on a more user-friendly online certification and recertification application and will soon be adding additional content, including links and resources to help MBEs grow and become more successful. In addition, MBEs who receive certification from another regional council in the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) network will be able to receive online reciprocal certification from SCMBDC in early 2011.

Check out our redesigned site at www.scmbdc.org.

Website BDU to include 'corporate college'



From a minority business perspective, there are many well-known benefits to joining the council: minority certification, exposure via the NMSDC database, networking events, professional development programs, access to affordable health insurance through the MBE Health Insurance Program -- just to name a few.

But what about the benefits for corporate members? Although lesser known to the public, corporate members have access to a large pool of qualified MBEs, the ability to strategically match MBEs with their sourcing needs and the opportunity to network and share resources and "best practices" with other corporations committed to supplier diversity.

The council's programs committee is developing more programs and services for corporate members as part of SCMBDC's Business Development University, which was announced earlier this year. BDU is aimed at utilizing, sharing and expanding MBEs' and corporate members' existing knowledge and exposing them to new concepts, skills and tools via an "MBE college" and "corporate college."

'We're looking at the issues, what's important, the value the council brings and how to tap into that for corporate members.' - Derek Johnson

While the MBE college will focus on education, involvement and online resources and tools (see January 2010 issue), the corporate college will focus on enhancing the "value proposition" for corporate membership. These areas include benchmarking, including education and awareness, data and networking; public relations, covering co-marketing and recognition, and the qualification process, such as certification, database optimization and access to qualified MBEs.

"We have some good ideas from corporate members and we're putting together a curriculum for the corporate college," according to Derek Johnson, programs committee chairman and vice president, strategic sourcing and procurement, media networks, new media and technology, marketing and advertising for The Walt Disney Company. He added that the programs committee met with about 10 corporate members, including Robert Half International, U.S. Bank, Disney, Hyundai, and Toyota Motor Sales, USA, and discussed the types of programs and services they'd like to see.

"We're looking at the issues, what's important, the value the council brings and how to tap into that for corporate members," he adds, noting that one of the corporate college's goals is to recruit more corporate members. "Over the next few months, we'll come up with programs on how to best meet their needs."

News briefs

Minority firms increase in U.S.

The number of minority-owned businesses in the U.S. increased nearly 46% to 5.8 million from 2002 to 2007, according to data released in July by the Census Bureau.

In the same period, the total number of businesses rose 18% to 27.1 million. The new data comes from the Preliminary Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race and Veteran Status, culled from the census bureau's 2007 survey of business owners.

The same report found that black-owned businesses rose 60.5%, Native American and Alaska native-owned business climbed a combined 17.9% and the number of Hispanic businesses gained 43.6%.

The report also noted the number of female-owned businesses totaled 7.8 million in 2007, up 20.1% from 2002. Male-owned businesses totaled 13.9 million, up 5.5% from 2002.

Successful vs. unsuccessful business owners



What differentiates successful from unsuccessful business owners? Six attitudinal factors, according to a survey by the Guardian Life Small Business Research Institute.

In its survey of small-business owners whose companies expanded during the recession, the institute found six characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. They are collaborative, self-fulfilled, future-focused, tech savvy, curious and action-oriented.

"The most successful entrepreneurs think and act like key executives in medium and large companies," Mark Wolf, the institute's director told the L.A. Times. They seek out and implement best practices, love being their own boss and use technology to expand and plan for the future.

The survey results are available at www.smallbizdom.com (click "research").