



The Diver\$e City

Using small and diverse businesses mutually benefits all involved parties in corporate contracting.

by Beverly Kuykendall

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THERE IS A REASON to be hopeful that small business and diversity will someday be universally recognized as a strategy for business growth! I recently returned from a national sales conference sponsored by Tremco Inc., an international building asset management and roofing material manufacturing firm located in Beachwood, Ohio.

It was exciting to observe that one of the primary conference objectives was to update more than 300 sales, marketing, construction management teams, and staff regarding new products, strategies and initiatives. Even more exciting was the realization that intricately woven into the fervor of this high-energy meeting was an update on small business and diversity initiatives which Tremco recognizes as an integral component of its business growth strategy.

Public Law (P.L.) 109-461, the service-disabled veteran-owned small business sole-source contracting initiative that the Department of Veterans Affairs is implementing, was incorporated as part of a diversity breakout session entitled "Diver\$e City." All participants were fully briefed on how P.L. 109-461 impacts federal and state contracting as well as the workings of the Patriot Express Pilot Loan Initiative, which

provides low-interest loans for vetrepreneurs. Tremco viewed these initiatives as important enough to develop a separate breakout session where participants were rotated in groups of 50 to be briefed.

UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY

It was important that Tremco field representatives understand the importance of diversity to their ability to deliver customer-driven solutions. From schools to hospitals to government agencies to corporations, more and more customers are making inquiries about how they can work with Tremco for building asset management and simultaneously meet diversity goals.

Tremco's approach to the subject of VOB and government contracting was unique in that it was introduced as an **opportunity** for the company to provide customer-driven procurement solutions to government, educational, healthcare and corporate customers. Small business and diversity at Tremco is industry specific. This means that Tremco's relationships with small and diverse businesses are designed to enhance business growth. The small and diverse firms benefit through the extension of Tremco resources and Tremco benefits by



ILLUSTRATION BY GITA MATSON

being able to offer small business and diversity solutions to both public and private customers. Tremco makes it easy to recognize and celebrate the impact of an integrated small and diverse business program. If customers express a need for small business and diverse suppliers, on either a Tier I or Tier II level, Tremco offers a solution through a network of close knit relationships with select small and diverse contractors.

Rather than traditional supply chain diversity, Tremco has opted to enhance business by way of a more comprehensive method. Tremco's program offers small and diverse companies the opportunity to work with an almost unlimited number of Tremco customers. Together with small business and diverse teaming partners, Tremco markets vertically – educational, government, corporate and healthcare. This alternative method of incorporating small business and diverse firms into customer solutions means that Tremco works **with** small business and diverse contractors to grow the business for both sides of the equation. As Tremco gains a new customer, the small business and diverse teaming partner gains additional business opportunities as well. One enhances the



business success of the other. Small and diverse team members jointly market along with Tremco for multiple contracts with various prospective customers. Together they develop strategies for growing the business and deliver solutions.

DIVERSITY RESULTS IN ROI

This unique approach has resulted in a significant return on investment and an incremental increase in market share for Tremco through the Tremco Small Business Strategic Alliance Program. During the conference, Tremco announced plans to expand the small business program to include the Tremco Tier II Subcontractor Recruitment Meetings. These outreach events are designed to increase the number and quality of small business and diverse firms available to support Tremco construction projects. Targeted subcontractors include: HVAC/Mechanical, electrical, lightning protection, painting, paving, debris removal and other construction related specialty trades. Tier II Meetings are currently being planned for Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver and Atlanta. Tremco actively seeks both SDVOB and VOB, 8(a), HUBZone, Woman-Owned and other small business contractors for Tier I and Tier II contracting opportunities.

As more corporations look for strategic market advantages and distinctions to set them apart from their competitors, how many of them will find their way to "Diver\$e City" and seek out VOBs and other small business and diverse firms? Only time will tell. 