

Opportunities for women-owned businesses

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Introduction

Women business owners are crucially vital to the American economy. Women are establishing businesses at twice the pace of all businesses and remaining in business longer. In fact, America's approximately 9.1 million women-owned businesses provide work for about 27.5 million individuals and put in around \$3.6 trillion to the economy (Page, 2006). Nevertheless, women persist to confront rare and distinctive barriers and challenges in the world of business. This paper will establish that in spite of present global turndown, there are now tremendous opportunities for women owned businesses both domestically and in the international market place.

The total number of women owned companies throughout the world provides considerable business-to-business (B2B) opportunities. Actually, US women owned companies spent around \$48 billion on technology equipment alone (Page, 2006). This just proves that women can definitely respond in this 21st century by their numbers to the "ole boy's network" of old. These women business owners are a primary force in the global economy with considerable spending powers.

The major obstacles to trading internationally are frequently the time and costs concerned with getting it done. The costs of marketing to a number of different countries at the same time can be unusual. It takes some time to go into new markets, it takes considerable time to build new business relationships and it takes a lot of time to create the right contracts. A number of the conventional methods of entering new markets have been participation at international conferences or trade fairs. These can be time consuming, expensive, and, unluckily, not at all times productive.

Some time ago, globalization has been set aside for the elite corporate, with their huge budgets and massive resources. For a lot of small businesses turning out to be a player on the world market was just basically further than their expectations. For women business owners, there's often double whammies, since women are frequently declined the essential capital for starting up in business and then often declined capital for growth and expansion. Women business owners frequently lack access to information and easy access to a recognized trade network.

In the year 2000, President Bill Clinton initiated Executive Order 13157 reiterating his administration's pledge to boosting opportunities for women-owned businesses (Office of the Press Secretary, May 29, 2000). The E. O. required agencies and departments to formulate long-term comprehensive strategies to develop and increase opportunities for women-owned businesses. The Executive Order also obliged federal agencies to "meet or exceed" the five percent government-contracting objective that now subsist for women-owned businesses.

At present, there are various supports being offered to create opportunities for women-owned businesses and help these women entrepreneurs succeed in their businesses. First, there is the growing popularity of certification among women-owned businesses; next, there is increasing federal procurement opportunities for women-owned businesses; and third, a web site was created to assist women business owners obtain federal contracts.

Certification Growing in Popularity Among Women-Owned Businesses

Nowadays, certification to qualify for government contracts is becoming more popular among women-owned businesses (Page, 2006). Specifically, a lot of women-owned businesses in Oklahoma are obtaining or securing certification to meet the criteria or qualify for government contracts.

Moreover, certification likewise offers firms owned by women an advantage in securing contracts from big corporations, as mentioned by Debbie Hurst, president of the Women's Business Council-Southwest. According to Hurst, she informs women that certification can be a significant part of their marketing tool case. Hurst added that with merely 5 percent of women business enterprises obtaining government and corporate contracts yearly, there is still a need to bridge the gap between the opportunities for business and the capability of women-owned businesses (Page, 2006).

The group Women's Business Council-Southwest (WBCS), with headquarters in Arlington, Texas, stands for women-owned businesses located in Oklahoma, north Texas, New Mexico, and Arkansas. The association operates in coordination with the Women's Business Enterprise National Council to endorse and certify members.

As asserted by Hurst, the number of Oklahoma companies securing certification has increased 60 percent ever since the year 2004, the year the OklahomaLeadershipForum was created by the regional group (Page, 2006).

As maintained by Tamara Walden, president of Walden Energy (a certified women-owned business) based in Tulsa and a council member The Oklahoma Leadership Forum was conceived to assist women capitalists boost business and gain access to more contracts (Page, 2006).

Walden added that certification is a vital marketing tool for increasing a women-owned business' visibility between procurement decision makers and corporate supplier. Several companies necessitate that a firm be licensed or certified before they will offer a contract as a women's business enterprise. The WBCS is striving to create consciousness of that fact to local businesses, as well as offering educational opportunities and fun networking that help support that.

There is promise and potential for growing certifications in Oklahoma for the reason that the state has a projected 77, 000 women-owned companies (Page, 2006). Moreover, there is an enormous market of women-owned businesses that are not availing of certification programs like that being offered by WBCS that can help them access diversity and government programs.

Growing Federal Procurement Opportunities for Women-Owned Businesses
Although Federal procurement might not sound like a significant issue to the general public, or even a term that a lot of people is aware of, it is considered one of the most profitable, yet complicated and difficult, markets for small businesses to access, specifically those owned by under-represented minorities and women. According to the Office of the Press Secretary (May 29, 2000), in the year 1999, women-owned businesses composed 38 percent of all businesses but obtained merely 2. 4 percent of the \$189 billion in Federal prime contracts.

Certain Federal agencies have taken the lead in operating with women owned businesses, and must be applauded. As indicated by the Federal Procurement Data System, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the <https://assignbuster.com/opportunities-for-women-owned-businesses/>

Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Federal Mine Safety & Health Review Commission, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Small Business Administration have all not just met the five percent objective, but have come in at approximately fifteen percent or better (Office of the Press Secretary, May 29, 2000).

These Federal agencies recognize that coordinating and operating with women-owned businesses is not merely a philanthropic exercise. These businesses owned by women are dependable, strong, and do good work. Furthermore, these companies offer a solid service to their clients, and the Federal contracting officers are aware of it. Altogether, about 20 Federal agencies either fulfilled or exceeded the five percent objective.

Thus, this just proves that it is certainly possible for government agencies to accomplish the five percent goal. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that agencies will work harder, adhering to the examples of the agencies mentioned above, to contract with women-owned businesses. Over the years, government officials are supportive of numerous initiatives to boost resources and opportunities for women-owned businesses. For instance, several senators have passed legislation to re-authorize the National Women's Business Council for a period of three (3) years, and to raise the annual appropriation from \$600, 000 to a total of \$1 million. Part of that amount will be utilized to help Federal agencies satisfy the five-percent procurement objective for businesses owned by women (Seck, May 23, 2000). The National Women's Business Council has offered magnificent leadership in this field, making bigger contracting opportunities a main concern since it was established in the year 1988, and merited praise from

Republicans and Democrats for two general and extensive procurement studies it published in the years 1998 and 1999.

Besides sustaining reauthorization of the National Women's Business Council, Senator Kerry initiated the Women's Business Centers Sustainability Act of 1999 (Seck, May 23, 2000). Proclaimed a public law, that Act is assisting Centers deal with the funding limitations that have been making it more and more hard for them to maintain the level of services they offer after they graduate from the Women's Business Centers program and no longer be given federal matching finances.

Hence, it is certain that President Clinton's Executive Order creates a strong system within the Federal Government for raising the number of contracts that can be obtained by women-owned businesses.

SBA Creates Web Site to Help Women Business Owners Obtain Federal Contracts

In the year 2000, the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) launched a new web site, which aimed to boost procurement and networking opportunities to women-owned businesses by means of putting all contracting assistance information at a single on-line site.

The web site called WomenBiz. gov is a joint venture of SBA's Office of Federal Contract Assistance for Women Business Owners, National Women's Business Council, the Interagency Committee for Women's Business Enterprise, and the SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership (Comtex News Network, 2000).

WomenBiz. gov offers women-owned businesses direct access to the government networks and the federal acquisition tools to draw on the \$200 billion federal marketplace. Furthermore, the web site functions as the official gateway to over 100 procurement and acquisition sites hosted by a variety of federal agencies.

Furthermore, the web site likewise incorporates connections to Electronic Posting System, PRO-Net, the GSA Federal Supply Schedule Program, DefenseLINK, CBDNet, and SBA's Government Contracting page (Comtex News Network, 2000). When President Clinton asked the SBA to lead the efforts to make sure that women-owned businesses be given their fair share of federal contracts, SBA answered that call and reiterated its promise to the President Clinton's initiative though endorsing the launch of its web site and establishing the office. These are two vital instruments for offering procurement opportunities to women-owned businesses.

Generally, the web site contains information pages specially developed to help women entrepreneurs who want to take part in government procurement.

Meanwhile, the women's contracting office is one of numerous initiatives the White House has instigated to encourage procurement opportunities for women-owned businesses.

Conclusion

All of the initiatives discussed in this paper show that there are several complementary national policies to increase procurement opportunities for businesses owned by women.

The phenomenal growth and success of women-owned businesses was primarily due to the development of a national network of women's business centers and organizations. As an outcome of lobbying by women business owners and the establishment of the SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership, various women's business centers have offered would-be entrepreneurs with adequate and necessary knowledge, information, training, skills, loans, and technical assistance.

Nowadays, the Federal agencies have started to make progress from the time when Congress implemented the five-percent procurement goal, but the contracting managers should keep in mind that this goal is just a minimum, not a maximum. Out of the over 9 million women-owned businesses in the United States, the Federal Government can find ones that are reliable and qualified, with good products and services to boost, to fulfil their contracts if they make it a main concern or top priority.

References

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