



Supplier Diversity Academy

# The Insider's Guide to Corporate Procurement:

5 Proven Ways Minority and Women Business  
Owners Can Land More Corporate Clients and  
Never Lose a Contract

## The Insider's Guide to Corporate Procurement

If you're like thousands of other small business owners, the day you added corporate clients to your marketing plan and overall growth strategy is the day your business changed for the better—forever! Let's take a trip down memory lane for a moment. If you ever marketed your product or service to individual consumers or other small business owners you were probably left feeling frustrated with mediocre profits and fed up with having the “I'd love to work with you but can't afford it” conversation. Fortunately, corporate clients have larger budgets and are willing and able to pay you what you're worth...

While working with corporate clients can be very rewarding, it can also have its challenges. There are several steps to being awarded the contract and a few things that if done well will increase your chances of keeping it. Supplier Diversity Academy has helped thousands of minority and women business owners (MWBEs) navigate the corporate buying process, maximize their certification, land lucrative contracts, and master the strategies to become preferred providers. We also work directly inside the procurement/supplier diversity departments of some of the top corporations in America providing consulting to improve their programs and supplier relations and providing business development for their suppliers. In doing so, we have learned exactly what corporate clients are looking for in a supplier and how suppliers can best meet their aggressive demands.

Landing a corporate contract is one thing, keeping it is something entirely different. As a result of the recent economic downturn, much of the progress achieved in bringing diverse suppliers to the Tier 1 level has been lost as a result of companies consolidating supplier bases to cut expenses. This has pushed MWBEs into Tier 2 or Tier 3 levels or has eliminated them altogether because they are mostly small to medium-sized businesses unable to compete with the largest suppliers based solely on scale or price.

This free report is designed to reveal the very strategies and tools we share with our clients that you can implement right away to stay at the top of the supply chain in any economy and no matter how competitive the market. (Don't worry—even if you have not landed your first contract, you are in the right place to get started on the right foot toward becoming a successful supplier.) If you do these 5 things well, not only will you attract more top corporate clients, but you will be less likely to ever lose a contract. Obviously there may be times where things occur that are out of your control and may cause you to no longer have the opportunity to keep a contract but the procurement department will notice that you are a supplier that is serious about their business and is one that should be considered a preferred supplier.

So what does all of this mean to you as the business owner? This means that not only will you be prepared to attract more corporate clients and close more deals, but you will also be well equipped to meet the needs of your clients and turn them into raving fans that not only give you repeat business but provide you with an endless stream of referrals of top corporations exactly like them.! Who doesn't desire that?

Let's get started!

- 1. Capacity, Capacity, Capacity.** Just as location, location, location is key when purchasing a property, capacity also commonly referred to as scalability can mean the difference between landing a corporate contract or losing out to your competitor. Corporations desire to work with a short list of suppliers, ideally on a global basis. If your small business is unable to handle the scope of work for a potential proposal, it is difficult to plead your case as to why your target client should hire you. Do NOT, however, let being "too small" keep you from bidding on contracts that appear to be out of your abilities and capacities. Consider partnering with other small business owners that offer the same product or service to increase your manpower and capacity. Additionally, you can partner with other businesses that offer goods and services that compliment yours and provide a package deal to your target client. For example, if you offer plumbing and clients who utilize your service also frequently need an electrician, partner with an electrician to bid on proposals. This solves a problem for your potential client because they now only have to conduct business with one company to supply two of their needs. Further, commit yourself to constantly developing yourself and your business. By doing so you can continually build your capacity.
- 2. Avoid Complacency.** You must be willing to work every day to retain and grow the business and relationship with your corporate client after you land a contract. Corporations are looking for clients that can grow with them as strategic partners. Again, continue to devote time and resources to growth and development and always remember that customer service is critical to gaining repeat business. Consider hiring a coach or utilizing a mentor in areas of your business that may be a weakness for you or an area that you simply do not enjoy. (Remember you can't give yourself a good haircut!) It is very common to become complacent without realizing you are doing so, especially when you are focused on delivering a quality service or product. One way you can be sure to compete every day is with adequate follow up. Ask plenty of questions after you win the contract to determine the expected frequency of communication during execution of the contract. (Lack of communication and follow up is one the major challenges that the average supplier diversity executive experiences when doing business with MWBEs.
- 3. Maintain a Low-Risk Profile.** When selling to corporate clients, do not underestimate the importance of your company's financial health. Corporations are very risk averse and they almost always check out a potential supplier's profile on Dun and Bradstreet or other reporting tools before awarding a contract. Even after landing the contract, your corporate client is likely to periodically check your profile. You can lose contracts if your profile score is too low EVEN if you have a strong relationship with the client or have demonstrated strong past performance. Unfortunately, financial management is a common area that small business owners are not as savvy. Let's face it, many business owners are in business because they are great at what they do, not because they are great at balance sheets and cash flow statements. ☺ Be sure to have a strong CPA and bookkeeper on your team. You may also consider getting some guidance from a

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member of SCORE, a nonprofit association comprised of retired executives who serve as counselors, advisors and mentors to business owners. ([www.score.org](http://www.score.org))

4. **Have Good Operational Health.** In order to execute well on a contract, it is critical that you have a powerful team backing you. It is essential to have a dedicated person handling the back-office aspects of your business such as customer service, accounting, order processing and fulfillment, etc. Selling to corporate clients is not the time or place to be all things to your business. Make this easier on you and your team by having a solid system for every aspect of your business. When possible use the best technology you can afford to automate your business. Having these pieces in place makes it easier for supplier diversity departments to do business with you and demonstrates your ability to meet their needs.
5. **Provide Total Value.** In today's environment it is more important than ever to be able to compete beyond product and price. You must be able to provide a unique experience for your corporate clients. This is especially true if you are in a commodity business such as promotional products or IT consulting. Historically, MWBEs are more likely to start a commodity business than their counterparts so you can imagine how competitive these areas are in supplier diversity. I am not suggesting that there is not a need for these types of service but all businesses must be able to transform beyond customer satisfaction and loyalty into creating customer advocates. Think of coffee. An average cup of coffee that you make in your home is probably worth 7-12 cents per cup. That same cup of coffee at a local chain restaurant may be worth around \$1.50. Now take that same cup of coffee and offer it in a cool happening place with beautiful décor and free Wi-Fi and it now becomes worth \$5-\$7 (even if purchased through the drive-thru!). My point is that when you can become an experience provider you are likely to close more deals and turn your corporate clients into your champion that give you repeat business and referrals to other potential contracts. How you approach this will be different for every business, but it requires a mindset shift and outside of the box thinking.

Corporations spend trillions of dollars every year on goods and services which is great news for minority and women business owners. If you do a few things correctly you have the opportunity to quadruple your profits. If you do a few things incorrectly you can very easily lose money and possibly your reputation. To be successful in the corporate marketplace you need support and guidance. Supplier Diversity Academy has experience selling to corporations, working hand in hand with supplier diversity leaders, and empowering minority and women business owners to succeed in the corporate marketplace.

As a bonus for downloading this report, you will also receive a FREE subscription to our email newsletter, *Insights*, where you will receive tips, tools, and strategies to land and keep corporate contracts.

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Should you need additional support and guidance to take your business higher, consider enrolling in our One-on-One Mentoring program for the most direct path to growing your revenue. You can get more information at [SupplierDiversityAcademy.com](http://SupplierDiversityAcademy.com) and clicking on the Minority and Women Business Owner drop down menu under Services. Enrolling in this program gives you access to the information, education and support you need to become a successful supplier to your corporate clients. It is perfect for new suppliers all the way up to those who are at the six-figure and beyond mark.

We are here to help you Discover Possibilities, Enhance Performance, and Maximize Profits. Supplier Performance IS our business!

## Who We Are

**Supplier Diversity Academy** specializes in diversity performance. We empower Minority and Women Business Owners (MWBEs) and Supplier Diversity to work together more effectively and profitably. Doing so results in economic development and increased vitality of communities at large.

Our services help MWBEs to become stronger suppliers, enhance the leadership skills, productivity, and overall effectiveness of Supplier Diversity Executives, and improve Supplier Relationship Management. Additionally, we provide opportunities for MWBEs and corporations to connect and do business.

Our knowledge of business development and capacity building forms our ability to understand our clients' needs. We go beyond "off-the-shelf" training and customize our programs to exceed the expectations of those we serve and to ensure desired results are achieved. By exploring greater possibilities and putting the emphasis on people and performance, our clients are able to maximize profitability.

Our mission is simple—to transform the way small business enterprises and corporations collaborate.

## Our CEO



### The Ultimate Connector Between

### Small Businesses and Corporate America

*Diversity Business Strategist and Corporate Marketplace Mentor Shayna Rattler is quickly becoming recognized as a highly acclaimed authority in minority business development and the ultimate connector between minority and woman-owned businesses and Corporate America. She helps these small businesses and corporations cultivate leadership skills and achieve greater success through business development and*

organizational excellence. Ultimately, she empowers the two to work together more effectively and profitably.

### **Shayna Has Cracked the Code to Collaboration, Connection and Community Development**

Small businesses desire to do business with corporations and many corporations are committed to doing business with small businesses. Doing so effectively has proven to be a challenge for many. Creating powerful connections and successful partnerships through effective communication and collaboration leads to greater profits and ultimately economic development and increased vitality of the community at large.

Whether engaging Shayna as a coach to navigate the corporate contract maze that boosts revenue in your small business, as a consultant to strengthen your supplier diversity department, or to speak to your audience, avail yourself to her relevant and abundant resources and knowledge. As a result, you will be better equipped to step through the door of opportunity for enhanced performance and greater profits than ever before.

She is the person to turn to if you want to grow your small business by working with corporate clients because she has done so herself. This experience has also given her tremendous insight into supplier diversity and purchasing. Now she also provides support and guidance to large corporations to drive improvements in supplier relationship management and to advance the organization as a whole. By exploring greater possibilities and putting the emphasis on people and performance, her clients are able to maximize profitability.

If you are a woman or minority business owner looking to do business in the corporate marketplace or a corporation seeking improved supplier relations and access to a constant pipeline of great talent, Shayna Rattler is the missing link. Her passion, vision, wisdom, and “get-it-done” attitude are the keys to your success.

### **How Shayna's Journey Serves You**

Fresh out of college, Shayna began her journey as an entrepreneur. By the age of 28, as a single mother, she created two successful businesses, making her an obvious go-to for business and life advice. She has over 13 years of business and management experience that she draws on to share with clients those essential elements that comprise her vision of entrepreneurial success, leadership, vision, and life.

Over the years through her training and keynotes Shayna has empowered thousands to enhance performance, and to connect and do business for greater impact and profits. As a coach, author, and speaker she focuses on leveraging her expertise to positively impact the success of small businesses and the leadership of corporations. She shares the very strategies and methods she used to grow her own business and develop her as a leader. She developed a proprietary F.O.C.U.S. System™ she uses with clients to maximize their

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success. By combining knowledge and experience Shayna has built a reputation based on results.

Her natural qualities as a leader are demonstrated in her service to the business community. She serves on several boards of directors and is active in Executive Women International, National Association of Professional Women, National Association of Women Business Owners, and Women Speakers Association.

Shayna has been featured in several print publications and has been interviewed numerous times on television and radio. She has a BS from the University of Tennessee and is a certified Diversity and Inclusion facilitator. She received a certificate in the Strategic Mindset Process in 2011. Shayna is also the published author of ***Higher: 5 Powerful Principles for Entrepreneurs to Reinvent Themselves and Redefine Success to Earn More.***

She believes giving is a fundamental principle of business and life success and donates a portion of all company proceeds to Big Brother Big Sister of America and St. Jude Hospital.



**Shayna was chosen as the National Association of Professional Women**

**2012 Woman of the Year for her industry.**