SUPPLIER DIVERSITY IN THE 21st CENTURY: Surviving the Economic Downturns

During troubled times, maintaining the success and relevancy of a supplier diversity program requires greater focus and attention. The starting point – an organization-wide recommitment to diverse suppliers.

In good times, one role of the supplier diversity executive was to promote the concept of supplier diversity within his/her organization and spread the word about its positive impact. Today, with many C-suite and senior executives still unaware of its bottom-line benefits, the task of promoting the concept has turned into ensuring that the organizational commitment remains intact. In short, supplier diversity in some companies may struggle for survival during turbulent economic times.

Back to Basics
It may sound like a cliché, but in volatile economic times, it is important for the supplier diversity executive to be current on global economic trends and markets and focused on reinforcing the foundation of the organization’s supplier diversity program. A good place to start is a reaffirmation of CEO commitment to supplier diversity, revamped internal and external communication strategies to reinforce that message, a look at ROI metrics to build the business case, and a general process review.

C-Suite Commitment
Leadership is the lynch pin of any successful organization. In order for any project, initiative, or program to be successful, it must have the support of the C Suite from the very top and all the way through the operating team. Most best-practice supplier diversity programs have a statement of support from the CEO that features a clear and forceful commitment to a diverse supply chain and the utilization of diverse suppliers. Now is a good time to obtain a reaffirmation of that support with fresh language that reemphasizes the CEO commitment to the supplier diversity program even in hard times.

Internal Communications
Utilizing the renewed CEO commitment, the supplier diversity executive should take a deep dive into all communications strategies and formats including print, video, and Internet-based, with the aim of reinvigorating the organization’s dedication to the program. Communications must be relevant, concise and easily understood. The message that you convey to your internal stakeholders should be aimed at fulfilling their business needs with a keen eye on the cost component.
External Communications
Identify key external stakeholders (e.g. suppliers, advocacy groups, etc.) and ensure that each has a clear understanding of any change in direction for your supplier diversity program and what impact those changes may have on how they do business with you in the future.

ROI Metrics
Reestablishing the business case for supplier diversity is critical. ROI (Return on Investment) has taken on special meaning in today’s economic environment. Identify revenue generated by supplier diversity program involvement in the respective corporation’s sales process.

Process Review
Undertake a systematic process review to include activities such as reporting (internally, externally) supplier certification, forms, Web site updates, RFP and contract language.

Additional Steps
Additional actions that supplier diversity executives should be taking to ensure success and relevance in a volatile economy include:

Periodic review — Conduct a person-to-person periodic review of your top suppliers with an in-depth review of their supply chain and their financials. Review new opportunities for increasing and/or maintaining their business. Are there supplier development opportunities to help them grow their business? Also help them keep an eye on next generation technologies.

Bankruptcy watch list — Utilize legal notifications systems to identify which suppliers filed for bankruptcy.

Seizing Opportunities
While much of what has been mentioned in this report appear to be defensive actions, it is important not to overlook potential new opportunities that may result from the downturn.

Government financial stimulus — Various Federal/State/local programs may afford the diverse supplier an unprecedented opportunity. While the specifics of these programs are still unfolding, now is the time to determine the best method to quickly identify such opportunities. Diverse suppliers should actively seek out stimulus opportunities.

Charitable foundations — Ensure that you have full knowledge of the financial opportunities available to all aspects of your program. For example, there may be some financial resources available for diverse supplier mentoring and education. This funding may be available through a foundation sponsored by your own company or affiliate. Additionally, look for other public funds/grants that may currently be available for such activities as research and development. Diverse suppliers should actively seek out public grants.

Volunteerism — Do not underestimate people’s desire to help others in time of need. Develop a volunteer program that utilizes specific skill sets to assist a diverse supplier to better develop their business case. Supplier mentoring is critical during times of need. Ensure you recognize the individuals or groups that provide their time to help.
For Suppliers: Actions Diverse Suppliers Should Consider
• Suppliers need to ask themselves what specific actions they are taking in today's environment to react to their customers' new direction.
• Diverse suppliers need to stress the "partnership" element of their business relationships by:
  — Improving connectivity with their customers
  — Being more creative in their approaches to solving customer problems
  — Clarifying their competitive advantage; e.g., rebuilding an outmoded business plan, then executing it
  — Leading with optimism
  — Diversifying their offerings, if it makes sense, while retaining focus on their core competencies
  — Increase respective capacity through partnerships, LLC's, acquisitions and joint ventures

Conclusion: A Checklist for the Supplier Diversity Leader
During troubled times, supplier diversity programs need to refocus on providing guidance on specific opportunities that offer the diverse supplier a chance to be successful in the near term. This could include assigning operational personnel to suppliers to better help them compete successfully by encouraging participation in development opportunities, including global ones, investing in next generation technologies, and looking at niche markets such as going "green."

Core Activities
The critical core activities deemed important by The Conference Board's Supplier Diversity Leadership Council include:
• Renew "C Suite" support
• Drive commitment to utilize diverse suppliers within your supply chain
• Review policies, procedures and processes and streamline where appropriate
• Refresh internal and external communications in all media formats
• Reinforce the base case for supplier diversity
• Remain vigilant for new opportunities such as government financial stimulus packages and charitable foundations
• Rededicate yourself to your program and remain positive in everything you do to advance supplier diversity in your enterprise
• Reestablish your mentoring program

Specific Tactics
• Conduct a deep dive for savings in Tier I and Tier II spend
• Automate reporting process
• Re-target supplier diversity event sponsorships
• Identify and invest in high-potential MWBEs (training, real mentoring, consulting)
• Utilize technology to perform registration, reporting and online technology

The Importance of Remaining Connected
During tough economic times, memberships in diverse supplier advocacy organizations become an easy target for budget cutbacks. Executives need to connect and weigh these costs against historical savings obtained through the use of Minority and Women's Business Enterprise organizations. It is also important to press advocacy organizations to better articulate their role in ensuring the continuity of the diverse supply base during turbulent times.
Council Perspectives™
Members of The Conference Board Councils are among the most experienced and savvy executives in the world. Their private deliberations produce rich insights on the most challenging business and societal issues of our time. With their permission, we have channeled their energy and expertise into Council Perspectives, a new platform to voice their views. Council Perspectives is based on sessions from selected council meetings, post-meeting interviews, and other pertinent data, and may sometimes include original content written by council members. It is not intended to be a research report; rather, Council Perspectives provide a unique look into the minds of executives from leading global organizations as they assess, analyze, and develop ways to address critical issues.

About This Report
In mid-2007, discussions in the Supplier Diversity Councils turned to a particularly “hot topic” — sustainability — which was receiving not only vast media attention, but the focus of corporate C-suites around the world. Council members posed the question: How could supplier diversity develop similar momentum? While the members were pondering that question the global recession forcing members to turn their attention to not how to best promote supplier diversity in an enterprise, but rather how does supplier diversity survive. The material in this report is a compendium of discussions on what actions a supplier diversity thought leader should take to ensure the continued relevancy and success of his/her program and make certain it remains a priority within the organization.

About The Conference Board
The Conference Board is a global, independent business membership and research association working in the public interest. Our mission is unique: to provide the world’s leading organizations with the practical knowledge they need to improve their performance and better serve society.

The Conference Board creates and disseminates knowledge about management and the marketplace, conducts research, convenes conferences, makes forecasts, assesses trends, publishes information and analysis, and brings executives together to learn from one another. The Conference Board is a not-for-profit organization holding 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status in the United States.

About The Conference Board Council Program
Membership in one of our councils affords entrée into a select and trusted community of 2,500 executives from a broad array of industries, functions, and regions—executives who know the value of this rich source of insights and new approaches.

Enduring relationships are the cornerstone of the Councils experience. Enhanced by our global, enterprise-wide reach, these relationships span the world and extend value across your organization. Confidential peer dialogue combines broader perspective, specific knowledge, and shared experience to save you precious time and public missteps.

To learn more, contact Katie Plotkin, Councils Membership Manager, +1 212 339 0449 or katie.plotkin@conference-board.org. Council participation is by invitation only and is an exclusive benefit for The Conference Board member organizations.
About the Supplier Diversity Leadership Councils
In 2005, The Conference Board recognized a void in furthering the future of supplier diversity and launched the first of two Supplier Diversity Leadership Councils. These councils, which meet on a regular basis in a confidential setting, bring together senior thought leaders on supplier diversity to discuss opportunities and challenges that face the supplier diversity executive.

By: Council Perspectives, Leadership Insights from The Conference Board Supplier Diversity Leadership Councils

Mentor–Protégé Program for Veteran Owned Small–Business and Service Disabled Owned Small Business Goals

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently is developing a Mentor–Protégé program (MPP). This program will be implemented during fiscal year 2010. Under the VA MPP, protégé firms must be Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business or Veteran Owned Small Business.

The MPP will be a developmental program to provide vital business expertise to Veteran owned enterprises. The MPP will serve as a tool for Veterans who are business owners to become viable and/or more competitive in the small business community.

Under the MPP, Mentors will receive credit on their subcontracting plans. The details on how this process will work are currently under development.

Mentors and Protégés are responsible for finding their counterparts. Once the VA has started accepting Mentor and Protégé applications, we will list firms on this web page that are interested in being Mentors and firms interested in being Protégés.

At this time, we are developing the framework for the program and coordinating internally to finalize the necessary documentation.

David Canada (david.canada@va.gov) and Fernando Guerra (fernando.guerra@va.gov) are the primary points of contact for this program. Please check the Mentor–Protégé section of the VA OSDBU web page periodically for updates on the development of this program. Once the program is implemented, the applications forms, agreement template, and a guidebook will be posted on the VA OSDBU web page.

By: Government Contracting Area IV, Indianapolis, IN
RELOCATION STRATEGIES: A SUCCESS STORY

Jesse, thanks once again for all you have done to include WBE firms at Purdue!!! The opportunity to meet staff in the architect’s office and purchasing department would not have happened without your help. Relocation Strategies, Inc. was hired for our first Purdue project October 19th, 2009 and hope this is the beginning of a wonderful relationship with Purdue.

We inventoried 11 existing cubes above the exponent office on the 3rd floor. The existing department was moved out and the new department moving in had different needs. We redesigned the space with the assistance from Julie Hickman and Alice Kelso. Relocation Strategies, Inc. then proceeded to create installation drawings of the labor that needed to be done so Purdue could bid out the work. Since Relocation Strategies, Inc. does not sell any product, it was our goal to reuse as much existing product as possible. We had only a few pieces that were not incorporated in the new layout, I think Julie was pleased. We also provided a parts and pieces list needed to be purchased, Purdue will benefit by bidding to two qualified Steelcase dealers to obtain the best price for new product. I was very pleased working with both Julie and Alice, as well as, the Purdue client. Thanks again for the fantastic opportunity to work with Purdue and for all of your assistance.

In my first deposition, defending Shelby County Government, I had the honor and privilege to work with one of Memphis’ most venerable litigators, Leo Bearnum, who had a perfect win record. He quickly taught this young whippersnapper that the settlement agreement was a litigator’s best friend. A litigator could never have a perfect win record without mastering the art of settlement negotiations. In that litigation, I learned that my job was to keep my client out of the courtroom. Once settlement discussions were under way, it was then up to the public entity and its lawyers to negotiate a settlement agreement in its favor.

By: Melissa Lamb Brown, IIDA, Relocation Strategies, 2009; relocationstrategies.com

NAWBO 2009 VISIONARY AWARD WINNERS

NAWBO–INDIANAPOLIS ANNOUNCES 2009 VISIONARY AWARD WINNERS INDIANAPOLIS – Over 750 people, including Lt. Governor Becky Skillman, Secretary of State Todd Rokita and Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard, celebrated Indiana women at the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO–Indianapolis) sixth annual awards and holiday luncheon, Celebrating Women presented by American Family Insurance on Wednesday, December 16, 2009.

The highlight of the annual luncheon was the announcement of winners of the 2009 NAWBO–Indy Visionary Awards. This year, five individuals were honored for their achievements as business owners and leaders in the community. The 2009 Visionary Award winners were:

• Avatar of the Year: Angela Faulkner, Faulkner Strategies

• Indianapolis Choice (two recipients): LaTricia Hill–Chandler, Indianapolis Public Schools and Holli Harrington, Eli Lilly and Company

• Member of the Year: Pam Parker, JP Parker Flowers
• Woman Business Owner of the Year: Carol Curran, Phoenix Data Corporation

In addition to the award winners, NAWBO–Indy announced the creation of a new scholarship benefitting its members. Beginning in 2010, the NAWBO–Indianapolis Entrepreneur Scholarship will provide executive level education to enhance both personal and professional growth to one qualified member per year. Proceeds from the annual luncheon benefitted the scholarship.

MEDIA CONTACT: MaryKay Scott | Chapter Administrator | (317) 608–0252 | mscott@nawboindy.org

ABOUT NAWBO

Founded in 1975, NAWBO propels women entrepreneurs into economic, social and political spheres of power worldwide. More than 35 years later, NAWBO is still the only organization that solely represents the interest of women entrepreneurs in all industries. The organization's mission is to strengthen the wealth–creating capacity of its members and promote economic development; to create innovative and effective change in the business culture; to build strategic alliances, coalitions and affiliations; and to transform public policy and influence opinion makers.

With over 230 members, NAWBO–Indianapolis is one of the largest chapters in the country.

THE SECOND TIER AND BEYOND

How to make the most out of your tier–two supplier diversity program? This question is raised quite often as large organizations look to leverage existing programs and improve the value to the organization. In fact, tier–two supplier programs can be expanded to include areas beyond diversity such as sustainability, risk, or compliance programs.

Industry supply chains have made quantum leaps in efficiency and technological sophistication over the past decade. Initiatives such as global sourcing and supplier–base rationalization have changed the face of the supplier base, shrinking it to as small as a quarter of what it once was. In recent industry analyses, CVM has shown how these corporate initiatives have also created additional risk to the supply chain across Fortune 1000 companies. The suppliers that are still standing are finding that the supplier diversity offices of major corporations and government agencies are delving deeper into the supply chain to ensure the inclusion of diverse suppliers. Those diversity offices are extending their programs beyond their company's own supplier base into the next tier and even further down the value chain.

We have several well published examples of the impact that successful second tier programs can have on large companies. Wal–Mart reported record increases in business with minority and women–owned suppliers even in one of the worse economic times in history. Wal–Mart increased its combined direct and second–tier spend to more than $8.1 billion with minority– and women–owned businesses through an innovative second tier program. "At Wal–Mart, we know we can make a difference in the communities we serve and our commitment extends to minority– and women–owned businesses at the local level," said Theresa Barrera, vice president of Supplier Diversity at Wal–Mart Stores Inc. "We are proud of the fact that, in these difficult times, we are able to deepen
our commitment to these important partners—giving them the potential to grown, while enabling Wal–Mart to deliver and sell the goods and services our customers want.”

The first step in implementing any tier–two program is selling the business value to your tier–one suppliers and gaining executive buy-in. Whether your company sells to consumers, commercial customers, or local, state, or federal government entities, mature supplier diversity programs expand their scope well beyond their immediate tier–one suppliers. The dynamics of modularization, supplier–base rationalization, low–cost country sourcing (procuring materials from counties with lower labor and production costs), and other practices certainly affect the ability to grow the supplier diversity program if one were to only think about the tier–one supplier base.

As with any major corporate initiative, for the second–tier program to be a hit, it is critical to have the endorsement of executive management and procurement. The world–class second–tier programs that we see today do indeed start with such a commitment. Just look at Ford Motor Company, Wal–Mart Stores, Inc., Proctor & gamble, Johnson & Johnson, AT&T, and Motorola, Inc. These companies encourage their first tier large suppliers to create their own supplier diversity programs. Nannette Kelley, supplier diversity manager for Motorola, Inc., says, “Where we have had supplier diversity initiatives at the top level of many different industries, tier two and ‘tier x’ drive diversity efforts into the vertical industries that support the top tier of business.” What exactly does buy-in and commitment involve? It requires more than a handshake deal or words of encouragement. You need to create a formal policy for a second–tier program. The policy should clearly articulate your company’s desire to expand diversity efforts to tier two and beyond. It should also establish what is expected of prime suppliers that are required to participate in the program, including how goals will be set, how frequently prime suppliers will be required to report sub–tier diversity spend, and how those tier–one suppliers will be held accountable to mutually agreed–to goals. Samples of formal programs are easily accessible.

Excellent resources are the National Minority Supplier Development Council and the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council, corporate peers who have implemented a program in your industry or region, and consultants such as RGMA & Associates. The policy would be difficult to materially implement unless amendments are made to existing standard contracts requiring participation from prime suppliers. Indeed, second–tier reporting is much more than mere data collection and reporting. Successful programs ensure that there is an adequate support structure to drive high participation and actual spend based on goals established. This requires proper outreach and communication; tools to automate the data collection, a rigorous verification process to certify that the diverse suppliers named in sub–tiers are indeed diverse, and verification that spend did occur between the two parties (the prime and the sub).

The indirect and direct procurement teams ultimately play a major role in dictating the conformance and success of the program. Madlyn Bagneris, manager of supplier diversity at Entergy, notes that having a system that enables the company to obtain supplier informative quickly and accurately has enabled Entergy “to make sure smaller companies have a second opportunity to work through the second–tier system.” Tier–tier programs are ultimately driven by procurement teams. Purchasing managers and buyers who maintain these critical supplier relations are key to driving high levels of participation from suppliers. The procurement team must have clear directions regarding its role, the policy established, the expectations of a prime supplier chosen and the exact purposes of period review.
Another important aspect of the process is establishing accountability within the procurement team for certain levels of diversity spend contribution from the key suppliers nominated. This provides accountability for goals set for each prime supplier on their contacts with your corporation. Goals for each prime, and for your organization overall, depend on a variety of factors, including your industry (or your supply chain), the level of knowledge of supplier diversity among your suppliers, their ability to participate, and the potential for subcontracting opportunity based on their contracts. With the internal commitment in place, prime suppliers must be identified to launch the program.

Across many industries today, it is not uncommon for a few hundred suppliers to represent more than 80 to 95 percent of spend. Most programs, including those that now boast billions in annual diversity spend in the second tier, start small—focusing on the top 50 or 100 suppliers that represent a high percentage of their spend and expanding their programs in a phased manner. It is important to analyze the chosen supplier base in terms of the realistic scope of diverse supplier participation at a second-tier level and to set specific goals for each prime supplier, or set goals for all suppliers in a particular commodity group. The prime supplier recruitment should include contractual amendments (if necessary), proper communication of the expectations, training, and the setup of an ongoing review process.

Successful execution requires careful consideration of several critical elements of the program design, including:

- Frequency of reporting, whether it’s monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or annual. Quarterly reporting is by far the most common. Specific industries or commodity categories, like the construction industry for example, may require more frequent reports to be able to measure and course-correct on the fly.

- Prime supplier training, help desk, and follow-up during the reporting cycle.
- Method and ease of reporting, whether measuring direct or indirect contract-specific spend.
- Level of detail collected. Second Tier (continued)
- Use of robust technology to enable efficient and accurate reporting.
- Verification and diversity status of spend reported and auditing.
- Measurement against goals and periodic reviews with prime suppliers.
- Internal reporting.

Continuous measurement and continuous improvement should be the mantra for any tier-two program. The measurement process should include several key program metrics including total diverse spend reported, total verified diverse spend, response rates, and the number of suppliers exceeding, meeting, or below goal. Successful programs need to have a plan in place to deal with “offenders.” A periodic annual review process should be instituted with participating suppliers to review the results against expectations. Otherwise, the supplier will get the message that “it must not be important” or “no one is enforcing it, so let’s see what happened if we don’t do it.” Further measurement against internal accountability standards is equally important to drive continuous improvements in the process.
Even today’s world leaders in second tier continuously improve and evolve their program as their needs and the environment change. The result of such high standards not only ensures that supplier diversity goes beyond the surface, but can help entire communities. Fred Lona, director of supplier diversity at Hilton Hotels Corp., says, “We’re helping the vitality of the communities where we do business by reinvesting in local businesses.”

By: Rajesh Voddiraju, HNMagazine.com

THE TURNER SCHOOL OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Developing New Business Relationships

Since 1969, Turner has been training minority– and women–business owners in the disciplines practiced in the construction industry. This program has been uniquely designed to enhance the technical, administrative and managerial skills of minority and women businesses in order to make a profit and build a reputation for efficiently managing construction projects. Individuals enrolled in the program gain insights and meaningful tools that help them target their business for quality and growth and develop new, strategic business relationships. There are over 15,000 graduates of the program.

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The Turner School of Construction Management Fall 2010 Schedule

Turner Construction Company will once again host a series of free seminars for minority, women and veteran owned businesses. The program, which is co–sponsored by Purdue University and the City of Indianapolis, is an opportunity for MBE, WBE and VBE firms to further develop and improve operations while networking with others in the construction industry. The sessions will begin on Thursday August 5, 2010 and continue for ten consecutive weeks. All sessions will take place from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and will be located at Purdue University’s Intech Park location (6640 Intech Blvd.) Please call Tiffiny Summers with Turner Construction Company at 317.708.3125 to register for the course. Please register by July 26, 2010. Space is limited to first 40 participants.

Class 1 – Setting up a Business: Legal, Banking & Accounting Basics for Construction Firms
Thursday August 5, 2010

This class introduces the basics of setting up a business in the construction industry. The topics include the components of a business plan, how to select an accountant, the type of legal counsel an emerging business should look for, how to select a bank, and what the bank looks for in a company.
Additionally the class will cover accounting basics for construction contractors, covering major components of the financial statement. This session will also answer your tax questions.

**Class 2 – Project Delivery Systems and Contract Risk Management**
**Thursday August 12, 2010**

This class introduces the concept of project delivery systems and five commonly used project delivery systems: lump sum, cost plus a fee, construction management, design–build, and program management. It also provides a brief review of the commonly used contract forms. In addition, this class addresses the issues that relate to contract risk management such as the use of attorneys, avoiding litigation, and litigation management.

**Class 3 – Management**
**Thursday August 19, 2010**

This class, which introduces the participants to the fundamentals of managing a company, covers various business–side and project–side issues such as strategic planning, effective management practices, relationship building, government compliance, contract provisions, risk management, and notification requirements.

**Class 4 – Scheduling**
**Thursday August 26, 2010**

This class first provides an overview of scheduling and why it is important. It then introduces the scheduling process and various scheduling software programs. Finally, it introduces you to the two most commonly used construction schedules: the area schedules and the look–ahead schedules.

**Class 5 – Safety**
**Thursday September 2, 2010**

This class introduces the participants to the fundamentals of safety management in the construction industry. Topics include the importance of safety awareness, business–side and project–side issues, and resources such as check lists and sample safety programs.

**Class 6 – Estimating, Bidding and Procurement**
**Thursday September 9, 2010**

This class introduces the basic concepts of estimating and procurement. It provides detailed discussion of the bidding process, including the bidding processes from the GC to the client in order to get the work and the bidding process from the subcontracts to the GC in order to select the subcontractors.

**Class 7 – Insurance and Bonding**
**Thursday September 16, 2010**

This class introduces the basic concepts of insurance and bonding and the typical insurance and bonding requirements for construction projects. It also addresses compliance issues and provides
tips on how to purchase insurance and bonding, as well as, how to maintain insurance and bonding relationships.

Class 8 – Field Operations  
Thursday September 23, 2010

This class introduces the participants to the field operations management process. Additionally, business-side issues such as risk management plans, quality and safety programs, project oversight, relationships and project post mortem are discussed. The class also focuses on project-side issues such as preparing for project start, job management, job review meetings, record keeping, relationships and project closeout. This course will also discuss job costing and the main concepts associated with job costing.

Class 9 – Experienced Minority and Women Business Enterprise Roundtable  
Thursday September 30, 2010

This class will allow participants to interact with some of the most successful Minority and Women Business Enterprises within the Built Industry. Participants can ask questions of the panel members on how they have achieved the success that they enjoy today and the hurdles they have faced along the way. Class participants will have a unique opportunity to tap into the lessons learned by these experienced business owners.

Class 10 – Graduation and Networking Event  
Thursday October 7, 2010

In this final class of the Construction Management program, participants will be honored for their time and achievement with a graduation ceremony. Additionally, the graduation will be utilized as a networking event for the students, as representatives from the largest buyers of construction services in the area will be invited to attend. Additionally Turner will invite majority firms that complement the trades represented by the class participants. The goal is to initiate dialog that may lead to future partnering opportunities.

Participants who graduate* from the series will be eligible to take an on-line OSHA 30-Hour certification course through Turner’s Knowledge Network. The price of the certification will be at Turner’s cost, which is $160. The standard rate for the on-line training is $595. Furthermore, graduates will receive additional hours of web-based learning courses, such as “How to Read and Analyze Financial Statements” through the Turner Knowledge Network.

*In order to be considered a Construction Management program graduate, participants must attend a minimum of seven of the ten scheduled sessions.
Former Office of Supplier Diversity Development Employee Wins Prize in Burton Morgan Business Plan Competition

Anthony Sharpe, former Supplier Diversity Specialist for the office of Supplier Diversity Development left our office two years ago to pursue his MBA at Krannert Graduate School. Anthony has done very well for himself and will graduate this May. Recently he was a part of a team (Pinta) of graduate students to participate in the Burton Morgan Business Plan Competition. Below is Anthony's article on his teams participation.

Pinta Finds Victory at Burton Morgan Business Plan Competition

Today, if we want to search electronic information on the web, the first choice often is to use Google©. When we are in need of a subject matter expert for any number of projects, Google© may create more work for us than needed. Imagine being able to search for subject matter experts in any industry or organization, and instead of an endless list of available websites that you then dig through to find experts, a software existed that could provide an accurately ranked list beginning with the most authoritative expert in that specific area. What if this expert information was collected and stored 100% automatically with no human intervention using software alone. This information can then be used to create a profile of each user containing contact information and other relevant data on each expert. Researchers at Purdue University have created just this technology.

Pinta, is a startup company founded on a technology created over many years in the Computer Science Department at Purdue University. The technology is a sophisticated algorithm that can accurately search multiple data sources and automatically create a database of expert profiles which is then searchable by any number of users interested in locating expertise. Initially developed under the leadership of Professors Jeffery Vitter and Aditya Mathur in 2005, this technology has evolved through the years and been further developed by Professor Lou Si, and Computer Science PhD student Yi Fang. The technology began as a project at Purdue, where several researchers across the University had the desire to search for other researchers for collaboration. The system PURE (Purdue University Research Expertise) was born. This system worked well, and the Indiana Economic Development Council (IEDC) funded the department $104,000 to create a statewide expert search system which became known as INDURE (Indiana Database for University Research Expertise). The link www.indure.org is the interface to search for research expertise at Purdue University, Indiana University, Ball State, and Notre Dame. This system is openly accessible by the public for locating research expertise in the state of Indiana.

After successful development of the INDURE system, PhD student Yi Fang saw potential to form a business using this technology. He approached the school of management and sought out two MBA students to help him write the business plan and enter the 23rd Annual Burton D. Morgan Business Plan Competition at Purdue University’s Discovery Park. After obtaining two MBA’s, Yi Fang and Professor Aditya Mathur began seeking out a board of advisors for the firm. What came of this hard work was the formation of a business plan containing eight members of Pinta: Yi Fang, a PhD student in the Department of Computer Science at Purdue; Anthony Sharpe, a Finance MBA student at Purdue; Nadim Ahmed, a marketing MBA student at Purdue; Suli Xi, a PhD student in Computer Science at Purdue; John Schneider, Assistant Vice President for Industry Research at Purdue; Jeff Vitter, a Professor of Computer Science and engineering at Texas A&M University in College Station,
Luo Si, Assistant Professor of the Department of Computer Science at Purdue; and Aditya Mathur, Professor and head of the Department of Computer Science at Purdue.

This team was the only information technology team to make it to the finals of the prestigious Burton Morgan Business Plan Competition in February of 2010. Competing against biomedical and engineering technologies, Pinta placed 3rd in the competition and has caught the attention of many within the Purdue community and beyond. The team leader Yi fang stated, "Pinta was the first and the fastest of the three ships used by Christopher Columbus to sight the new world. The name reflects the mission of our company: to discover the valuable target that others cannot". Team member Anthony Sharpe said “This technology has the potential to unite many researchers for collaboration on projects that we can’t even imagine today. The possibilities are limitless, and this is an exciting time to be in this industry with this unique technology.”

Future plans for the Pinta technology include developing search and recommendation software for other universities across the country and extending into both federal and private entities that have the need to search their expert information within their organization. For additional information on Pinta or the underlying technology, please contact Yi Fang in the Computer Science Department at (765) 413-2550 or fangy@cs.

By: Anthony Sharpe, Krannert MBA Student purdue.edu.

KUDOS

Vicky Walker, Purchasing Assistant, for identifying a local minority vendor that was not identified and an MBE. Due to her investigative skills we will now be tracking their business through Purdue and CVM. Thank You Vicky!