

# OSD Link



CONNECTING MINORITY VENDORS WITH GOVERNMENT SPENDERS

## From the Executive Director

Greetings to all certified women-, service-disabled veteran- and minority-owned business enterprises!

With your overwhelming support, we executed the biggest and best yet MatchMaker Conference and Trade Show in Orlando. This year more than 1,500 minority, women, and service-disabled business owners, local residents, and other community-based organizations attended, and we conducted more than 2,500 one-on-one appointments during the trade show. We were proud to have Governor Crist return for the second year in a row to address the conference, showing his commitment to supplier diversity in our state. Furthermore, we signed two strategic partnership agreements and launched our first reciprocal certification agreement!

Our staff worked hard to create another premier educational experience along with innovative workshops and increased networking opportunities. We want to send special thanks to all federal agencies, state agencies, universities, local municipalities and private corporations who helped make this event successful. Through these partnerships and alliances, we are able to provide these outreach events and ongoing initiatives.

As we move forward, we want to hear from you! We have received your feedback and suggestions on this year's event. We continue to seek input, listen to your suggestions and adjust our operations to better serve you. Thank you for your continued support of our office. Enjoy this issue and we hope you enjoy the holidays with your family and friends.

Sincerely,

Torey L. Alston  
Executive Director



## Keeping Your Costs Down

There's a fine line between starting your business on a shoestring and letting it fail due to a lack of resources. You want to minimize the amount of money used to get the business moving, yet you want to look professional in the eyes of your customers. The challenge is to maintain the image of a solid, successful company without letting your expenses lead to uncompetitive pricing.

The trick is to determine the point at which your business runs both effectively and efficiently. The good news is, if you master the art of trimming expenses early in the game, you'll develop good habits that serve you well as your company grows.

The first action item is to cut your initial budget to the bare minimum. Chances are your business will start slow, so doing things for a dime that would otherwise cost a dollar is a great discipline. Here are some tips to keep early costs under control.

### Workspace

Where you work often determines how well you work, but you can probably rough it a bit while getting things done. Another suggestion is negotiate with your landlord for free rent during your startup phase. Many office buildings are willing to reduce or even forego rent for as much as a year just to get tenants in the door.

### Tools and Services

Buy office supplies in bulk whenever you can. Lease equipment and vehicles, rather than buying them or purchase items at an extremely discounted price. Keep your fixed costs down by turning as many tools and services into variable expenses as you can. That way your cost of doing business grows only as your income grows.

### People

Controlling labor costs is probably the biggest challenge you will face. When it's time to hire, do it carefully and intelligently. While competitive compensation is essential to attracting good people, it does not have to be in the form of salary. Give your employees perks, such as flexible work hours, train them adequately for their responsibilities, and take time to give feedback and praise. Be passionate about your company and about them.

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## Marketing

Word-of-mouth is the best and cheapest form of advertising, which means a lot of networking. Attend business and community events to talk about your company, and focus on your most desirable customers. Find opportunities to be a featured speaker. Work the trade show circuit, even if you don't have the money for a booth or exhibit. Remember the value of free media coverage.

Source Brad Sugars - Entrepreneur.com

## Certified Vendor Spotlight



A.M.W.A.T. Movers received the 2008 Minority Business of the Year award from the Office of Supplier Diversity. A.M.W.A.T. is a woman-owned moving company in Tallahassee, and services include residential and commercial relocation, and logistics. For more information on A.M.W.A.T. please visit <http://amwatmovers.com/> or call (850) 877-7131. Congratulations, A.M.W.A.T.!

## Bid Opportunities

The Department of Corrections requests bids from qualified laboratory/pathology providers having at least one year of business/corporate experience with appropriately experienced management and at least one year of experience within the last three years in the provision of correctional laboratory/pathology services. For more information concerning ITB 08-DC-8008 please visit [http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main\\_menu](http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main_menu) or call Corina Chiorescu at (850) 410-4052.

The Department of Environmental Protection Division of Recreation and Parks, Bureau of Design and Construction solicits formal competitive bids from Certified or Registered General or Building contractors for the building of the Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park – Manager's Office. For more information concerning ITB BDC 48-08/09 please visit [http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main\\_menu](http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main_menu) or call Susan Maynard at (850) 488-5372.

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs issued an invitation to bid to purchase outdoor public service advertising space for the Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) program. For more information on ITB 12-01-08 visit [http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main\\_menu](http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main_menu) or call Marianne Moody at (850) 414-2394.

## Tips for Success

Do you need a **duplicate copy of your certification certificate**? E-mail the Office of Supplier Diversity at [OSDHelp@dms.state.fl.us](mailto:OSDHelp@dms.state.fl.us) to request a copy of your CMBE certificate and within 24 hours a duplicate certificate will be sent to your e-mail address listed in MyFloridaMarketPlace.com. For more information contact the Office of Supplier Diversity at (850) 487-0915.

Have you recently moved, changed your telephone number, or want to change the e-mail address where your certificate is sent? Please remember to **update your contact information and commodity codes** at <https://vendor.myfloridamarketplace.com>. For assistance please contact the MyFloridaMarketPlace Customer Service Desk at (866) 352-3776.

As a registered state vendor, you can **receive electronic notification of solicitations and purchasing opportunities** with the State of Florida. All you need is a working e-mail address to receive the updates. Please visit: [http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main\\_menu](http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main_menu)

Are you a certified minority-, service-disabled veteran- or woman-owned business available to provide services or commodities to government buyers **before or after a natural disaster**? If you are, join the 2008 list of emergency suppliers by visiting [http://dms.myflorida.com/business\\_operations/state\\_purchasing/florida\\_emergency\\_network](http://dms.myflorida.com/business_operations/state_purchasing/florida_emergency_network) or for more information, please email [flemergencynet@dms.myflorida.com](mailto:flemergencynet@dms.myflorida.com).

## Important Links to Remember

### MyFloridaMarketPlace

Register as a vendor and update your listing in the certified minority business enterprise directory. <http://vendor.MyFloridaMarketPlace.com/>

### Vendor Bid System

Register to receive solicitations from the state for business. [http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main\\_menu](http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main_menu)

### U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency

MBDA serves minority entrepreneurs across America who are building and growing their enterprises. <http://www.mbda.gov/>

### Florida Small Business Development Center

Assistance to start, grow and succeed as a business in Florida. <http://floridasbdc.org/>

# A Glance at MatchMaker 2008

The 2008 MatchMaker Conference and Trade Show was a huge success! Special thank you to our partners, business owners and organizations for attending this year's event. At MatchMaker, we unveiled two Strategic Partnership Agreements with the NAACP and the U.S. Small Business Administration. We signed the first reciprocal certification agreement between the state and the City of Tallahassee as we focus on streamlining certification in the state. Our biggest highlight was the premiere focus on certification for service-disabled veteran-owned business enterprises.



Governor Charlie Crist and NAACP Florida State Conference President Adora Obi Nweze signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the State of Florida's Office of Supplier Diversity to promote collaboration and increase the number of certified black businesses from 574 to 700 by November 2009.



Department of Management Services Secretary Linda South and Tallahassee Mayor John Marks sign the first reciprocal agreement between the state and City of Tallahassee for certification.



MatchMaker participants listen to keynote Speaker Malik Ali President of the Florida Minority Supplier Development Council during the Diversity Awards Luncheon.



Department of Management Services Secretary Linda South addresses the Florida Conference of Black State Legislators.



Florida Fish and Wildlife representatives participate in one-on-one sessions during the MatchMaker trade show.



Networking between a CVS representative and a business owner during the 2008 MatchMaker trade show.



One of several networking opportunities during the MatchMaker Conference.



L-R: Commissioner Mildred Fernandez; Office of Supplier Diversity Executive Director Torey Alston; Gloria Pugh, A.M.W.A.T. Movers; Department of Management Services Secretary Linda H. South; and Zhonggang Li (Cliff Lee), CommerNet, Inc. Cliff Lee and Gloria Pugh shared their business success stories with MatchMaker attendees at Thursday's Executive Breakfast.