



The Canadian delegation at the 2010 WBENC National Conference in Baltimore.

Seven steps to supplier diversity success

1. *Build* your certification into your business plan. This should be a thoughtful, strategic exercise in which you identify the companies and governments with supplier diversity programs, target those you want to do business with and clearly lay out why they should do business with you.
2. *Integrate* your certification into your marketing efforts. Review your marketing plan and tactics. Identify ways to highlight your certification and your interest in supplier diversity opportunities. Develop messaging and products to keep you top-of-mind with potential clients.
3. *Create* an action plan and action it. It's now time to develop your to-do list. Identify your action items in order of priority, establish deadlines and assign tasks to your team. Next, take action and track your progress.
4. *Register* your interest and network. Many large organizations have supplier diversity websites. Register your interest to become a supplier and provide them with information about your business and what you can do for them. Get to know the procurement officers and stay in regular contact.
5. *Work* closely with the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service. Trade commissioners in Canada and around the world have extensive networks and knowledge. Make the most of them. They can help identify opportunities, prepare you for your target markets and find qualified contacts.
6. *Identify* opportunities for visibility. Every year, there are business matchmaking opportunities, along with supplier diversity fairs, in a vast range of industries. Spend the time and money to participate. Take part in trade missions and the annual Women's Business Enterprise National Council conference. Nothing can replace face-to-face contact.
7. *Leverage* your WEConnect Canada connections. Network with other certified women business owners and the WEConnect Canada team. Educate them about your products or services. After all, it's the best way to ensure that your name comes up when opportunities arise that fit your profile.

Know a woman on a mission?

Nominations open!

JoAnna Townsend Award, The Organization of Women in International Trade Toronto

www.owit-toronto.ca

The Sara Kirke Award for Woman Entrepreneurship, Canadian Women in Technology, a division of CATAAlliance

www.catawit.ca

RBC Canadian Woman Entrepreneur Awards

www.theawards.ca

The International Alliance for Women World of Difference 100 Awards

www.tiaw.org

Canada Export Achievement Awards

www.exportawards.ca

Ontario Global Traders Awards and Ontario Business Achievement Awards

www.obaa.ca/nominate-now

Canadian Women in Communications Annual Awards Gala

www.cwc-afc.com

Women's Executive Network Canada's Most Powerful Women Top 100 Awards

www.top100women.ca

Regional development agencies for business women in trade

The Federal government's regional development agencies provide programs aimed at improving the economy of Canadian communities. Some of their programs are specifically designed to support business women.

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Women in Business Initiative

www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca

Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions

www.dec-ced.gc.ca

Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

www.north.gc.ca

Women Entrepreneurial Center of Quebec www.cefq.ca

FedNor (Ontario) www.fednor.ic.gc.ca

Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario

www.feddevontario.gc.ca

Western Economic Diversification Canada www.wd.gc.ca

Women's Enterprise Initiative includes:

Women's Enterprise Centre of B.C. www.womensenterprise.ca

Alberta Women Entrepreneurs www.awebusiness.com

Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc.

www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca

Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba www.wecm.ca