

## **Hitting Home Runs: Supply Managers as Supplier Diversity MVPs**

**Joan N. Kerr, Executive Director – Supplier Diversity Programs  
AT&T**

**925/824-5507, [joan.kerr@att.com](mailto:joan.kerr@att.com)**

### **91<sup>st</sup> Annual International Supply Management Conference, May 2006**

**Abstract.** Procurement Managers today are seen as critical players in delivering cost savings, better quality products and services, and higher supplier diversity results in the supply chain. Sometimes the pressure to win on all three fronts seems like an impossible objective.

Fortunately, many procurement managers are meeting this challenge today and are achieving winning corporate supplier diversity results along with higher quality and bigger cost savings. Whether your job title is contract manager, strategic sourcing manager or supply manager, when you are up at the plate, you have the chance to deliver a home run that drives in all three competitive advantages. This presentation will highlight some winning plays and will lay out the strategy for becoming a supplier diversity MVP.

**Objectives.** Our objective is to present specific supply chain solutions where supply managers have distinguished themselves as MVPs by delivering a triple or double play of significant cost savings, top quality and huge supplier diversity results. The workshop will also distill the key learnings from these breakthrough examples and explore how supply managers can employ these strategies to hit their own Home Runs.

**The Opportunity.** The knowledgeable planning that creates an elegant and competitive supply chain can also reveal the roadmap for a sourcing solution that delivers not only cost savings and quality, but also significant diversity. Through end-to-end supply chain analysis, managers can scope out the strategic points in the supply chain where diversity suppliers can add value, reduce costs and have the biggest impact on supplier diversity results.

Supplier Diversity Home Runs do not occur by chance. They are the result of a clear understanding of what it takes to plan and execute a winning hit, followed up by the willingness to do the work it takes to be a top player who can deliver when up at bat.

While it is easy enough to simply demand that suppliers provide a certain target in cost savings, quality performance metrics and supplier diversity results, MVPs are directly engaged in planning and delivering those winning elements so that all such objectives are interwoven in a sustainable solution. MVPs have a thorough knowledge of the supply chain of the product or service being procured, a solid grounding in the business objectives and imperatives of both the suppliers and the customers, particularly as related to the particular product or service at hand. From the moment that a sourcing need is identified through ongoing contract administration, the MVP is designing and auditing a solution that keeps all supply chain objectives on track- with cost, quality and supplier diversity at the forefront.

The inclusion of supplier diversity participation in non-core procurement or the participation of diverse suppliers in ancillary roles in a large contract or core sourcing solution is an everyday

occurrence that most sourcing managers are comfortable achieving. The MVP is distinguished by a willingness to tackle core sourcing projects and go outside of the traditional supplier base to include in a key role, one of the many diverse suppliers eager to have the opportunity to add value. The MVP is willing to break new ground where it may be necessary to coach and mentor diverse suppliers to support the growth that will be necessary to meet Big Hitter size and scope requirements. The MVP however, cannot be successful alone and behind every significant supplier diversity solution, you will find a wide ranging team of support that has been brought together to design and implement the supplier diversity breakthrough.

Supplier Diversity Big Hitters can be found across several industries. The telecom, auto, information technology and consumer product industries may be the most widely known for huge, breakthrough diversity initiatives. Specific examples from each of these industries will reveal pitfalls and best practices to guide you as you develop your own Big Hitters. Some of the Big Hitters we will highlight have focused on re-engineering the manufacturing process, others have zeroed in on critical order management, distribution and delivery networks. Still others have seen how outsourcing business process operations to a diversity supplier can deliver a winning solution. While it is difficult to hit a home run every time you are up at bat, there are opportunities for every sourcing manager to become a supplier diversity MVP.

## REFERENCES

Boston Consulting Group, *The New Agenda for Minority Business Development*, 2005

Telecom Supplier Diversity Task Force, *Revitalizing the Supplier Diversity Value Proposition through Supply Chain Effectiveness*, June 2003

[http://www.ism.ws/SR/P2\\_Diversity.cfm](http://www.ism.ws/SR/P2_Diversity.cfm)