

## Matchmaking With a Purpose

By Leah Shepherd



Beverly Kuykendall, *President, FCCi*

Beverly Kuykendall is a match-maker of sorts. She's constantly looking for ways to create beneficial relationships between small and large companies.

Beverly is the president of Federal and Commercial Contracts, Inc., (FCCi) a consulting firm based in Inglewood, California. FCCi provides strategic advice and support to large firms looking to partner with federally or state certified small firms in order to enhance the business that they do with public agencies, including the federal government

The strategies developed and implemented by Beverly and FCCi are based on sound business principles. This leads to the development of successful partnerships between large and small companies that are based on the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Adherence to acquisition regulations and public law is a primary focus area for FCCi. FCCi develops business relationships with large businesses who then engage her firm to help them to achieve results with small businesses that directly impact the bottomline.

Kuykendall, a resident of Los Angeles, established the firm in 1997 and it has grown into a talented and committed staff of 5 small business experts. FCCi helps to create access to

federal markets for its clients throughout the United States. It develops sales strategies that facilitate sales to federal agencies, and helps to establish mentor-protégé and other teaming relationships between companies. For its clients, it can provide market data, including information on new opportunities; sales target locations; key decision-makers, products or services purchased; competitive data and pricing data. But most notably, FCCi is able to demonstrate to large businesses that there is a quantitative value to small business relationships. FCCi's focus is to demonstrate that developing a strategic small business approach to contracting, results in a solid return on investment, an incremental increase in market share and a strategic market advantage for the large firm.

"It's really refreshing. I really enjoy it. It's a long-term dream to be able to develop and implement an approach that results in a win for the small business, a win for the large business and a win for the customer." Kuykendall comments.

### **'A great channel'**

Right now, countless numbers of businesses in the United States are hoping to do business with federal agencies. For some requirements, the government has a sole-source or limited-source system in place which encourages the utilization of small firms. FCCi looks for ways that large firms can develop relationships with small firms to maximize these opportunities to the benefit of all stakeholders, the government, small and large businesses.

"That opens up a great channel for small businesses



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and a rationale for small business and large businesses to work together," Kuykendall notes.

A key client, Tremco, Incorporated has engaged FCCi to create, develop and implement the Tremco Small Business Strategic Alliance Program. The Program is ongoing and has been in place nearly 8 years. Tremco provides complete building envelope solutions to the Federal, Healthcare, Educational and Corporate markets. Over the years, the Small Business Team has grown to a staff of 8 Tremco employees. "With Beverly's leadership, Tremco's Small Business Strategic Alliance Program offers our government and commercial customers the quality small business procurement solutions they need, while providing our contractors the training and opportunities to profitably grow their businesses," says Deryl Kratzer, Tremco's President.

The goal is for the relationship to produce a higher return-on-investment, incremental increases in market share and a strategic marketing advantage for both firms. The relationship can't be formed on the basis of sympathy, sentiment or presumption.



"They're both bringing something to the table. We need to continue to emphasize that there are sound business reasons for large businesses to work together

with small businesses, and that's my role," Kuykendall explains. "Understanding that, we can change the face of small business in this country."

In fact, in the midst of this year's recession and the federal stimulus bill, the federal government is putting more emphasis on hiring small businesses. "We see the pitfalls [of the recession], but we're also able to implement some strategies that help us achieve our goals," Kuykendall says.

She is grateful to agencies such as the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) for helping her figure out what could be done under the federal regulations to help small businesses win federal contracts.

### **A long-time advocate**

Before launching FCCi, Kuykendall spent nearly 20 years in logistics, distribution, sales and marketing management jobs with various firms, such as Procter & Gamble, Xerox, American Hospital Supply and Herman Miller. She also spent almost 10 years as co-owner and executive vice president of Management Healthcare Products and Services, a medical products distribution firm. "I really wanted to explore the government markets in a way that large companies weren't interested in at the time. I felt that going out on my own would be a better way to do what I wanted to do," she remarks.

She has served on the board of the National Veteran-Owned Business Association. In addition, she is the co-founder, immediate past president and member of the board of directors for the National Minority Medical Suppliers Association. The purpose of the group is to encourage the Veterans Administration to consider more small businesses



*Kuykendall speaking during the MEDWeek 2009 Conference*

in its procurement processes. "That's where my love of small business advocacy started," Kuykendall says.

She is a professional public speaker and a member of the National Speakers Association. She has spoken at events for a number of government agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, the Federal Aviation Administration and the General Services Administration. "I believe in delivering the message about small business in a way that emphasizes the possibilities rather than the impossibilities. I want to give audiences useful, relevant strategies in a powerful way that will, hopefully, motivate them to take the next step," she says.

Beverly earned a bachelor's degree in business management from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and an MBA degree from Pepperdine University, Malibu. She has written a workbook called "Welcome to the World of 8(a) Contracting," a reference to small business programs. She is in the process of publishing a second book that covers related topics.

She remains committed to the goal of opening up the federal markets to small business owners. "Small businesses, they're not hearing enough about alternative approaches" to working with the federal government, she observes. "If small business wants what large business has, it must engage in some of the same strategies as large business," she notes. Specifically, small companies should identify the procurement decision-makers and market themselves to those individuals. Too often, she says, small companies limit their discussions to Small Business Liaison Offices and Contracting Officers. This is great marketing, however, when you look at large businesses, they are talking to Program Managers and Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTR)

"Total dedication and passion" are the words that best describe Kuykendall's overall approach, according to Scott Denniston, director of programs for the National Veteran-Owned Business Association, who has known her for about 20 years.

"She's a constant advocate," he says. "She's incredibly articulate and knowledgeable about the programs [available to assist small businesses]. She's a very effective advocate. She really knows what she's talking about."