

Networking Commando



Small Business Enterprise Supportive Services Center

A Shared Initiative between Cheyney University of Pennsylvania and The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

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SBE Mission

The Mission of the Small Business Enterprise Supportive Services Center (SBESSC) is to serve as a resource for assisting SBE firms in gaining access to FAA, FHWA, and FTA assisted, transportation-related contracts. The Center will also assist active SBEs in the transportation arena in becoming self-sufficient and achieving proficiency in order to compete on an equal basis with non SBE's.

What is a Small Business Enterprise?

A for-profit business owned by a United States citizen or lawfully admitted permanent resident of the United States.

A firm that does not exceed the Small Business Administration's size standards for the work they desire to perform.

A firm whose average annual gross receipts for the three previous fiscal years does not exceed \$23.98 million.

Networking Commando Origin

An outlier response in a previous DBE Needs Assessment Survey was associated with the following question: “*What most hindered your ability to quote a PennDOT project?*”

- 43% of respondents cited “*Lack of Prime Contractor Networking*”

Based that response and several others we decided to take a different approach to helping SBEs improve their networking activities based upon a military model “*Mission Command.*” *Mission Command incorporates collaborative planning and feedback throughout the operations process which is critical to developing and maintaining a common understanding of the situation and the mission. Leaders must strive to improve their ability to communicate their intent, desired end-state, concept of operation, and understanding of the situation so subordinates are able to take initiative consistent with the mission.*

The goal of the Networking Commando is to apply the same techniques to the daily operations of the small business owner. We suggest the following solutions to alleviate **Networking Hindrances**: (1) Business Intelligence, (2) 30|60 Day Strategy, (3) 90-Day Strategy and (4) Associations Value.

Business Intelligence -- Lead Generation

When you receive a lead from someone in your network, **UNDERSTAND** you are getting information on a prospective customer who is usually ready to **BUY NOW**.

The prospects are generally known to the person who gave you the lead/referral. ‘This generally results in a cost savings to you i.e. less time acquiring the new customer and less cost for advertising.’”

This new lead/referral will know that you are reputable based on the recommendation of a mutual acquaintance, and will be more likely to pick up the telephone when you call to initiate your relationship.

Small Business List of Braggables

1. **List the Strengths** of your team and **Highlight** them in your promotions. This is key to establishing a **Solid Reputation** and encouraging **New and Repeat Business**.
2. **Focus** on the **Years of Experience** of the individuals involved. List where the Individuals **Worked, for How Long**, and what **Types of Projects** they completed.
3. **Focus** on a **Service or Project** that your company does particularly well in your advertising to bring customers on board in this area.
4. Discuss your Company as an **Expert** in a particular aspect of **Construction** your **Special Niche** in construction, real estate or marketing.
5. Developing a **Specialty** helps make your brand memorable and sets you apart from the competition.

30/60 Day Strategy

Once you've targeted your prospect(s), distribute your firm's Capability Statement. Your Capability Statement will serve as an excellent introductory document for distribution to prospects and others before doing business with them.

We recommend this be done by email within the first five-days of meeting. During the next *20-30 days*, follow-up with a mailed (U.S. Postal Service) version. On *day 60* you should follow-up with a postcard sized reminder with the firm logo and your name prominently displayed on the front and discreetly on the back.

The firm's services, mailing address, website, and email address should also be on the back panel.

Bus Companies Do It Best

Interior bus ads are placed above the windows along both (*Positioning*) sides of the bus and enable your campaign to reach thousands of daily riders. Fifteen minute average trip times allow signs to capture the attention of riders all day long:

Key Goals for You:

1. Develop a **Method to Reach** your audience when they are most receptive.
2. **Build Familiarity** with your brand, so customers will think of you when making purchasing decisions.
3. **Low Cost Repetition** of your ads builds reach and frequency quickly resulting in high recall and awareness of your message.

90-Day Strategy

90-days after meeting your prospect and adhering to the 30|60|90 Day Strategy, you have solidified your work and reputation with quality correspondence.

Day 91, via phone call request a face-to-face meeting; Create a script for your person to use when making this appointment. This is not a phone call to be made by you. Find a retired person or that expensive college student you have at home this summer.

The goals of this call (1) *“Is Not to Put a Face with the Name”* – The sole intention of this appointment is to access to new opportunities and to keep work coming in the door, (2) You are not building credibility here, you’ve done that with your capability statement and postcard and (3) This is a coffee meeting, not breakfast , lunch, or dinner.

You will either meet at your worksite or the worksite of your prospect. Use this time as an opportunity demonstrate your knowledge about their work or products. You are closing the sale today and working on cementing a long-term relationship.

Building a Good Reputation

1. **Commit** to putting clients first and providing superior quality and high delivery standards.
2. **Delivering Superior Customer Service** lays a foundation for a good reputation – Managing what how customers to talk about you online.
3. **You** provide an online tools on your website **for customers to review you** -- to increase your chances of getting good reviews.
4. **“Preserving your brand's reputation”** -- make sure your team knows your brand's core message and understands what image is to be **Projected at all Times to Customers.**
5. **“Outside the organization, you need to make sure that your brand image is being communicated consistently.”**
6. **Handle client complaints directly – client satisfaction is the key.**

Associations Value

Consider joining: *Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers* which allows you to connect with engineers from all disciplines and gain access to potential business partners, employers, and employees.

The Urban League Entrepreneurship Center (Philadelphia) provides technical assistance, strategic planning and links to resources to help small businesses grow their financial and human capital.

The Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce instantly connects you to thousands of companies throughout the region.

Utilizing this strategy will allow your business and employees to gain access to several extensive networks, businesses, and professionals found throughout southeastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and northern Delaware.

SBE Supportive Services Team

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