



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA Business Matchmaking Conference Helps Women Owned Enterprise

Approximately, 1,000 small business men and women participated in SBA's Business Matchmaking Conference at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California. The 3 day event, February 9th -11th, 2004th, was geared toward small businesses, either currently active with respect to procurement contracts, or aspiring to establish a relationship with various buying arms of much larger private and public sector companies. The uniqueness of this event involved pre-scheduled meetings matching small business sellers to corporate and government purchasing departments during the actual event. In addition, an on site re-schedule booth allowed for an aspirant to add one or more of these 1-on-1 meetings to their pre-scheduled meeting slate, predicated on availability and time. In addition, counselors from the SBA and SBA partnership organizations were available to consult on key small business issues, including access to capital, effective business planning, and other technical and procurement assistance needs.

This event was so successful, that it will be replicated in other major U.S. cities. 3,200 appointments were scheduled, plus a significant number of impromptu match-ups. Several contracts were negotiated on site. More successful purchasing deals are pending.

One of the attendees that benefited directly from the Business Matchmaking Expo was Barbara Bickham, President of TechGenii, Inc. The company name springs from Ms. Bickham's comprehensive knowledge of two high tech areas, computer security and wireless data communications. Subsequent to attaining both a baccalaureate and a masters degree in computer science, Ms. Bickham garnered significant hands-on experience working for wireless firms as well as companies involved in computer security. TechGenii reflects her genius in combining both aspects to achieve the core competencies that drive her Los Angeles based corporation.

Founded in August 2002, TechGenii provides technology to offer customers cost effective security and mobility for wireless fidelity networks. "As we become more mobile with respect to the types of portable devices for data input and access, security and protection of information become issues of substantial concern", posits Ms. Bickham. Smart Phones, Tablet PCs, and hand held devices allow users to move from office to office and still be capable of accessing their networks. However, utilization of these tools may render the user at risk from a security standpoint

Barbara Bickham identified three major problems inherent in the workings of the wireless local area network (LAN) marketplace and set her company in motion to specialize in dealing with them. Whether, it is Product Research & Development, Management Consulting, Wireless Application Development, Wireless Feasibility Studies, or Wireless Installation & Development that is performed by TechGenii, the focus is never diverted from the 3 problem areas: 1.) securing end-users by protecting data transmissions across networks, 2.) mobility by allowing a wireless end-user to move seamlessly between networks, and 3.) billing enhancement by providing an accounting of users who are on the networks. This consistent focus has set in motion the forces necessary to establish the propitious niche that permits TechGenii to compete in its market segmentation.

The invitation to attend the Business Matchmaking Expo was very timely for Ms. Bickham. She responded with expectations for a successful Expo. At a minimum, the event would prove a good venue for networking. Even more significantly, Barbara saw it as a wonderful opportunity to access a plethora of potential clients under one roof. Also, the fact that appointments were being made for TechGenii in advance and with contractors within the desired NAICS codes, promised valuable marketing opportunities.

The outcome exceeded her expectations. "This was a very successful Business Matchmaking event for me as a small business owner", commented Bickham. "Tech Genii met some buyers and we had the opportunity to speak with the actual decision makers." In addition, her company was also able to mingle with many small companies in need of systems security. Also a pleasant surprise came from her unplanned encounter with Marlyn Garcia, a business development officer from CHARO-SBA Women's Center, which had a booth at the Expo. This center, headquartered in East Los Angeles and funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration, provides business and technical assistance, plus capital access (SBA loans) to women- owned enterprises.

Through her involvement with Ms. Garcia and the CHARO-SBA Women's Center, Barbara Bickham received assistance with general business planning issues. The Center is currently working on marketing strategy with the updated promotional approach expected soon. But most impressive is the fact that Marlyn Garcia was able to get TechGenii processed for an SBA guaranteed Express Loan and get it funded within a month of the actual Matchmaking Expo. SBA Business Matchmaking was a successful event for small business, for women-owned businesses, and for Barbara Bickham in particular!

Los Angeles SBA District Director, Alberto G. Alvarado echoed that same sentiment in his praise of Barbara Bickham. "The SBA is proud of the assistance received by TechGenii. Ms. Bickham, in true entrepreneurial fashion, fused her technical acumen with her understanding of the marketplace to create her own enterprise and, thus, she merits any SBA assistance to help her achieve an appropriate return commensurate with her risk."

For more information on TechGenii visit its web site at www.techgenii.com or contact the company as follows:

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For information on the CHARO-SBA Women's Center please call Anita Rodriguez, Vice President- Corporate Development at (323) 269-0751.

To find out more about SBA Loan Programs and Services visit the Agency's user friendly web site www.sba.gov or call one of the following Economic Development Specialists at the SBA's Los Angeles District Office:

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