



Notes – Latina Business Leaders Meeting January 9, 2009 – 9:30am, Rm: 7015

Introductions

[Cristina Mossi – CEO, Devis]

- Thank you for having us. I want to say something with regard to contracting—I would like it be easier to work with the government. There are high barriers to entry in the procurement process. It is very convoluted.

[Stephanie Valencia – PTT, OPL]

- And we know that women are the drivers of small business in our communities.

[Penny ? – PTT, SBA]

- Karen Mills sends her regrets and we are glad that you all took the time to be here today.
- As you know small businesses are a priority for the president-elect and he introduced the SBA director as part of his economic team.
- She understands both the money side of things and the that diversity in the department is important.
- And diversity is very high on her list.
- The president-elect is also keeping it in mind for the stimulus and once the secretary is confirmed she will open her doors and let the fresh air in.

[Reta ? – PTT, OPL]

- Welcome to everyone. I would recommend that everyone look at the stimulus, there is a lot on there for small businesses.

[Elizabeth Gallagher – Vice Chair, USHCC]

- Thank you for the invitation to be here today and your commitment for an open dialogue.
- Today we'll talk about our views on federal procurement, trade, foreclosures, healthcare and the economic crisis.
- We would like to see more diversity in contracting and the overturning of the women's' business rule
- With regard to fixing the economy, we would like to thank President-Elect Obama for his small business tax cuts.
- Growing businesses need access to capital and we need to ensure that labor rules do not depress our growth. In addition, it should be easier to access new export markets—like Panama and Cuba.
- We would also like to see health care reform.
- We also ask that you give some of our priorities for the stimulus your full consideration.
 - Keep in mind that Latina businesses are a driving force in our communities, and that we out pace our male counterparts.



- Please make high level appointments of highly qualified Latinas. We are grateful for the appointment of Secretary-designee Solis and we urge you to continue to put Latinas in at the cabinet and sub-cabinet levels.

[Penny ? – PTT, SBA]

- Earlier this week, regulation regarding women owned businesses –specifically where women are under represented— was put up for comment. The comment period has been re-opened.
- I know USHCC has already sent their comments, but please have all your members comment—as many people as possible.

[Melinda Guzman – Partner, Golsberry, Freeman & Guzman, LLP]

- I would like to comment on TARP and the economic stimulus and to allow one of our rising stars, Nina Vaca, to comment on what happens when small businesses get access to capital.

[Reta ? – PTT, OPL]

- In the short time we have, please keep comments to solutions, ideas, recommendations that you want our Treasury and economic recovery teams to see.

[Melinda Guzman – Partner, Golsberry, Freeman & Guzman, LLP]

- Please give us your contact info so that we can send our comments to you.

[Beatriz Manetta – CEO, Argent Associates]

- A great place for our voices to be heard is the Presidential Export Council. I prefer volunteer work.

[Nina Vaca – Pinnacle Technical Resources]

- I am living the American Dream, and my company employees over 2,000 individuals in 48 states with revenues of \$200 million.
- My most elementary feedback to you would be to communicate with groups that represent Latino owned businesses.
- It's difficult to do business with the federal government, even talented businesses.
- The more successful you are, the harder it is to do business with the federal government. Either you are too successful or too small to get help.
- Please spend a considerable amount of time connecting with Latina businesses.

[Lorena Chambers – Member, Board of Directors, Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies]

- I've been a federal contractor for 10 years and I've worked with many government agencies.
- Access to information is so important. The information on the website is not enough because every agency is different.
- There are many consultants for SBA programs and once you get the right information it's easy.



- I have been under 8a and SB contracts—recently I created a type of telenovela for the department of Agriculture for the SNAP.
- Working with the 27 agencies and there are excellent career people in government, but they're overwhelmed. So you need to know how to do it yourself. There is a gap in information when you need extra assistance. This all goes back to the need for better communication from agencies.
- My company just got a 2010 census contract to make sure that Latinos are not under counted. It was only because of our outreach. They had not hired any Latino businesses on the census project, which is \$220 million. They had other minority groups, but no Hispanics—and they can't communicate with Hispanics.
- Government communications contracts only use 5% 8a businesses and the Latino portion of that is miniscule.
- Latinos are 20% of the workforce (despite being only 15% of the population) because they have multiple jobs. If one out of five new jobs created by the stimulus package go to Latinos, then we are just maintaining parity.

[Beatriz Manetta – CEO, Argent Associates]

- As a telecom company, it's hard to go after pieces because the big contracts are bundled.
- Secondly, we need the stimulus to take into account that by 2015, 85% of consumers will be outside the US. What are we doing to compete globally? China helps their SMEs.
- We need to help small businesses that pay minimum wage. It is harder for these businesses to compete globally.

[Patricia Corrales – CEO, Capitol Construction Enterprises, Inc.]

- I am a very small DC contractor and see things differently. I need funding to grow or I will not get to \$1-2 million dollars in revenue. I speak for the every day, mom and pop shops.
- Manpower is a concern, as is immigration. The families are stable in the united states and many that work here have immigration issues. Immigration is part of business for us.
- I'm involved in apprenticeship programs, and help in the trades.
- It's tough to grow in this industry and tough to go into partnerships without funding. I lay wiring myself to make getting funding easier.
- Paper work elimination is also a concern with small businesses and minority companies.

[Stephanie Valencia – PTT, OPL]

- So you're aware, we've met with many people on immigration and we are aware that we have to address LEPs, especially for green jobs. It is a priority for us.

[Melinda Guzman – Partner, Golsberry, Freeman & Guzman, LLP]

- We are concerned that with immigration, we will have a dual policy. We also need college educated graduates in order to compete.



[Ana Harvey – Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce]

- I recommend you look at the organizations on the ground for what needs to be done at the top. One way you can do this is by talking to the local chambers of commerce.
- We are doing well working with the local government in DC.
- We also need education to help entrepreneurs develop business plans. Grassroots organizations who are supposed to help are under paid, under staffed, and over worked.
- We need to expand funding for the workforce investment act because the grass roots are under funded.
- We're all going green –so we need to train people.

[Juana Pacheco - ? Foundation]

- I think that we need to approach Ivy league universities to help with the education funding and get them in the system.
- We have been doing focus groups and the many issues are regional, so the issues in Florida, California, New York are all different.
- One word I would have for this administration is 'innovative'. I think this administration should be innovative.
- We need to challenge corporations to invest in these programs for education.
- Capital is also an issue, we need it to be infused into our community. Women business owners are going to lose their homes because that's their equity in their businesses.

[Monika Mantilla – Member, Board of Directors, New America Alliance]

- There are three issues—
 - 1 – the scarcity of diversity – we need a Secretary of Diversity. Even corporations have a Chief Diversity officer. Also, ensuring that TARP funds are spent on minority businesses. In the emergency stimulus, state governments are allowed to exempt minority and women participation. We need to ensure that women are there at the creation of these policies to make sure the funds trickle down for minority businesses.
 - 2 – We also need to make sure that advocacy groups are present and that their voices are being heard, examined and resolved. Commercial banks are not lending, so we need a bottom up approach. Small businesses are dying without these funds.
 - 3 – Ensure that SBA really acts to provide equality to firms at different stages. I go to SBA and SBA sends me to Bank of America, and they say no. So SBA is not getting equity to small firms.

[Karla Gonzalez – CEO, DBTS]

- No one wants to work with the government. It's very hard as an \$8 million dollar company to get funds and we don't have the cash flow. We should enforce the compensation payment act.
- We need a performance matrix for federal employees. If I can't get a federal employee to help me, I can't go to another person.



[Nina Vaca – Pinnacle Technical Resources]

- I agree, we need accountability on both ends, like corporate America.

[Martha Montoya – Chair, Corporate Procurement, USHCC]

- In California we've started a board with minority women to deal with our issues with contracting with the utilities.

[Elizabeth Gallagher – Vice Chair, USHCC]

- We need opportunities to open doors for us. It's important to get people the opportunities for those contracts. Don't let small businesses die because no one can open the door. We have to allow them to grow and we have the opportunity now with the new administration.

[Melinda Guzman – Partner, Golsberry, Freeman & Guzman, LLP]

- On March 9th-11th we will have our legislative conference. We ask that President-elect Obama attend as Presidents Bush and Clinton have done every year.
- September 16th-19th we have our convention and we ask that a senior official attend the meeting.
- In closing, we want to stress that TARP funds have not trickled down to the bottom.
- We need incentives for banks to lend and allow refinancing—not just for first time homebuyers.
- We also ask that you use the Chambers of Commerce and non-profits for accountability on both sides.
- And ensure that there are next steps from this meeting like a meeting in 6 months so we can draft a communications plan together.