

2 HOW TO START A SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM

Based on data and successful best practices, we've compiled a list for your company to follow. Here are best practices that all your employees should know:

- Supplier diversity should be operated out of the procurement department, with one person responsible for it. The diversity department should be in frequent communication with this person.
- Supplier diversity should exist within the context of your company's business goals, supply chain and competitive-market climate.
- It's important to measure your success against other organizations and industry norms.
- It's critical to assess Tier II (subcontractor) supplier diversity as well as Tier I and to train your prime suppliers to find and mentor diverse suppliers.

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Discussion Questions for Employees

» **Does your company have a supplier-diversity program? If it does, how well are its goals and successes communicated to employees?**

What do you know about supplier diversity at your company? How can you get the word out about its importance?

» **How does supplier diversity help your company reach its business goals?**

Use this teachable moment to honestly discuss different styles, including confrontation/criticism, self-promotion/branding, and decision-making.

» **Is your company helping your diverse suppliers grow?**

Does your company offer educational opportunities and mentoring for suppliers, many of whom are small-business owners? This can include financial and technical education. Does your company make a significant effort to help its prime contractors find and nurture diverse suppliers — and does it track Tier II supplier diversity?

