

# Strength in Diversity

Wells Fargo works with national and local organizations to help diverse-owned businesses grow

There are essentially two purposes behind the practice of supplier diversity. The first and most recognizable is to include and develop historically underutilized businesses as part of the supply chain. These businesses typically are women- or minority-owned operations, but also include those owned by service-disabled veterans and others. The second idea is to transform a supply chain to better reflect the demographics of a particular area in an effort to increase revenue and loyalty in that marketplace. Both ideas are good for business.

"The benefit is in several areas," says Kenton Clarke, president and CEO of DiversityBusiness.com, a leading resource for businesses that seek information related to their diversity initiatives. "It drives new innovation and creativity in the supply chain by getting input from a different kind of supplier. But also, multicultural people might be more inclined to buy goods and services from a company that they know is doing business with diverse suppliers."

As senior vice president and director of corporate supplier diversity at Wells Fargo, Sonya Dukes is responsible for spearheading the interrelated efforts of a large and far-reaching entity; there are many pieces to a puzzle of that size and dimension. Through partnerships with organizations such as the National Minority Supplier Development Council, Women's Business Enterprise National Council, several other nonprofits and their local affiliates, Wells Fargo makes itself available both financially and strategically to help identify and mentor diverse suppliers on a more personal level.

"When we look at helping diverse businesses grow, we work with organizations that are national and local to these businesses," says Dukes. "We find that this is a great way for us to stay in touch and to make ourselves available to support those businesses." Wells Fargo has also created a Leaders of Change program



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viewpoints, expands the potential of a work team and enriches what they do. It has a real economic impact."

Wells Fargo's Dukes would certainly agree. But she finds herself in the paradoxical position of pursuing a goal that, if attained, will put her out of a job.

"I think one of the things that we should definitely be working toward in this space is getting to a place where we don't have to have separate programs, projects and practices for supplier diversity," she says. "The mainstream sourcing practices that we have for this industry should be inclusive of supplier diversity. We still have a long journey in this work to get to that point."

Pat Rodgers has a reputation for inclusion that has benefitted her company on many levels—not the least of which is business growth. "At the end of the day it's enlightened self-interest. It's the right thing to do," she says. "But it also builds capacity." —John Ledesma

dedicated to helping diverse suppliers develop their businesses. (Interested companies can get more information by contacting [corporatesupplierdiversity@wellsfargo.com](mailto:corporatesupplierdiversity@wellsfargo.com).)

American women- and minority-owned businesses account for more than \$3 trillion in revenue and employ some 25 million workers. Pat Rodgers is president and CEO of Rodgers Builders, one of the largest and most respected construction and construction-management firms in the Southeast. Rodgers Builders is familiar with both sides of the supplier diversity coin. As a woman-owned business, the company is a diverse supplier for many firms, including Wells Fargo. Additionally, as a large corporation, it has its own supplier diversity program.

"It benefits an organization to be diverse," says Rodgers, whose company collaborated most recently with Wells Fargo on a large part of uptown Charlotte's Levine Center for the Arts. "People want to see diversity in an organization that they work with. I think it benefits the entire community, brings a lot of different



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**Corporate Supplier Diversity.** Your growth is good for our business. We strive to establish relationships with companies like yours — solid organizations owned by members of the diverse business community.

In doing so, we gain strong suppliers to boost our competitive advantage in the marketplace and you enjoy new opportunities to expand and enhance your business. Yet, it's our communities that really benefit. Our partnerships with diverse suppliers — minority-, women-, LGBT-, disabled-, veteran-, and disabled-veteran business enterprises — contribute to the economic vigor and cultural vibrancy of communities where we live and work.

For more information, please contact the Wells Fargo Corporate Supplier Diversity team at [corporatesupplierdiversity@wellsfargo.com](mailto:corporatesupplierdiversity@wellsfargo.com).

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