

Celebrating Dr. King's Legacy and Principles



"I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, "I have a Dream" Speech

Lessons Learned on Supplier Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Set-Aside Opportunities

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Two years ago, I made a promise to my then ailing father, that my minority owned and MBE Certified business technology firm - Spotswood Consulting- would become an SBA 8(a) Certified Company.

My father, Godfrey (Joe) Spotswood, was a very proud African-American man from a loving, working class family. My dad was a retired New York City Police Officer, and U.S. Army Veteran, who always put God, Family and Country first. My dad taught me the importance of public service. Dad also taught me to never give up. And he taught me to love one of his role models- Dr. Martin Luther King. It was via Dr. King that I learned how important it is to have a dream and to fight for equality and true social justice.

It was in great part due to these two men that I decided to make sacrifices in order to attend Georgetown University.

As a small business owner, I decided to research and apply for the SBA 8(a) program- the oldest and most established minority business development program in the United States- when I learned that the U.S. Federal Government spends approximately \$32 Billion in Minority-Owned Businesses per year. The 8(a) program has served as the model for many corporate as well as State and local government minority business programs. There were approximately 7,500 active certified 8(a) firms in 2014, and the average federal revenue per firm was approximately \$4.1MM. The big two industries in 8(a) Federal Spending by Industry are Construction and IT, both of which are within my firm's core competencies. These industries saw double-digit growth over the past year.

In June, 2014, after more than a year of extensive paperwork, clearing multiple hurdles and vetting by even the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the SBA finally approved my company as an 8(a) Certified company.

Interestingly enough, in the course of the past six months my 8(a) firm has been approached separately by a few firms outside of the program, who seek to circumvent supplier diversity and inclusion programs, hoping to leverage our minority status and certifications in order to gain access to set aside contracts, while denying us our fair share of work, and active participation under these legally designated contract opportunities, created to help minorities and economically disadvantaged individuals compete in today's economy.

These unscrupulous and unethical firms do not believe in Supplier Diversity and Inclusion, they simply want to manipulate minority-owned firms such as mine, and our MBE credentials to exploit a small window of opportunity that many great men and women like Dr. King and others like my Dad fought so hard to build.

At Spotswood Consulting, we take a strong, principled stance against this new form of social and economic oppression which also amounts to procurement fraud. We take a firm position against small business exploitation, and simply reject these antics.

Today, remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, we reaffirm and uphold:

1- Our company shall not engage in procurement fraud, or in these types of deceitful, criminal and exploitative acts. Spotswood Consulting carries my family name, and as the firm's Principal, I simply will not allow myself- nor anyone on my team to take short cuts, or to accept '*crumbs*' in exchange for a contracts of any type.

2- We are Americans, and as such, believe that our great Nation can benefit enormously from the talent and diversity of its many qualified children, sons and daughters. Diversity is a necessary component for strategic modernization. As world leaders, this Nation and our people cannot continue recycling old ideas, methods and technologies to obtain new results, and reach new heights.

3- Supplier diversity and inclusion to us means being INCLUSIVE, and opening up the game to all qualified parties, regardless of gender, race, sexual preference, ethnic/national origin, religious belief or physical handicap. We want to be evaluated by the quality of our work and results, and the services we deliver to the American taxpayers, not judged by the color of our skin, or economically disadvantaged place of origin.

4- Spotswood Consulting welcomes performance-based contracting. The American taxpayer and corporate shareholders alike should not be forced to pay a premium, or to receive a product of lesser quality, in order to accommodate a diverse supplier. Our quality of work and deliverables should speak for themselves. We also feel that it is a disservice to the taxpayers when larger companies are awarded contracts that could otherwise be cost-efficiently performed by qualified, proven, small, diverse companies with less layers of management expense and fees. Less is more.

5- Spotswood Consulting welcomes a true win-win, and ethical relationship with Large Systems Integrators. As a small firm that has successfully delivered 315+ complex telecommunications projects worth several millions of dollars in the last year on behalf of large telecommunications companies, Spotswood Consulting welcomes a true, mutually beneficial Mentor-Protégé relationship and Joint Ventures (JVs) with firms such as Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, SAIC, Mantech, Raytheon, Boeing, and others. However, we will strictly adhere to the government's procurement guidelines and will not accept anything less than our legally required division of labor and profit sharing. If a contract requires that the Small business control 51% of the Joint Venture and profits, we will accept nothing less.

6- Our 8(a) Certified firm has tremendous potential and is a proven/qualified supplier. We have great team members and a vetted pool of resources to augment our team as needed. We refuse to be manipulated and forced to accept anything less than what we are capable of delivering and earning on our own merit. We have proven past performance in the private sector with Fortune companies, where competitiveness is the order of the day.

7- Spotswood Consulting will diligently work with Contracting Officers and corporate Chief Procurement officers alike, to help them understand the cost savings, key metrics, operational improvements and risk mitigations needed from having an active supplier diversity program. We will bring value to these hard working employees in public service, and in the private sector, to help them deliver cost reductions and will help them improve competitiveness.

8- Spotswood Consulting reaffirms that the finest things truly come in small packages. There are 4.1 million minority-owned businesses in the U.S., and this is fastest growing business sector of the U.S. economy. Certified diverse suppliers and small businesses are the backbone of this great Nation. Finding opportunities for new diverse suppliers and bringing new proven suppliers into the fold will be of great benefit to our communities as we create more jobs, and will also improve the quality of services rendered. The U.S. is an entrepreneurial economy. Innovation is the lifeblood of entrepreneurship and competitiveness. With the appropriate policies in place, minority-owned businesses have -and will continue to- provide new jobs, new products, and increase expansion into new domestic and global markets.

9- The mission of Spotswood Consulting is to become a "Force Multiplier" for our customers and teaming partners in the private and public sectors by delivering comprehensive services and turnkey solutions required to design, build, optimize, and maintain information technology and telecommunications networks.

10- Spotswood Consulting's vision is to be the top minority owned systems integrator in the US without compromising our ethics, and without sacrificing project safety, quality, on time delivery, or deliverable tasks.

We will uphold these lessons learned and the principles above out of respect to my Dad's memory, to Dr. King's legacy, and to the American Taxpayers and Corporate Shareholders for giving us an opportunity to serve them and for trusting us with their hard-earned dollars via these special programs.

As stated by Dr. King: "We hold these truths to be self-evident..."



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