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Staffing 360: Exploring the World of Staffing From All Angles

"Need-to-Know" LinkedIn Tips For Corporate Supplier Diversity Professionals

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They sometimes say that in the business world "your network is your net worth." There's a lot of truth in that idea and it's been that way since, well, probably since commerce was invented centuries ago. What is different now is *how* we network and the countless ways that we connect. Technology has changed everything: access to your network isn't a stack of business cards or in a rolodex. (Remember them?) It's on line. Connecting with the right people is a business imperative for every professional but for those of us in the diversity business community it's especially so. Companies are always interested in promoting their Supplier Diversity Programs and finding qualified MBEs to work with, and MBE owners are always trying to raise their profile and find opportunities to serve new clients. Social media has expanded the choices for how we network. It's made it both easier, and occasionally more difficult, to connect with people.

LinkedIn has quickly become the go to online resource for business networking, giving us access to people at our fingertips and the possibility of an introduction or connection with someone we want to know. Its growth is phenomenal and its potential power is impressive but how do you tap into it? How do you make quality connections and begin to develop trusted business relationships? How do you promote yourself and your program in a way that increases your visibility and helps you develop new diversity supplier relationships? It starts very simply with how you decide who to connect with; who you send invitations to and who you will hit the accept button on.

The Pitfalls

Let's talk about the bad stuff first. All those requests to connect! Do I know this person? From a conference or was it school or did I used to work with them? Are they just going to immediately bombard me with requests to start