



**TGB Productions, LLC**  
**Marketing and Communications**  
**PO Box 4321**  
**New Kensington, PA 15068**

In March 2008, Toni found herself without a job and struggling to make sense of her disjointed resume. The list of jobs included everything from fundraising, recruiting volunteers and event planning to news writing and assignment managing for television news. Toni's freelance communications work was suffering as the economy was declining.

### **Following the money**

Toni had to find a way to market herself, using all of her professional experiences and business contacts. She had to find a way to make her services flexible and responsive to the economic climate, and she had to find clients with budgets to pay her.

During a brainstorming session with her brother Mark, the construction engineer suggested she find out how to secure government contracts. That's when all the pieces began to fall in place for Toni. Hearing that government related contracts were written to include disadvantaged businesses was one avenue Toni had not considered, and to find out where the contracts were was something else. Toni searched the Internet for Pittsburgh area diversity business organizations and found the Diversity Business Resource Center (DBRC). DBRC Executive Director Christina Jumba answered questions, made suggestions and referred Toni to materials and contacts available through the DBRC.

Toni attended DBRC mixers, state and city DBE events, and met other business owners trying to attain government related contracts. Toni also began applying for government related Requests for Proposals (RFP).

### **Doing the work**

No fairy tale endings, here, but Toni gained some interesting experiences along the way. For her first presentation before a government related entity, she didn't get the contract, but she followed up with a thank you card and a request for feedback on her marketing presentation. Toni found out that the selection committee really liked her

work but felt that her company was not big enough to handle the contract. Toni was told that TGB should consider partnering with other businesses. Soon after, Toni called around and found marketing companies and advertising agencies with which to partner. For her next big marketing RFP, Toni had partnered with another company, and they collaborated on a joint presentation. Still no contract, but more experience for TGB Productions and more items to include in the business's portfolio.

### **Securing the contract**

After a year of researching, networking and attending DBE functions, TGB Productions has:

- \* Become a Limited Liability Company (LLC) to protect Toni's personal assets and has insured business as required by many government contracts
- \* Become a certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise with the Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program
- \* Become a Pennsylvania Department of General Services Woman/Minority Business Enterprise
- \* Submitted proposals for four (4) government related agencies with contracts valued between \$30,000-\$500,000
- \* Partnered with two (2) Pittsburgh advertising agencies for contracts
- \* Partnered with a local non-profit organization for a future joint venture
- \* Written two (2) grant proposals for separate projects (results pending,) and
- \* But best of all: secured its first government contract for a marketing campaign!

### **Final words**

The current economic conditions have created unprecedented challenges for small and start-up businesses. Toni found new ways to market her own business by informing former customers of new developments. She interviewed potential subcontractors to employ when business picked up. She looked at ways to create business opportunities from her passions--the arts, travel, youth and religious organizations—and gained contracts with nonprofit organizations.

According to Toni, the bottom line is doing good work, leaving satisfied customers and preparing for growth at TGB Productions, LLC. It is for these very reasons that the DBRC presented TGB Productions, LLC with the Client Business of the Year award at the local Minority Enterprise Development Week celebration on October 2, 2009.

Find out more about TGB Productions, LLC at: [www.tgbproductions.com](http://www.tgbproductions.com).