

THE "CERTIFIED" BUSINESS ADVANTAGE: THE EDGE YOU NEED WHEN SELLING B2B OR B2G



LEARN WHAT ALL GOOD BUSINESSES DO WELL
Plan | Partner | Perform | Profit

UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS CERTIFICATION
THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU.



8(a) Certification Specialists

www.8atheeasyway.com

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE
The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Good Business.....3
Chapter 2: Why Get Certified?.....7
Chapter 3: Which Certification is Right for Me?.....12
Chapter 4: According to SBA...Size Matters.....19
Chapter 5: Social Disadvantage.....23
Chapter 6: Economic Disadvantage.....27
Chapter 7: Help Tailored to Your Needs.....32
Chapter 8: Government Contracting Assistance.....35
Chapter 9: Export Assistance.....39
Conclusion:43
About the Author:.....44

Introduction

This e-book is the result of many articles written, questions answered, inquiries researched, and some of my own personal “aha” moments. The result is something that I know you will find valuable.

If you’ve ever considered selling your products or services to the government or to corporate clients, but just didn’t know where to begin; if you questioned what agencies buy what you sell; or if you’re big enough to play in that sandbox—then you’ve picked up the right e-book. There’s something in this book for everyone who’s asked these questions, whether of yourself or your business partners.

I encourage you to dive right in. This book is really an easy read —and I’m not just saying that because I’m the author. 😊 I do my best to keep it light, and at the same time, give you the substance you crave. I hope you enjoy, and I look forward to your comments and questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lya". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a trailing flourish.

Chapter 1: Good Business



I've pinpointed 4 things good businesses do well. They (1) plan, (2) partner, (3) perform and (4) profit.”

Most of the people I talk to come to me for certifications in the hope of winning federal or commercial contracts. One of the first things I do with new prospects is evaluate whether they are running a “Good Business.” The reason I do what I do is not to give any particular group of people an advantage.

My purpose is to provide good businesses with a competitive advantage. My method is with certifications.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

So what makes for a good business? I’ve pinpointed four things that all good businesses do well. **They (1) plan, (2) partner, (3) perform, and (4) profit.**

Good businesses **plan** for their success. In business—as in anything else—if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. If you were planning a road trip to San Diego, California from Atlanta, Georgia, you would certainly plan for your trip. You’d map it all out, plan your stops, make the necessary reservations for your overnight stays, and maybe some things you want to do along the way. That would be prudent.

You could just hop in the car and drive west—follow the sun, as it were—but you’d have a much less stressful and more direct trip to your destination by following a predetermined plan. Plans may have to be changed, because things happen, but then you modify or tweak the plan instead of throwing your hands up in frustration.

The **second** thing good businesses do well is **partner** with others. I’ve always been one to believe in collaboration rather than competition. And as cheesy as it sounds, I believe that old T.E.A.M. acronym: Together, Everyone Achieves More.

T. Together
E. Everyone
A. Achieves
M. More

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

By partnering wisely, you can gain strengths that you don't have, or don't have the resources to acquire. You could also jointly go after business that you would not have had the capacity or capabilities to do alone. Remember: any percentage of something is a whole lot more than 100 percent of nothing.

The third thing good businesses do well is **perform**. All of the certifications I provide incorporate a review process where the certifying agency reviews your files and documents and approves you for admission into the program. One of the caveats of admission, especially into the 8(a) Business Development Program, is a company's propensity for success. The agency wants to know that you will succeed and perform well in the program. Also, any entity awarding a contract to your business, whether commercial or government, is going to want to know your past performance history. Why? Because past performance is a pretty good indicator of future success. So if you've performed successfully in the past, a client will be confident they can expect the same kind of results going forward.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Finally, good businesses **profit!** A business cannot sustain itself without making a profit, therefore, good businesses must profit. It's funny to hear prospects and potential clients talk about taking a job at a loss with the hopes of making it up in volume. Think about that for a moment. That math doesn't add up... Well, it does add up—to a big fat LOSS! So, if you plan your work well, partner when necessary so as to spread expenses, and perform well, you can profit from your efforts, and, in the end, prosper!

Make sure you have all 4 P's of a Good Business in place before considering the federal marketplace.

**Quick
Tip!**

Chapter 2: Why Get Certified?



You’ve undoubtedly heard of “women, minority or veteran-owned” certifications, yet you may be wondering, “Why bother?” Clients use our services to prepare certifications for several reasons. I’m going to share a few of these with you so that if you recognize yourself in one of these scenarios, you may want to get additional information.

One of my current clients is going through the certification process because if they become certified, they have the opportunity to perform more work for a general contractor for whom they currently subcontract.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

The client is a woman-owned business but they don't have the certification to prove it. Once they get certified as a Woman Business Enterprise, the general contractor will happily funnel them more business.



And why wouldn't they—it's a total win-win. The GC can continue doing business with a company they already know, like, and trust; and they can satisfy their small/minority business requirements at the same time.

Another reason my clients have chosen to get certified is in order to partner with other companies to bid on contracts. Oftentimes, “teaming agreements” are formed so that two or more companies can work together to win a large contract that the individual companies may not be able to win on their own. These situations sometimes mean that you are collaborating with a company that may otherwise be considered a competitor, but as the acronym T.E.A.M. states: Together, Everyone Achieves More.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Most of the time, my clients decide to obtain certifications because they want the opportunities that being certified can provide. Notice I said opportunities, and NOT guarantees.

Certifications are not entitlement programs, nor do they guarantee anything to the business concern that holds a certification. But what certifications are designed to do is even the playing field where it has been found to be not level, and provide support where it is lacking.

**Certifications provide businesses
Opportunities, NOT Guarantees.**

Women and minorities business owners, and small businesses in general, have not always had the same opportunities to compete as large businesses have. Certification programs have been enacted and goals set forth to bridge the gaps that have been found.

As a result, 23 percent of all federal prime contracting and subcontracting dollars are to go to small businesses, and 5 percent of those contracts are to go to women-owned

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

businesses. In an effort to support the men and women who served our country and were injured as a result, the Veterans

- ✓ 23% of federal contracting dollars are to go to small businesses
- ✓ 5% are to go to women-owned businesses
- ✓ 3% are to go to service-disabled veteran-owned businesses

Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act set an annual goal of no less than 3 percent of the aforementioned federal prime contracting and subcontracting dollars to go to Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Concerns (SDVOSBC).

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

I've identified the three main reasons that I see most often for working through the certification process. These are by no means the only reasons to get certified, if you are able.

What I encourage you to do is to get informed, learn what certifications your business is eligible for, and research the benefits. If you decide that certification is for you, then [contact us](#) for a free 20-minute consultation (a \$149 value) to discuss your business and answer any questions you may have about certifications.

Chapter 3: Which Certification is Right for Me?



If I had to pick one question that is posed most often by my prospective clients, it's this one: “Which certification is right for me?”

The answer is not always 8(a). I know, I know... My company specializes in 8(a); there are free tools on our website about 8(a); our website is called 8aTheEasyWay, for goodness sakes.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Yet, 8(a) is not the right certification for everyone. It is just one of several that can provide your business with the competitive advantage you are seeking. Let’s review the facts so that you can make an informed decision, shall we?

The 8(a) Business Development Program is not for everyone, because not everyone can participate. You may already know what the criteria are, but here’s a refresher.

Acceptance into the 8(a) BD Program is limited to businesses considered small according to the SBA size standards. In addition, the “51% or better” owner(s) must prove economic disadvantage AND social disadvantage.

- ✓ Small according to SBA standards
- ✓ Economically disadvantaged
- ✓ Socially disadvantaged

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

In the subsequent chapters I will elaborate on both social and economic disadvantage. Just be aware that if you are the owner of a business and you do not belong to one of the defined socially-disadvantaged groups, it will be hard to prove your

social disadvantage with what SBA refers to as a “preponderance of evidence.”

The Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Program and Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) Program is available to certain small businesses where one or more women own and **CONTROL** 51 percent or more of the company. “Control” is integral to qualification for WOSB, and there are documents online that detail the specifics of how SBA defines “control.” The bottom line here is this: the SBA wants more businesses run and managed by women to participate in the government contracting process.

The program is limited to businesses that have been underrepresented by women, designated by 45 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes, and businesses substantially underrepresented by women, indicated by another 38 NAICS codes. SBA size requirements also apply. Since the WOSB program can be self-certifying, the onus is on you to

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

provide an accurate representation of your business and its management.

The Veteran-Owned Small Business and the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Programs are available for veteran or service-disabled veteran business owners. The veteran must own 51 percent or better of the business and upload required documents into the Vet Biz Ops portal for submission to the V.A. for review. Upon verification and a site visit, the veteran business owner will be awarded VOSB or SDVOSB status.

Women Business Enterprise and Minority Business Enterprise certifications are another option for businesses. The WBE and MBE certifications are usually evaluated by national certifying agencies such as the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), National Women Business Owners Corporation (NWBOC), U.S. Women’s Chamber of Commerce (USWCC) and National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC).

These certifications may not allow you to play in the federal and state government sandbox, but they will provide you with the certifications needed to compete in the commercial sector.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Large companies will usually align themselves with one or more of the aforementioned organizations in an effort to diversify their procurement efforts.

So let’s answer the question we started this discussion with: which certification is right for you? Well, that depends a lot on the goals and objectives of your business. Let me begin by answering the question with more questions. (Don’t you just love that?)

- ✓ Who buys what you make, what you sell, or what you service?
- ✓ How seasoned is your business?
- ✓ How experienced are you in the sector you are targeting?
- ✓ Have you worked for a prime contractor who wanted to partner with a woman/minority/veteran- owned business?

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Who buys what you make, sell or service? If the answer to that question is other companies, then an MBE or WBE may work for you. If, however, the answer is a municipality, military installation, or federal government agency, then VOSB, WOSB or 8(a) would be more appropriate. If it's both, then start with

the one that you can get in the least amount of time, with the least expense, and with the biggest potential for profit. You can always add other certifications later.

How seasoned is your business? If you are a young company with little to no experience with larger contracts, start with a certification from a national certifying agency and build experience in the commercial sector.

How experienced are you in the sector you're targeting? If you've never performed on any government contract... **EVER**, then you probably don't need to dive into 8(a), even if your target is the federal government and/or military. You can start with another federally-recognized certification (like WOSB or VOSB, if applicable) and gain some experience.

Do you currently work, or have you worked in the past, as a subcontractor for a prime contractor who wants to partner with

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

a women/minority/veteran-owned business? If you have, then get the certification that matches that need.

As you can see, there is no “one size fits all” answer here. My hope is that you now have the information to make an informed decision about which of these certifications are appropriate for you and your business.

There is no
“one size fits all”
certification

If you need some assistance deciding, [contact us](#) for a FREE consultation and get the answers you need to make an informed decision.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Chapter 4: According to SBA... Size M A T T E R S



If you’ve done any research at all on certifications, then you’ve inevitably visited the SBA’s website at www.sba.gov. As the name suggests, the Small Business Administration is concerned with providing resources and advantages for small businesses. But what does SBA consider “small”?

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

The SBA’s website is full of information, but one of the most valuable resources I’ve found for getting specifics on any question relating to any of the SBA’s programs is the [Code of Federal Regulations](#).

Electronic Code of Federal Regulations

e-CFR

Thankfully, an electronic version of the code is updated daily by the Office of the Federal Registrar. I’ve included a link to the e-CFR above so you can reference it whenever you’d like. If you have not embraced your inner nerd, or if you have better things to do with your time than scour the code, then you’ve picked up the right e-book. 

SBA defines “small” differently for every business. They consider economic characteristics of the industry that include things like competitors, barriers to entry, average firm size and a distribution of firms by size. The SBA will also look at the threat of competition from other industries, the growth cycle of the industry, and unique factors that may distinguish small firms from others.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

The SBA uses either annual receipts or number of employees to qualify a business based on size. Another major factor SBA considers when calculating their size standards is whether any business, at or below a certain standard, would be dominant

To determine size, SBA uses

- ✓ annual receipts, or
- ✓ number of employees

in that industry. The main purpose of size standards is to ensure that a business taking advantage of government programs is in fact a small business concern and it is not dominant in the industry it represents.

Now, let's get into the fun stuff, shall we? In the handy-dandy e-CFR, there is a 40-page section that lists individual NAICS codes, with the SBA's maximum-size requirements for each.

Here's an example. If you are a heavy and civil engineering construction company that does highway, street, and bridge

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

construction, then your primary NAICS code is 237310. The annual revenue for your company would have to be less than

\$33.5 million, in order for your company to be considered small. If, however, your industry was in food manufacturing and you processed fresh and frozen seafood, your primary NAICS code would be 311712. Your company would be considered small if it had 500 employees or less.

One of the reasons the SBA requires an annual review is to ensure that the businesses participating in the set-aside programs are in fact “small” according to size standards. The 8 (a) Business Development Program is a nine-year program. So a firm that grows beyond its designated size requirements by the time of the annual review will be excused prior to the expiration of the nine-year term and will be considered an early-graduate of the program.

Like I said in the title, size matters (only to the SBA of course, ☺). So be sure that you do your homework to accurately determine the size criteria, because misrepresenting the size of your small business concern comes with serious penalties.

Chapter 5: Social Disadvantage



The term “social disadvantage” is the SBA’s “politically correct” term referring to ethnicity or race, and it’s one of the criteria for some SBA certifications. When I was asked a unique question about social disadvantage, I had the opportunity to conduct some serious research to get to the answer.

Although the prospect qualified for a Minority Business Enterprise certification in the state where he resides, he wasn’t sure if he met the SBA’s requirements regarding social disadvantage. He was concerned because he is mixed-race; his

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

mother is white, and his father is ethnically Hispanic, but racially white. Are you confused yet?

Social disadvantage is the SBA's
“politically correct” term referring
to ethnicity or race

Think about the questions on forms you have to complete where it asks for race. Generally there are five categories for race: African American, Asian American, Caucasian, Native American, and Pacific Islander. At a minimum, there are two categories for ethnicity: Hispanic origin or non-Hispanic origin. Why is that? Well, based on definitions used by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), race and ethnicity are mutually independent. “Hispanic origin” is independent of race and constitutes an ethnic category, not a racial category.

Why is any of this important? Well, the applicant wants to be certain that he doesn't start down the long and winding road of 8(a) just to be told that his race—white—excludes him from the

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

class of socially disadvantaged even though he is Hispanic. And you may be in the very same or a similar situation.

Certain groups are presumed socially disadvantaged and they include:

- Black Americans
- Hispanic Americans
- Native Americans (Native Alaskans, native Hawaiians, or enrolled members of a federally or state recognized Indian tribe)
- Asian Pacific Americans (persons with origins in Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Japan, China [including Hong Kong], Taiwan, Laos, Cambodia [Kampuchea], Vietnam, Korea, the Philippines, U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Republic of Palau), Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Samoa, Macao, Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, or Nauru)
- Subcontinent Asian Americans (persons whose origins are in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, the Maldives Islands, or Nepal) ¹

¹eCFR §124.103 – Who is classified as socially disadvantaged? – <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&SID=04905b587eb8451d87365a22ace62bd8&rgn=div8&view=text&node=13:1.0.1.1.1.9.1.288.7&idno=13>

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

So, to get to the answer I went once again to the [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#) of course. The e-CFR is the final word on all matters federal. Every guideline to every program relating to the federal government is fully explained in the Code.

In this situation, however, §124.103 of the Code only stated the social disadvantage criteria as outlined above. The real answer, I believe, lies in the Office of Management and Budget with the OMB Federal Register Notice dated October 30, 1997.² This Federal Register Notice—The Revision to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity—changed the previous standard to reflect that, regardless of race (the color of one’s skin), an individual can be of Hispanic origin. And according to the social disadvantage criteria outlined in the Code, Hispanic Americans are presumed socially disadvantaged.

So, long story short, the prospect is OK to proceed. If your situation is similar, then check out the links and read further to be sure you are good to go forth as well. And [contact us](#) if you need help as you search for the answers you need.

² http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards/ – Federal Register Notice dated October 30, 1997.

Chapter 6: Economic Disadvantage



money

Another criterion for several certifications is economic disadvantage. The economic disadvantage criteria established by SBA varies slightly depending on the certification.

Since the economic disadvantage criteria for 8(a) is less restrictive than EDWOSB, if you meet each of the following, you would qualify for either certification:

- your net worth must be less than \$250,000

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

- your total assets must be less than \$4 Million
- your income—averaged over the last three years—must be less than \$250,000 a year

I find that my prospects fall distinctly into one of two categories. Either they are:

1. definitively economically disadvantaged and meet the net worth thresholds, or
2. they have lots of liquid cash and very little debt and their net worth—at first blush—exceeds the guidelines

When it comes to economic disadvantage, my prospects fall distinctly into one of two categories. Either they are: (1) definitively economically disadvantaged and the net worth and income thresholds are not a challenge at all; or (2) they have lots of liquid cash and very little debt and their net worth—at first blush—exceeds the maximum requirements.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Now, if you're in the first camp above you're thinking, Not a problem, sign me up. But if you're in the second camp, that's

when we have to go through your personal financial statement with a fine-toothed comb to see if you meet the criteria.

When determining your net worth, the SBA will exclude: (1) IRAs or other retirement assets that are not available to you until retirement age without a significant penalty; (2) equity in your primary personal residence, **except** equity obtained by excess withdrawals from the applicant firm—your business; and (3) your ownership interest in your business.

I've seen a lot of prospects tripped up by the following scenario. They do well in the business, pull out a considerable amount of cash from the business (whether in salary or in a distribution), and use that money to pay off their home.

This is a very prudent, fiscally responsible thing to do, right? Well, usually having equity in your home would not penalize you, but the caveat about equity obtained by excess withdrawals would mean that your equity (obtained from excess withdrawals) would be included in your net worth calculation.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Let’s elaborate on out this scenario to make this easier to grasp. Let’s assume that your home is worth \$250,000, and you owe \$150,000 on it. The \$100,000 difference (the equity) that you have in the home would increase your net worth by \$100,000. The SBA will exclude this \$100,000 from your net worth. If, however, the balance was paid down by withdrawals from the applicant business during the previous three years, (since three years of tax returns is all they review) the equity will be included. See the table below for clarification.

	Mortgage amortized normally	Mortgage reduced by excess withdrawals
Home Value	\$250,000	\$250,000
Principal Reduction Payment 1 yr. ago	no principal reduction	(\$25,000)
Principal Reduction Payment 2 yrs. ago	no principal reduction	(\$25,000)
Principal Reduction Payment 3 yrs. ago	no principal reduction	(\$25,000)
Current Mortgage Balance	\$150,000	\$150,000
Equity	\$100,000	\$100,000
Equity considered in Net Worth Calculation	\$0	\$75,000

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Another issue that frequently arises is that there is no definitive answer about a spouse’s net worth. If the individual claiming economic disadvantage is married, then a separate financial statement for the spouse must be submitted. The code simply states that SBA will consider the spouse’s financial situation to determine your access to credit and capital (the foundation of economic disadvantage). So if your spouse has considerable assets and net worth, proving economic disadvantage could be problematic.

If proving your economic disadvantage is going to be a challenge, give me a call and let’s review your situation. There may be options within the guidelines that can make your case.

Chapter 7: Help Tailored to Your Needs



The SBA website is loaded with no-cost and low-cost options all designed to help your business flourish. The SBA itself offers several classes to help answer your questions about many of their programs, including certifications. But are you aware of all of the other affiliated resource centers that can help?

In addition to the SBA district and regional offices, there are Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Women’s Business Centers, the U.S. Export Assistance Center, Veteran

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Business Outreach Centers, Certified Development Centers, Procurement and Technical Assistance Centers, and SCORE.

I’ve had experiences with almost all of the aforementioned organizations, either for my business, on behalf of my clients, or through my former career as a banker. I am going to spend the remainder of this e-book addressing the mission of each and sharing my experiences with you. With this information, it’s my hope you can get the help you desire, tailored to your specific needs.

Let’s start with the [Small Business Development Center](#). SBDCs host a network of centers that provide professional and targeted technical assistance to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs. I love this resource because the counselors there are so knowledgeable and they genuinely want to help you and your business succeed. In the Metro Atlanta area alone, there are eight SBDC offices and I’ve dealt with half of them. At every one, there are friendly counselors ready to help—so there’s no reason not to use this resource.

What are some reasons to use the SBDC counselors? Well, the counselors and staff can handle many things. Maybe you need someone to review the projections and business plan you are presenting to your bank; you might want export assistance for your business; or you need QuickBooks training. I used my

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

local SBDC office to get some market research data when I was completing my initial business plan.

I've referred several former bank clients to the SBDC for business plan assistance; I continue to refer current clients and prospects looking for training or coaching programs. There are so many services that the SBDC counselors perform and many of them are no-cost or low-cost alternatives to procuring the same services in the retail marketplace.

You can find SBDC assistance at more than 900 delivery points throughout the U.S., Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa. Find your local SBDC [here](#).

Chapter 8: Government Contracting Assistance



If you need assistance with obtaining government contracts, look no further than your local Procurement Technical Assistance Center. The Procurement Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program, established by Congress in 1985, was established to generate employment by helping businesses obtain federal, state, and local government

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

contracts. The program, funded by a cost-sharing cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense, establishes Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs). The services of the local PTACs are offered to businesses either for free or for a nominal fee.

So what services are offered at your local PTAC? Pretty much anything you need educate yourself about entering the federal marketplace. I’ve attended classes ranging from “Government Contracting Basics” to “Women-Owned Small Business Programs.” In addition to the classes, the PTACs have one-on-one counseling to gauge your readiness for the federal marketplace. They can also help you research past contracts to anticipate future opportunities.

The services of your local PTAC

✓ Training Classes

➤ In person

➤ Webinars

✓ One on One Counseling

✓ Research

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

Other great benefits of PTAC are the resources they have. My local PTAC has a page of useful links that is second to none.

As you know from reading this e-book, I am in the e-CFR and on the SBA website all the time. Because of that, I’ve gotten pretty good at navigating each, but the PTAC has links directly to the WOSB program, the HUBZone calculator, and size standards—all of the places I commonly visit on SBA and in the e-CFR are just one click away!

The other great resource my local PTAC has is a government bid search system called iSearch. It’s totally free and customizable so you can set it to notify you about opportunities that match your capabilities. Cool, right?

“We’ve all heard it’s not what you know, but who you know. So, even better than the source links are the links to the **people** you need to know.”

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

But wait, there's more! Seriously, all of that and I don't even think that's the best part. We've all heard it's not what you know, but who you know. Well, even better than the source links are the links to the people you need to know.

I'm talking small business specialists at several federal departments including the departments of Interior, Housing & Urban Development, Homeland Security, and more; contracting representatives for all of the state agencies; small business liaisons for your state's public colleges and universities; and a listing of all your state's military commanders and their contact information. This kind of resource is **priceless**, people!

Becoming a client of the PTAC is free, so click on the link below to find your local center and start equipping yourself with the information you need to start competing for local, state, and federal contracts.

**Quick
Tip**

**Becoming a client of
PTAC is FREE!
Click [here](#) to find your
local PTAC office.**

Chapter 9: Export Assistance



The U.S. Commercial Service is a federal agency established for the sole purpose of helping U.S.-based businesses to export. The U.S. Commercial Service has an international network of trade specialists and commercial officers in more than 250 cities all over the world. You can easily locate the domestic U.S. Export Assistance Center nearest you by visiting www.export.gov and clicking the “Locations” tab.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

If you have a product that can be sold outside of the U.S., then this resource is essential. I know you may be saying, “I don’t know anything about exporting.” Well, that’s where this resource comes in. It really is designed to teach you all of the basics, in the comfort of your own home or office.

The Export Basics tools can help you:

- develop a plan
- identify your global market
- prepare for your market
- sell to your market
- conduct business online
- get logistics support
- teach you how to secure export financing
- create terms of trade

If you are like me, then you hate “flying blind.” You know what I mean by that, right? You need to have at least a fundamental understanding of the subject at hand, so that when you speak

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

with a representative to get more information, you can ask deeper, more relevant questions and really get good value from the time spent investigating.

The Export Basics tools do just that. With [this link](#) you can begin uncovering a world of opportunity, literally. You'll find a readiness assessment you can take, as well as videos that give you the information you need.

If you decide that the global market IS your new frontier, then the Export Basics tools can help you: (1) develop a plan, (2) identify your global market, (3) prepare for your market, (4) sell to your market, (5) conduct business online, (6) get logistics support, (7) teach you how to secure export financing, and (8) create terms of trade. Talk about comprehensive.

So if the global marketplace is something you've considered—or even if you haven't—check out your local U.S. Export Assistance Center... The world is waiting!

Conclusion:

As you now know, all types of certifications exist for small businesses and each one offers distinct advantages to good businesses who successfully market themselves. It is my hope that the information you’ve gleaned from this book allows you to make an informed decision about the options available for your particular business.

Every business is different, so there is no one right “certification” answer that will apply to every business owner. But now you are more informed, you can ask better questions, and more importantly, you know where to go to get your questions answered.

If you have specific questions that weren’t addressed in this e-book, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me. You can find me on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#) so feel free to ask your questions there. If you know you are ready to proceed with certifications and want my help, then [contact me](#) so we can chat.

Thank you so much for investing in this e-book. I appreciate your business and I hope I have the privilege of earning your business in the future.

THE “CERTIFIED” BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

The Edge You Need When Selling B2B or B2G

About the Author:



Myra Cisse is the Managing Member of Certification Consultants LLC. Her company assists women, minority and veteran business owners who want to sell their goods and services to the federal government. On the path to government contracts, she is that all-important first step.

Myra majored in finance at the University of South Carolina and worked in the banking industry for more than 20 years. In August 2010, she obtained her MBA from Georgia State University with a concentration in project management. She spent the last six years of her banking career working exclusively with business owners.

As a former banker, Myra has in-depth knowledge of the banking industry in general, and the SBA in particular, having closed millions of dollars of SBA loans. She now combines her decades of industry experience, many years of SBA experience, and her education to provide a much-needed service to business owners.

Myra lives in the Metro Atlanta suburbs with her 13-year-old daughter. She conducts workshops about 8(a) and other certifications in the Metro Atlanta area. To get your free 8(a) tools and to receive informative weekly articles answering the most pressing questions about Women, Minority and Veteran certifications, visit www.8aTheEasyWay.com.