Access to Experts

Karen Blackwell , Manager, Supplier Diversity and Development , Nestle

Karen Blackwell is the Manager for Supplier Diversity and Development for Nestlé Business Services of North America where she is responsible for reenergizing and expanding the supplier diversity initiative for Nestle North America by helping minority, women, and veteran owned and other small businesses owners access procurement opportunities within 6 operating companies (Nestlé USA, Nestle Purina Pet Care, the Nestle Waters Company, Nestlé Professional , Nestle Health Science and Nestle Nutrition). Nestlé's business case states that increasing the volume of business done with diverse companies is consistent with strategic sourcing, innovation and competition.

Since joining Nestle in her current position in 2005, the supplier diversity program has expanded its internal and external network of buyers, Nestlé stakeholders and strong diverse suppliers. Under her watch the Nestle online supplier Diversity portal, eLearning and interactive supplier teleconferences have become examples of Best in Practice components for relevant Supplier Diversity programs that are cost efficient and effective.

Before joining Nestlé, Karen held several positions of increasing responsibility including Assistant Deputy Mayor Economic Development for the City of Los Angeles , and Small Business and Job Training Manager for the $4.2 billion world class Alameda Corridor construction project. As a business owner, VP of a small consulting company and a practicing City Planner she developed a unique view of how entrepreneurs can succeed in today's economy.

Karen is originally from Philadelphia PA. She holds an undergraduate degree in sociology from Beloit College, a Masters from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is a graduate from the CORO Foundation's Women Leadership Program.

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