

Business MATCHMAKING



A Cooperative Agreement between SBA and HP Small Business Foundation

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U.S. Small Business Administration and HP's Multi-Million Dollar Business Matchmaking Initiative Returns to Orlando Following Successful Year-Long Tour Across the U.S.

National Small Business Event to be held May 20-21st in conjunction with SBA Expo'04: Celebrating National Small Business Week

WASHINGTON, D.C. – May 6, 2004 – After a year on the road touring throughout the United States, and millions of dollars in contracts signed for small businesses, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and HP (NYSE, Nasdaq:HPQ) are bringing Business Matchmaking back to Orlando, where the program originally launched in 2003, with more contract opportunities for Southeastern entrepreneurs.

Business Matchmaking will be held May 20 & 21st at the Orlando County Convention Center in conjunction with *SBA Expo'04: Celebrating National Small Business Week*, an annual celebration honoring the nation's leading small business entrepreneurs.

“We are excited to be back in Orlando for Small Business Week, honoring America's entrepreneurs and acknowledging the success of Business Matchmaking over the past year and the tremendous economic impact that it continues to provide small business owners throughout the country,” said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto.

Registered participants for SBA Expo'04 will not only have full access to Expo activities, but the chance to participate in the Business Matchmaking program, which will have some 150 representatives from major government agencies, along with dozens of America's leading corporations, in attendance with current and future contracting opportunities.

“The small business segment holds more promise for the future of our economy than any other segment, which is why we are 100 percent committed to the success and growth of Business Matchmaking,” said Robyn West, vice president of small and medium business, HP. “Our procurement staff will continue to participate at each of the events across the nation providing small businesses contract opportunities to work with HP. And, our technology will continue to drive the program's overall operations – from registration, education and training to Web site support and on-site “Cyber Café” workstations.”

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Previous Business Matchmaking events held in 2003 and early 2004 have resulted in more than 14,640 face-to-face meetings between small business owners and procurement officials with millions of dollars in contracts awarded, including:

- Mary Hamill, president of Global-5, Inc., an Orlando public relations firm that secured \$5.5 million in contracts following the launch of Business Matchmaking in Orlando in 2003; and
- Donnie McDaniel, vice president of Texas-based Best Products Co., an integrator of industrial supplies, who was recently awarded a \$2.5 million agreement with a government contractor.

The largest small business initiative in SBA history, Business Matchmaking is a public/private partnership between the SBA and HP that provides a major economic stimulus to small businesses by decentralizing the procurement process and taking contract opportunities to the streets of America.

The two-day regional events held across the United States pair small businesses with federal, state, and local governments and large corporations that have identified a near-term need to buy specific products and services. The event is more than just an opportunity to trade business cards, as is the case with traditional trade shows. Instead, it is a chance for small businesses to hold one-on-one face-to-face meetings with the key decision makers holding genuine procurement opportunities.

In addition to regional events, Business Matchmaking also offers half-day workshops that include expert counseling and educational seminars to prepare small businesses to 'do business' with government agencies and corporations as well as 24/7 online access to numerous contract opportunities through the Small Business Networking Center (SBNC) available at www.businessmatchmaking.com.

Through the SBNC, businesses that have attended a Business Matchmaking Workshop are able to make appointments for telephone interviews with procurement officials outside of Business Matchmaking regional events, saving buyers and sellers time and money by eliminating the need to travel to each event.

For more information on registering for SBA Expo '04, please visit www.sba.gov/50. Small businesses that have already registered for the SBA Expo '04 can visit <https://www.bmmreg.com/Expo> to sign up for Business Matchmaking appointments.

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