

Another Small Business Success Story

TEVET LLC

An “above and beyond” attitude from a
Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business

“Sandia’s SBUD has been a big part of our success here. They are tremendous advocates for small businesses.”

– Tracy Solomon,
TEVET LLC

TEVET LLC, a SDVOSB and HUBZone provider of test and measurement equipment, is the recipient of the Department of Energy’s “2009 SDVOSB of the Year Award”.

Just out of the Navy, and a veteran of the first Gulf War, Tracy Solomon had a dream: to create a business in his hometown of Greeneville, Tennessee – a place where many skilled workers have watched their jobs disappear as local industries begin moving operations overseas.

Solomon has seen that dream become a reality. Since 2003, Solomon has grown his company TEVET LLC into a major supplier providing its clients with a range of technology sourcing/consulting services and equipment management solutions.

Solomon used his military training as a stepping stone, taking advantage of Navy education programs to earn a bachelor’s degree in business, studying and taking classes at night. After his discharge from the Navy, this third-generation disabled veteran (his father served in the Vietnam War and his grandfather was a World War II infantryman), worked at Agilent Technologies, Inc., which makes electronic test and measurement equipment, and later for a major telecommunications company. Again, Solomon pushed for more and earned his MBA.

It is this “above and beyond” attitude that interested Sandia in Solomon’s company. Sandia senior manager Billie Weatherly first met Tracy Solomon at a Northern New Mexico Supplier Forum in 2008. Weatherly later talked with Toni Leon Kovarik, Sandia’s representative for veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, about TEVET’s qualifications as a test equipment supplier. Kovarik was also impressed with TEVET: “I’m always proud to work with the

veteran-owned business community, both as a Sandian and a private citizen. When I met Tracy, I really admired his approach to business and marketing. He has very high standards, and I knew that if he worked for Sandia he would come through and do a great job for us.”

Kovarik knew that Sandia purchases Agilent equipment for a number of applications throughout the Labs. She also learned that TEVET is an Agilent “Small Business Partner,” a program where qualifying small businesses represent and sell Agilent products. Agilent Account Managers Anthony Esquibel and Sophia Bowers work with TEVET to place orders for Agilent products. “TEVET is a great Small Business Partner to Agilent, and Tracy adds real value as a supplier of Agilent products because of his team’s expertise in instrumentation and testing,” said Bowers. “TEVET knows what questions to ask so that the customers get just the equipment they need,” added Esquibel.

When the time came to establish a new bid for an Agilent supplier at Sandia, Kovarik met with Sandia Contracting Representative Krista Smith to identify a sourcing strategy that might include small businesses. Sandia has aggressive goals to work with small, disadvantaged, HUBZone, woman-owned, veteran-owned, and service-disabled veteran owned small businesses (SDVOSB).



Small Business
Utilization@Sandia

"The person I talked with [at TEVET], Patty Solomon, was very prompt, responsive and helpful."

– Bob Kaplar, SNL Engineer

Tracy Soloman, TEVET LCC, and Donald Devoti, Sandia National Laboratories



In her role as one of Sandia's small business advocates, Kovarik provided Smith with several potential sources in these categories. Based on the qualified supplier pool, Smith established the Agilent products contract as the first SDVOSB/8(a)/HUBZone competitive set-aside procurement at Sandia.

After the bidding process, the contract was awarded to TEVET, a SDVOSB and HUBZone small business. "Toni (Kovarik) really deserves a great deal of credit. She took the time to learn about the equipment Sandia was buying and came prepared with a lot of specific information to include in the bidding process," said Smith. "This contract helps Sandia meet its targets for working with service disabled veteran-owned small businesses. It also streamlines the way Sandia orders Agilent equipment. We now order from one supplier, rather than several different suppliers."

Since receiving the Sandia contract, TEVET has expanded and opened a satellite operation in Albuquerque, with offices adjacent to other veteran-owned businesses and the Veterans Procurement Assistance Center. TEVET has received a lot of support from the non-profit group and its director, Archie Garcia. "Our goal is to support all veteran-owned businesses in the area," said Garcia. In September 2009, Garcia's organization hosted a "Welcome to the Community" event attended by the Albuquerque Mayor's office, small business leaders, and executives from Sandia National Laboratories. "It's great to see Sandia reaching out to the service-disabled veteran's business community.

I look forward to more interaction with Sandia in the future," explained Garcia.

"TEVET looks forward to working in the Albuquerque business community. The contract with Sandia gives our company the additional ability to market and grow in the New Mexico community. Sandia's SBUD has been a big part of our success here. They are tremendous advocates for small businesses," said Solomon.

Success Contributors

TEVET LLC

Tracy Solomon, President & CEO
<http://www.tevetllc.com/>

Sandia National Laboratories

Billie Weatherly, Senior Manager
Don Devoti, Small Business Utilization Manager
Toni Leon Kovarik, Small Business Advocate
Krista Smith, Contracting Representative

Agilent Technologies, Inc.

Sophia Bowers, Account Manager
Anthony Esquibel, Account Manager

Veterans Procurement Assistance Center

Archie Garcia, Executive Director

SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS ADVOCATE

Toni Leon Kovarik
tlkovar@sandia.gov
(505) 284-9549

Click before you buy!

<http://thinksmall.sandia.gov/>



Sandia National Laboratories is a multi program laboratory operated by Sandia Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Lockheed Martin Corporation, for the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration under contract DE-AC04-94AL85000.
SAND number: 2010-3361P