

Business MATCHMAKING



A Cooperative Agreement between SBA and HP Small Business Foundation

Champ's Doors & Windows

Gary, IN

Marcus Mosley learned diligence, preparedness and perseverance during a five-year stint in the U.S. Marines. In the eight years he's been operating Champ's Doors & Windows--a 31-year-old firm started by his father-in-law--he's put those skills to good use. The thriving, Gary, Ind., business both manufactures and wholesales quality doors, windows and fencing for new construction and replacement projects to a broad range of residential and business customers.

With 18 employees and annual billing in the \$600,000 to \$3 million range, Mosley decided it was time to expand his market. He's partnered with Greenwood International to manufacture wood door products overseas and then market them to big box American retailers, creating a larger footprint in a very competitive niche of the construction market, benefiting from industry advertising and marketing and at the same time manufacturing and selling products under the Champ's name.

Mosley decided to attend a recent Business Matchmaking event in Chicago--just 20 minutes from Gary--at the last minute. Within weeks of the June event, he was both surprised and delighted with the results, even though he'd attended in jeans and a t-shirt, and initially felt he might be out of place.

Immediate Results: \$200,000 worth of Projects, Numerous Opportunities

"I showed up after a spur-of-the-moment decision, and hadn't pre-registered or secured any appointments," Mosley said. "Even though I was late in signing up, and felt I was underdressed, the staff and everyone running the Business Matchmaking event went out of their way to make me feel comfortable. More importantly, they helped me make the event tremendously successful."

Business Matchmaking, a partnership between the U.S. Small Business Administration and HP, provides opportunities for small businesses to have personal appointments with government and corporate procurement officials regarding potential contracts. Events also include networking and education sessions and provide valuable insight on local financing options, how to apply for the Government Services Administration (GSA) schedule, access to technology resources,

international trade and trends in technology and marketing.

Mosley had previously begun the bidding process on a major project with the U.S. Navy. At the Business Matchmaking event, he was able to meet face-to-face with decision-makers who will be instrumental in pushing that bid forward. Of more immediate importance, they introduced him to another Navy procurement official, who on the spot put Mosley's firm on the list to replace doors at a major Chicago-area Navy installation during an ongoing re-modeling project. That work will bring in about \$200,000 in new business a year, and Mosley plans to work hard to make it a long-term relationship.

Another success already has resulted from the 20 face-to-face appointments Mosley was able to secure during the two-day event. A meeting with HUD (Housing and Urban Development) officials resulted in an introduction to another agency that manages property for the Chicago public school system.

"With that foot in the door, I got a \$2,000 contract to repair some fencing," Mosley said. "And that's only the beginning. Now I'm on the list, and I look forward to a number of additional projects in the near future."

Other Business Matchmaking Contacts Productive

Mosley's active participation in the Chicago event wasn't limited to looking for new business for Champ's Doors & Windows. While there, he made it a point to visit with sponsors and other small business representatives alike. The results:

- Another small business owner who develops websites will be working with Mosley to help improve his company's Internet effectiveness.
- A meeting with representatives from HP (an event sponsor) may result in updated computer capabilities.
- Relationships established with SBA representatives could result in Mosley helping market future events to other small businesses.

"The message is simple," Mosley said. "If they attend, they will get business. Business Matchmaking is a great experience, but you need to be prepared to go the extra mile. Follow up and do the due diligence. You have to do the work in order to get the work."

That's good advice from the ex-Marine who is putting his skills and work ethic to good use in the world of small business these days, and can't wait to help others do the same.

Note to Media: Below is contact information to learn more about Champ's Doors & Windows and its experience with Business Matchmaking.

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