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## JOB WELL DONE DEBORAH!



From left to right: **Kent Starwalt**, Executive VP of Tennessee Road Builders Association; **Pamela M. Kordenbrock**, TN Division Administrator with Federal Highway Administration; **Paul Degges**, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Engineer; **Deborah H. Luter**, Director of TDOT Civil Rights Division; **Joe Galbato** Deputy Commissioner/Chief Financial Officer; **Toks Omishakin** - Deputy Commissioner, TDOT Chief of Environment and Planning.

**I**n lieu of my usual article, I wanted to use this space to instead bid farewell to the **Director of TDOT's Civil Rights Division** (and my boss) **Deborah Luter**, who is retiring in February after a **40-year tenure in state government**.

For thirteen years, Deborah worked in the position that I now hold as the Director of the Small Business Development Program (SBDP). During much of that time, I worked in close contact with her as the Small Business Development Coordinator. She has been a great mentor throughout the years and has taught me numerous skills that have helped me throughout my career at TDOT. As I am now working in the position she once held, I find myself continually trying to maintain the high standards she put in place for the DBE program. Even when she was correcting me, I was learning from her. I lost track of all the times she got on to me for my "laid-back management style" but she usually followed it up with, "but it seems to work for you."

While maybe not as laid-back as I am, we did have fun in the office. Under her direction, we tied for 1st place the last two years in Christmas Karaoke. And it was always fun watching her cringe whenever she came

into my office and saw the horse-head mask I kept in the corner (note: it was strategically placed where she would have to see it whenever she came in).

It was in February of 2014 that Deborah was appointed Director of the Civil Rights Division (CRD) for TDOT. As Director of the CRD she is responsible for oversight of the SBDP Program, as well as the Affirmative Action and Title VI programs. I remember she was hesitant to move into the Director position, and frankly I am not sure that she even considered it all that much, but the higher-ups are the ones that pursued her for the job. They could see that she had what it takes to run this division.

I've enjoyed our time working together and wish her nothing but the best. I will truly miss her. Please join me in wishing her a happy retirement (and in hoping she and her husband Paul don't drive each other crazy since they will both be home together). If you need any retirement gift ideas, I know that deep down she will miss the horse head. You can get one pretty cheap at Amazon. The one in the photo seems to be her favorite.



**David Neese**  
Director of the Small Business Development Program





# Business Development Round Table Discussions



**Tyler Construction Engineers P.C. Consultants** engages in a "Round Table Discussion" session with **Tioga Environmental Consultants, Inc.** in Memphis, TN.

**D**uring the months of October, November and December, **TDOT Supportive Services Consultants Tyler Construction Engineers, P.C.**, facilitated business development round table sessions with several DBE firm owners and their key staff members. These sessions focused on five key business activities: **Marketing, Financial Health, Leadership and Organizational Structure (HR), Project Management, and Technology.**



Round Table Discussion session with **Top Cat Masonry Contractors, LLC**, in Memphis, TN.

also took time to mentor two aspiring engineering students **Elijah Kidd** and **Nathaniel Colemon, Jr.** about the profession. He encouraged them to be disciplined in their studies and to be ready for the opportunities and challenges they will encounter on their journey in becoming professional engineers.



**Victor Tyler** (Middle) mentoring two Engineering students, (Left) **Elijah Kidd** Western Kentucky University and (Right) **Nathaniel Colemon, Jr.** Tennessee Tech University.



Round Table Discussion session with **B & B Lawn Services, Inc.** in Knoxville, TN.

Each company provided an overall assessment of accomplishments achieved during the year as well as challenges they encountered.

**Business Development Journals** were prepared for the eight DBE firms who participated in TDOT's Business

Development Program. Each journal charted the firm's progress over the past five years in the following areas:

- Revenue
- Home Office Overhead
- Net Profit %
- Business Net Worth
- Management/Leadership Capacity
- Average Annual Employees
- New Customer Acquisition
- New Work Areas
- Development of Policies and Procedures
- Technology Use

Supportive Services Consultants analyzed the impact each area had on the DBE firm's business and offered solutions, implementation strategies and tools. **Tyler Consultant Victor Tyler**

As the TDOT Supportive Services Provider, **many DBE firms consider TYLER as their External Board of Advisors.** Our mission is to assist the business owner in achieving profitability and sustainability.

If you would like to schedule a business development round table session for your firm, contact TDOT Supportive Services at [DBE\\_Supportive\\_Services@tyler-engineers.com](mailto:DBE_Supportive_Services@tyler-engineers.com) or call (615) 469-5398.

**Marshall Tabb,**  
Financial Management & Leadership Coaching



# A Top 10 Checklist on How to Build Leadership Strength in 2019

As we head into a new year, many of us will resolve to create a winning sales pitch to win that next big contract.



**Paul Degges** TDOT's Deputy Commissioner / Chief Engineer & **Deborah Luter** Civil Rights Division Director have played key leadership roles in the support and success of TDOT's DBE Supportive Services Program.

**R**esolving to grow business and increase your bottom line is commendable and very ambitious. However, as a business leader it is equally as important to ensure we also strategize to build leadership strength that will support business growth and add to your bottom line.

Please see the checklist below on How to Build Leadership Strength in 2019. A good reminder is to be intentional and make the checklist a part of your business planning resolution strategy to ensure you are building leadership strength that will promote growth and development.



1. Understand and recognize the value of aligning your business growth with your culture/mission
2. Learn to say "yes" with commitment and dedication and "no" when it is does not fit your business strategy

3. Understand the critical relationship between effective leadership and job cost/financial management
4. Read and learn from other thought leaders to help build leadership strength
5. Do a deep dive on leadership self-reflection
6. Embrace technology/data to enhance your innovation for your business
7. Invest in your people resources for a positive ROI
8. Be sure your value proposition speaks to your client's needs and not just your own
9. Use ethics as a guidepost to collaborate, team, and create joint ventures
10. Value differences to create a winning, well-rounded team

Added Bonus: Build leadership strength by giving back to your team and your community

Building leadership strength is like building any other muscle or skill. Effective leaders have to plan, set goals, and put in the work to make it happen.

The top 10 checklist in this article can be a good starting point to get your wheels turning and help motivate you for 2019.

In 2018, the expert team of consultants at Tyler Construction Engineers, P.C. offered training workshops and seminars such as:

- Estimating and Bidding
- Contract Job Cost Management
- Creating a One Day Strategic Plan
- How to Cultivate a Company Culture that Matters
- Effectively Communicating Company Policies

These workshops are examples of how we helped train and develop business owners and leaders on many of the items listed in the checklist above.

We look forward to connecting with DBEs, business owners, and leaders in 2019 to continue to deliver interactive and informative training to help you develop your very own checklist.

For information about our workshops, contact TDOT Supportive Services at [DBE\\_Supportive\\_Services@tyler-engineers.com](mailto:DBE_Supportive_Services@tyler-engineers.com) or call (615) 469-5398.

Have a Happy and Prosperous Leadership Year in 2019!

**Teresa Daniel, PHR**  
Human Resource Specialist





# 2019 TDOT Supportive Services Workshop Offering



Instructor: **Victor C. Tyler, P.E.**- Construction Business Specialist & TDOT's DBE Supportive Services Program Manager conducting an estimating workshop in Nashville, TN.

## Piecing It All Together...

*"How to solve your biggest business challenges using simple and easy to learn strategies"*

Running a small business is very challenging. This upcoming workshop will help you get out of the crisis management trap many owners find themselves in. You will learn what strategic business planning is all about and why it is important to your firm's success. Instructors will present three simple and distinct categories of business:

- Get the Work
- Do the Work
- Account for the Work

This workshop will be facilitated by industry-leading experts that will help

you understand how to increase your market share and win the right contracts that will grow your business.

## Job Cost Accounting & Profitability Workshop

This interactive training will cover Job Cost Accounting principles specifically tailored for Small Contracting Businesses. Your company's job cost accounting system should provide project performance and be used as a management tool to support your estimating and bidding processes. Successful job cost accounting can mean the difference between a profitable business and one that struggles to stay alive. The following topics will be discussed during this workshop:

## COURSE OUTLINE:

- Understanding the Accounting Equation
- What is Job Cost Accounting
- Financial Performance Ratios
- Creating Project Budgets
- How to Calculate Overhead, Mark-Up & Profit Rates
- Job Cost Tips to Increase Job Profitability
- Case Study Examples

Use the information you gather from job-cost accounting reports to improve not only your project estimating but also your way of doing business.



# CONTRACT

## How To Increase Your Success on Contracts

- Develop a Best Practice Checklist
- Be proactive about communications
- Attend project meetings
- Follow proper communication channels (subcontractors should communicate with owners or engineers only through the Prime)
- Primes must run project meetings effectively
- Designate someone to write the minutes of meetings
- Review minutes of meetings and have corrections made for any erroneous or inaccurate statements
- Review the scope before signing a subcontract
- Your project team needs to know what was agreed upon in the subcontract agreement
- Your supervisory personnel on the project must be competent and communicate well
- Always negotiate disputes expeditiously with the intent of achieving an equitable agreement
- Document your phone calls, conversations, and meetings
- Communicate project issues or problems through in-person interaction first – it is more effective than starting out with written letters



## Commonly Subcontracted Work Categories (DOT Construction)

HAULING/TRUCKING	BASE-AGGREGATE BASES OR AGGREGATES
EROSION CONTROL	GUARDRAIL/ATTENUATORS
MATERIAL SUPPLIER	RETAINING WALLS
BRIDGE PAINTING	INTELLIGENT TRAFFIC SYSTEMS
LANDSCAPING (SEEDING, SODDING, TREES, ETC)	BRIDGE WORK
TRAFFIC CONTROL	PAVING
BARRIERS (PARAPETS, CONCRETE BARRIERS, ETC)	LIGHTING (ELECTRICAL, ETC.)
STORM DRAINAGE	REMOVAL (BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, ETC.)
CONCRETE FLATWORK	INCIDENTAL OR MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS
FENCE	UTILITIES
EARTHWORK	PAVEMENT MARKING





# Build Your Business With Marketing Fundamentals



**T**o build your business, you need a simple and straight forward understanding of marketing. Marketing is a series of actions and communications designed to generate interest in your business and its products or services. Many people get confused in understanding the difference between “sales” and “marketing.”

Marketing is designed to support your sales effort, which focus specifically on benefits along with issues such as price and delivery. Marketing helps you get to the point where you can work directly with a prospect to make your sale. Successful marketing creates a compelling argument that attracts people to what you have to offer.

**Example:**

For those who bid new project opportunities, use your bidding process as a marketing tool to open doors. Create value within your bid that warrants a face-to-face or one-on-one engagement. Use this time to sell yourself, your business and showcase your value as to why you should be the chosen!


Though marketing may seem complex, there are fundamental tasks that, if done properly, will provide your business with the messaging and communications it needs to succeed.

Stay tuned, and plan to attend our next workshop. For information, contact TDOT Supportive Services at [DBE Supportive Services@tyler-engineers.com](mailto:DBE_Supportive_Services@tyler-engineers.com) or call (615) 469-5398 so you can learn techniques and strategies to enhance your business and watch your profits grow! —Provide excellence, stay consistent, and above all ...Be Epic!


**Curtis Webb**  
Strategic Marketing & Business Development Specialist

## Organization Tips for Accounting Records


**T**he better your systems of organization, the easier it is to prepare your monthly reports and tax compliance reports. Here are a few tips to make organizing your records easier.

**1)**  Summarize, scan and store all your receipts daily, weekly or monthly. Although most business owners use credit cards or checks for purchases, receipts are still required in audit situations. It is important to be able to prove the details of your purchases, especially at stores like Sam's Club, Walmart, Amazon, etc. If you summarize the receipts and scan them with a phone or printer, those records should be stored not just on a computer, but also on an external hard drive. If for some reason the computer crashes, your backup copies will prove invaluable. Choose a schedule to scan

your receipts to prevent being overwhelmed at the end of the year.

**2)**  Opt-in for electronic receipts for business purchases whenever possible. This will make it easier to find receipts for returns or warranties. It will also reduce the number of receipts you need to scan. Create a folder on your email to organize your receipts in folders to simplify searches for individual receipts.

**3)**  Keep computer files organized in folders on your computer. Create folders for your customers, vendors, receipts, backups, etc. With this system, accessing files can be more efficient and easier to send via email.

**4)**  Set automatic internal and external backups for all electronic devices. Computers, tablets, and phones need to be on automatic daily backups to prevent data and record loss. Portable devices are easy to lose, or damage and the loss of your information can impact your ability to earn revenue. All devices can be backed up to cloud drives or external hard drives.

Making these changes can improve your accounting system records and reduce the time, effort and money you will expend to prepare your financial documents. If you need assistance creating these systems and you are a TDOT DBE, please contact me at [erickalhayes@gmail.com](mailto:erickalhayes@gmail.com) and make an appointment today.

**Ericka L. Hayes, CPA**  
Accounting - Business Organization & Information Technology



# Five Numbers You Should Know About Your 2018 Performance

**B**efore we get too far into 2019, let's take a look back at your 2018 results and review five meaningful numbers you may want to discover about your business's performance. To start, grab your 2018 income statement, or perhaps take a second look at your income statement (for the first time).

## I. Revenue per Employee

This number measures a company's productivity with regard to its employees and is relevant and meaningful for all industries. If you have part-time employees, compute a full-time equivalent total and use that as your denominator. Compare this number to prior years to see if your company is getting more or less productive. Also compare this number to businesses in your same industry to see how your company compares to these peer companies. You may also want to compute other revenue calculations, such as revenue by geography, revenue by product line, or average sale revenue by customer, if you feel these may be meaningful to your business.

## II. Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC)

How much does it cost your business to acquire a new customer? That is the customer acquisition cost and is made up of marketing and selling costs, including marketing and selling labor. You'll need the number of new customers acquired during 2018 in order to calculate this number. Compare this number to prior years as well as industry peers. You can potentially do a lot to lower this number by boosting your marketing skills and

implementing lower cost marketing channels.

## III. Overhead Costs

Overhead costs are costs that are not directly attributable to producing or selling your products and services. They include items such as rent, telephone, insurance, legal expenses, and executive salaries. Although it's not standard practice to break out overhead expenses from other expenses on an income statement, it's valuable to know the numbers for performance purposes. Compare your overhead costs to prior years and industry averages. You can actively manage your overhead cost by re-negotiating with vendors on a regular basis and trimming where it makes sense.

## IV. Profit Margins

Your profit margin can help you determine which division of your business is most profitable. If you sell more than one product or service, you can compute a gross or net margin by product or service. You can also compute margins by geography, sales rep, employee, customer, or any other meaningful segment of your business. Your accounting system may be able to generate an income statement by division if everything has been coded correctly and overhead has been allocated appropriately. Reach out if you'd like us to help you with this. Seeing which service or product is most profitable can help you decide if you want to try to refocus marketing

efforts, change prices, discontinue items, fire employees, attract a different type of customer, or any number of other important decisions for your business.

## V. Breakeven Point

Do you know how many units you need to sell in order to start generating a profit? If not, the breakeven calculation can help you learn this information. The formula is  $\text{Fixed Costs} / (\text{Sales Price per Unit} - \text{Variable Costs per Unit})$  which results in the number of units you need to sell in order to "break even" or cover your overhead costs.

The breakeven point helps you plan the amount of volume you need in order to ensure that you have healthy profits and plenty of cash flow in your business.

These five numbers can help you interpret your business performance on a deeper level so you can make better decisions that will lead to increased success in your business. Perhaps you need some assistance discovering how to find these five numbers. If we can help with any of them, please give us a call any time and we can walk you through the process.

For information, contact TDOT Supportive Services at [DBE\\_Supportive\\_Services@tyler-engineers.com](mailto:DBE_Supportive_Services@tyler-engineers.com) or call (615) 469-5398.

**Jay B. Mercer,**  
QuickBooks Pro-Advisor & Tax Specialist



# New DBEs *Welcome*

## Region 1

**Family Painting, Inc.**  
**Genny Martinez**

Painting and Wall Covering Contractors  
Drywall and Insulation Contractors  
Highway, Street, and  
Bridge Construction

## Region 2

N/A

## Region 3

**B & D Hauling, LLC**  
**Bryan Sallier**

Hauling Aggregate Materials; Dump  
Trucking; General Freight Trucking, Local;  
Specialized Freight (except Used Goods)  
Trucking, Local

**Premier Fence, LLC**  
**Walter Donnell II**

Supply and Install of Residential,  
Commercial, and Industrial Aluminum,

Steel, Wood, Vinyl, and Chain Link  
Fences; Supply and Install of Automatic  
or Automated Gates; Hauling; Specialized  
Freight (except Used Goods) Trucking,  
Local

## Region 4

N/A

# Recently Renewed Firms

## Region 1

**Cannon & Cannon, Inc.**  
**Angela Y. Cannon**

Engineering Services; Surveying and  
Mapping (except Geophysical) Services

**Data Consulting Service, Inc. DBA**  
**San<sup>2</sup>, Inc.**

**Ashok Chatra**

Transportation Traffic/Planning Consulting  
and Import/Export of Durable Goods

**Dykes Trucking, Inc.**  
**Kim Dykes**

Asphalt & Bridge Deck Sealing, Concrete  
Flatwork, Milling, General Freight Trucking  
(Local), Erosion Control, Traffic Control

**G & G Rebar, Inc.**  
**Elvia V. Palacios**

Steel Placement for Concrete Structures

**Lynn Sanford Construction, Inc.**  
**Mary L. Forrester**

General Construction Contractor, Hydro-  
seeding, Landscaping, Sodding, Seeding  
and Erosion Control, Weatherization, Tie  
Rebar, Concrete Construction (Flatwork,  
Pour and Form), Precast Beams and  
Beam Erection, Site Preparation, Traffic  
Control, Hauling (Local), Utilities, Pavement  
Marking/Crack Sealing

**Samico Professional Service**  
**Sheila R. Hijer**

Recruiting Staff Augmentation engineering  
locator svc., drafting and design support

## Region 2

**Barton Construction, Inc.**  
**Anastasia Barton**

Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction  
(Parking Lot Marking and Line Painting;  
Bridge Painting); Poured Concrete  
Foundation and Structure Contractors;  
Painting and Wall Covering Contractors;  
Site Preparation Contractors; Other  
Support Activities for Road Transportation;  
Landscaping Services; Other Services  
to Buildings and Dwellings (Seal Coating  
and Asphalt Patching); All Other Support  
Services; Translation Services (Russian)

**Eco Spec, Inc.**  
**Dewayne R. Thomas**

Lumber, Plywood, Millwork, and Wood  
Panel Merchant Wholesalers; Brick,  
Stone, and Related Construction  
Material Merchant Wholesalers; Roofing,  
Siding, and Insulation Material Merchant  
Wholesalers; Other Construction Material  
Merchant Wholesalers; Wholesale Trade  
Agents and Brokers

**Gibco Construction, LLC**  
**Sharon Gilbert**

Excavating and Trucking, Spread Rock

**Thomason Company, Inc.**  
**Judy Thomason**

Clearing, grubbing, tree, bush and brush  
removal

**W & W Construction Company, LLC**  
**Henry Wood**

Underground Utilities & Building  
Construction

## Region 3

**Crown Group of Companies, Inc.**  
**Moren Adenubi**

Real Estate Sales and Property  
Management

**duGard Communications**  
**Perri duGard Owens**

Public Relations Agency, Communications,  
Marketing and Branding

**Earth Solutions, Inc.**  
**Jamie Helton**

Heavy Civil Construction, Excavation,  
Grading, Site Work, Trucking, Earth  
Moving, Underground Utilities, Erosion  
Control, Drilling, Blasting, Rock Removal  
and Rock Crushing, Oil and Gas Pipeline  
Construction

**Grace Welding & Fabricating**  
**James G. Garcia**

Structural Steel Erection Contractors





Recently Renewed Firms Cont' from page 8

**Grand Slam Universal, LLC**

**Marcus Lillard**

Power and Communication Line and Related Structures Construction; Electrical Contractors and Other Wiring Installation Contractors; Computer Facilities Management Services; Other Computer Related Services; Temporary Help Services

**Mitchell & Everett Construction, Inc.**

**Anetra Mitchell**

Painting & Sandblasting

**Panther Construction Co., Inc.**

**LaDevia Davis**

Waterproofing, stucco, building cleaning, restoration and exterior thermal systems, exterior finish systems, and texture coatings

**Reynolds & Reynolds Facility Services, Inc.**

**DeMarco Reynolds**

Janitorial Services, Painting and Wall Covering, Facilities Support Services, Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning, Other Services to Buildings, Landscaping Services

**T.G., Inc.**

**Tracey Hammonds**

Office supplies and equipment, Construction materials and supplies

**W. D. Schock Company, Inc.**

**Leigh Tanney Lasley**

Engineering Services, Environmental Consulting Services

**Winfrey's Janitorial Company**

**Cardale Winfrey**

Janitorial Service-Residential and Commercial, Supplier of Commercial and Industrial Products

**Region 4**

**Interstate Transportation, LLC**

**Marsha Via**

Transportation: Hauling asphalt, sand gravel

**Powers Hill Design**

**Nisha Powers**

Civil Engineering Design and Consulting Services



**TDOT**  
Department of  
Transportation

**Scheduled  
Letting Dates  
2019**

February 8, March 29,  
May 10, & June 21

The TDOT Civil Rights Division Small Business Development Program and its Supportive Services Consultants offer a variety of training classes designed to assist TNUCP certified DBE firms to succeed in the transportation construction industry. Seminars and informational meetings are made available throughout the state. The primary focus of these seminars is to disseminate industry specific information on strategic marketing, branding, accounting, estimating, cash flow management, business planning, leadership development, and human resource assistance. Look for seminar and workshop announcements soon in your email in-box.

Our Supportive Services Consultants are ready and waiting to assist you with ANY question you have! Give us a call today 888.385.9022.

*“Great things in business are never done by one person. They’re done by a team of people.”*

– Steve Jobs

**Civil Rights Division  
Small Business Development  
Program Team**

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Deborah.Luter@tn.gov  
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