

BUSINESS CASE AND EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

The process of engaging and recruiting one or more champions will also identify naysayers, and help to identify and counter arguments against supplier diversity. CAMSC reached out to Fasken Martineau to ask some common questions within Canadian corporations about the legal environment for supplier diversity (see insert, pg 12).

» Supplier Diversity Policy

A simple and concise policy statement should capture the fundamental goals, objectives and benefits of a supplier diversity program. This statement must be endorsed by a senior leader within the company, for example CEO, Chairman or Managing Director, as a demonstration of commitment to supplier diversity. Without top-level support it can be very difficult to convey a call to action down through the company.

A supplier diversity policy statement should include:

- Justification for the program
- Eligibility (target beneficiaries)
- Core processes to be inclusive of diverse businesses
- Benefits to the company, its shareholders and stakeholders.

For an external perspective, Johnson Controls Inc. has shared its policy statement with executive sign-off (see Appendix 1).

KEY ELEMENTS FOR A ROBUST SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROCESS

- Executive engagement on the business case
- Policy statement, signed by senior executive

Reach out to CAMSC for assistance with securing executive support, as CAMSC can also connect members to peer corporate mentors who may be able to provide suggestions based on their internal experience.

BEST PRACTICES

For more information, the Business Case and Executive Support section of the CAMSC Playbook aligns with the following best practices found in the CAMSC Best Practices in Supplier Diversity guidelines. These guidelines are available to CAMSC corporate members, to provide benchmarking “measures of success” that aid in the long-term design, development and implementation of a SD process.

- **Goal #1 - Establish corporate policy and top corporate management support.**
- **Goal #2 - Develop a corporate supplier diversity plan.**

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

A supplier diversity council should meet at least quarterly. This will provide valuable feedback for continued alignment with broader business strategies as well as opportunities for executive engagement.

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LEGAL ENVIRONMENT FOR SUPPLIER DIVERSITY IN CANADA: Q&A WITH FASKEN MARTINEAU



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As supplier diversity champions work to secure executive support for a supplier diversity policy in Canada, they may encounter questions about whether supplier diversity programs comply with human rights legislation in Canada. CAMSC reached out to Katherine Pollock, a Partner at Fasken Martineau, for her expertise around human rights legislation compliance.

» *Do Supplier Diversity initiatives comply with Canadian Human Rights legislation?*

Supplier diversity initiatives are programs offering businesses owned and managed by equity seeking groups (including but not limited to Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities, women) an equal opportunity to compete for business. The Canadian Human Rights Act, as well as Ontario and BC Human Rights Codes (to name a few) have specific sections allowing creation of programs designed to assist disadvantaged persons or groups to achieve equal opportunity, known as Special Programs. Supplier diversity programs that are established to provide equality of opportunity may be considered Special Programs and thus would likely be allowed under human rights legislation.

» *Can Canadian organizations ask suppliers questions on ownership characteristics such as ethnicity or gender?*

According to guidance provided by the BC Human Rights Tribunal and the Ontario Human Rights Commission, organizations that establish a Special program are encouraged to monitor and evaluate whether the program is achieving its goal of equality of opportunity to identified equity-seeking groups. In the case of supplier diversity, asking suppliers to identify their ownership characteristics enables organizations to monitor whether they are being inclusive of diverse-owned businesses in their bidding processes. It should be noted, however, that these questions should be voluntary. A number of CAMSC and WeConnect Canada corporate members and other organizations, such as the City of Toronto, ask suppliers voluntary ownership questions in their vendor registration portals or bidding processes.

» *Where can I find more information?*

CAMSC provides a useful summary presentation on the legal environment for supplier diversity in Canada. For guidelines on Special programs, visit the websites of the BC Human Rights Tribunal and the Ontario Human Rights Commission, as well as other provincial human rights associations. If your organization would like a legal opinion on a supplier diversity policy statement or special program plan's compliance with the relevant provincial or federal jurisdiction, Fasken Martineau would be pleased to assist you.