

ALREADY IN BUSINESS

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May 2012 WBE of the Month - Marie Bak



Marie Bak, owner of Service, Dependability, Quality, Ltd., (SDQ Janitorial) believes in respecting all aspects of her business, no job is too menial. So when the investors she sought out to help fund her commercial cleaning services company in its beginning phases fell through, she took on her company's daily cleaning duties, scrubbing floors in the homes of top executives. Her unflinching belief in her company caught the attention and earned the respect of several Fortune 500 executives who recognized that her vision and work ethic would be key to her success.

SDQ Janitorial went from a vision to dream come true as Marie built her business from the ground up, floor by floor. Now with nearly 30 years and more than 500 employees, SDQ Janitorial is not only Minnesota's largest non-union commercial cleaning service, but it is among the top ten companies in its industry in the state. Her employee base is comprised of 99% New Americans who come from countries such as Korea, Ecuador and Guyana. Marie provides her employees with specialized training, housing and resettlement support and is known for her caring "godmother-like" personality. As one of her employees expressed, "We

have been blessed, and our hearts belong to SDQ."

Marie's dream to build SDQ Janitorial began while she and her husband were living in Europe and had several workers to help with cleaning and other housekeeping tasks. Marie appreciated their work, and this experience helped to shape her plans for a family business of her own. "In Europe, every worker is respected, no matter what the job is. I treat my employees as professionals and special individuals: remembering birthdays, anniversaries – even favorite restaurants."

The WBDC-Minnesota (WBDC-MN) has been a benefit to Marie. She has attended several workshops which have been important in her understanding of the advantages of being a certified Women Business Enterprise (WBE). "The WBDC-MN assisted us in relationships with multi-national corporations, not just getting us in the door, but also helping us to establish a relationship. The workshops provide tools to help grow your business; they give you ideas of how you can improve."

Marie thinks it is important that every WBE know that to be successful, a business owner doesn't have to do everything within her business. WBEs should identify their strengths and weaknesses, and then seek out talent to cover those weaknesses. She suggests WBEs should concentrate on doing what they do best. Marie advocates trusting one's own instinct and never giving up on dreams. Finally, she says, "Make sure employees and associates know that you care about them, and then help to improve their lives. If you do this, you will always be successful."

To learn more about Service, Dependability, Quality, Ltd., (SDQ Janitorial) please [click here](#)

WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (WBE) CERTIFICATION helps women business owners create new marketing opportunities with corporate and government buyers. The WBDC provides women-owned businesses with nationally-recognized WBE certification through our partnership with the Women's Business Enterprise National Council. After completing the process of certification, you'll gain advantages outlined on this page.

CORPORATE CONNECTIONS

The WBDC coordinates one-on-one "matchmaker" meetings between WBEs and corporate and government purchasing agents who've committed to buying products and services from WBEs. These matchmaking sessions occur at the WBDC's Annual Entrepreneurial Woman's Conference and at corporate and government sites other times of the year

QUARTERLY NETWORKING AND PROCUREMENT MEETINGS

At our Quarterly Networking and Procurement meetings, as a WBE, you'll meet supplier diversity and procurement

BUSINESS TOOLS

RESOURCE LINKS