


Pennsylvania Launches Vetpreneur-Friendly Program + Our Expert Answers Your Questions About

NATIONAL VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS ASSOCIATION'S

VETREPRENEUR

FOR MILITARY VETERANS



CARL CHURCHILL
Lock-n-Load Java
U.S. Army, 1979-2006

COFFEE WITH A CAUSE

Lock-n-Load Java sets its sights on corporate America.

SEPTEMBER 2012

\$3.99US 099

7 25274 05094 9

WWW.BUYVETERAN.COM

SUPPLIER AND WHOLE-SALER AT THE SAME TIME

Thomas Schultz, owner of Veterans Imaging Products (VIP), has been in the ink and toner business since 1987. In

1996, his firm was bringing in ink and toner cartridges from all over the world and having them refurbished in America for resale. In 1998, he listed his business on the General Services Administration Schedule to sell office products to the federal government.

VIP is also a member of the TriMega Purchasing Association, a not-for-profit, member-owned co-operative dedicated to the business of office products, computer supplies, and office furniture. TriMega's approximately 590 member companies each range in annual sales from \$1 million to over \$100 million. This membership enabled VIP to buy directly from manufacturers and take

advantage of their marketing programs and resell those products to large corporations.

Schultz also had an arrangement in which he used Staples, Inc. as a subcontractor. "So what I can do is offer world-class services and products in terms of warehouses and delivery and I can get either option with TriMega or Staples," Schultz said. "The strange thing about it is in both cases Staples is also one of my customers. I sell them toner."

Staples, Inc. is the world's largest office products company with annual sales exceeding \$24 billion. According to its supplier website, the firm purchases products and services for its corporate office and sales of-

STAPLES

that was easy:

STAPLES

2011 Revenues: \$24 billion
Number of Employees: 91,000
What does Staples buy from small businesses?
Food, janitorial supplies, furniture, housewares and a myriad of other products and services.
www.navoba.com/staples

CORP

VOB



Thomas Schultz

Military Service: U.S. Army (1967-1970), Corporal (E-4)
Company: Veterans Imaging Products
Headquarters: Parker, Colo.
Year Founded: 1996
Number of Employees: 14
www.veteransimaging.com



"THE REAL TRICK IN GETTING IN THEIR DOOR IS UNDERSTANDING THEIR BUSINESS. UNFORTUNATELY FOR A LOT OF VETERANS GETTING OUT, THERE IS A MISCONCEPTION OF THE EASE OF GETTING INTO IT."

ices nationwide, and also purchases products for resale online, in retail stores and catalogs.

Schultz said that the hardest part about getting business with corporate America is landing that first contract.

"The real trick in getting in their door is understanding their business," Schultz said. "Unfortunately for a lot of veterans getting out, there is a misconception of the ease of getting into it."

VIP also sells to AT&T, McKesson and Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

"Each case is always different, but in every case, it's taken at least two years to get that first contract," Schultz said. "People expect a contract when they go to shows and conventions, but many veteran-owned firms just don't come in prepared." ☺

ADVICE FROM A SUCCESSFUL CORPORATE CONTRACTOR

Thomas Schultz, owner of Veterans Imaging Products, has been in the corporate contracting business for a long time. He's enjoyed many successes and landed contracts with Staples, AT&T, Noridian, Abbott Laboratories, Brookhaven, McKesson, as well as Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals nationwide, other federal and state government agencies, and several small to medium commercial accounts.

VIP has earned a wealth of accolades including, but not limited to:

- Outstanding AbilityOne Distributor 2006-2011
- McKesson - Diverse Business of the Year
- DiversityBusiness.com, "Top Disabled Veteran Owned Business" 2006
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Acquisition and Logistics, VA-FSS Vendor Day Outreach Program, recognition of significant contribution & support presented to Tom Schultz
- Disabled Veteran's Life Memorial Foundation, Certificate of Appreciation Founding Member, 01/11/2005
- Wounded Warrior Certificate of Recognition 05/19/2010

HERE ARE A FEW OF SCHULTZ'S TOP PIECES OF ADVICE:

- 1) Don't be afraid to approach large corporations as suppliers, customers or strategic alliances.
- 2) Be confident to sell and service all size accommodations.
- 3) Stay persistent. Keep calling on customers and learn from them what needs to be done for improvement to obtain the business.
- 4) Do not depend solely on the federal or state governments for all business or just one major commercial account.
- 5) Treat your personnel as number one. Customers and suppliers will be taken care of with excellence if your personnel are treated the right way.