

# Growing a Business

## Website tool helps with market research



Karen Mills

Small business owners and start-ups across the country can now take advantage of a new business tool to help them compete and grow.

The free tool, called SizeUp, helps businesses identify new customers and compare their performance against other businesses in their industry with data collected from hundreds of private and public sources. The toll can be found on the Small Business Administration website at [sba.gov/sizeup](http://sba.gov/sizeup).

"Market research and analysis is critical for the success of any small business owner or entrepreneur. Tools like SizeUp deliver data right to the fingertips of business owners to help make smart decisions and have the greatest opportunity to start, grow, compete and succeed," said SBA Administrator Karen Mills. "In today's challenging economic environment where small businesses create nearly all net new jobs in the U.S., help for small businesses is more important than ever before."

SizeUp works by analyzing a business in comparison to other similar businesses in the same trade and provides geographic information on the marketplace, areas recommended for advertising, and prospective customers. This useful tech tool delivers market data di-

rectly to business owners to help them make better business decisions based on competitive research analysis.

The SizeUp tool provides data analysis in three key ways:

Benchmarking an existing business to see how it sizes up by comparing performance to all other competitors in the same industry;

A mapping feature to see where customers and suppliers are located; and

Finding the best places to advertise by choosing from pre-set reports to find areas with the highest industry revenue and the most underserved markets. Custom demographic reports can also be created.

GIS Planning, Inc., the company that created SizeUp, has licensed the tool to SBA for one year. SBA's acceptance of this product is not an endorsement of the opinions, products or services of GIS Planning, Inc.

## Minority Contracting Goals are Increased:

### For Oregon transportation department jobs

The Federal Highway Administration has approved a goal to award more contracts to minority and women-owned businesses through the Oregon Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprises Program.

The approved overall goal is 16.95 percent of the contracts for federal fiscal year 2013 are made with DBE firms, of which 5.45 percent is expected to be attained through race- and gender-conscious means. This is an increase over the previous goal, which was 11.5 percent with a 3 percent race- and gender-conscious breakout.

To meet the race- and gender-conscious portion of the overall goal, ODOT will set DBE goals on select contracts in the areas of construction and architectural and engineering services.

Under 9th Circuit Court of Ap-

peals case law, departments of transportation are allowed to set goals on contracts only for groups where disparity has been proven. Studies conducted in 2007 and 2011 on ODOT contracting activities found disparities in certain areas, such as in awarding construction contracts to African-American owned businesses in the Portland area.

The studies also found that setting goals helped reduce those disparities.

Specifically, disparities were found with African American-owned and Subcontinent Asian-owned DBEs in the area of construction contracts, and in all DBEs (except those owned by Asian Pacific Americans) in the area of architectural and engineering contracts.

A DBE includes small businesses that are at least 51 percent owned by minorities: Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Subcontinent Asian Americans, women, and other individuals on a case-by-case basis.

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