

BEWARE OF “MISLEADING” WEBSITES

By Gayle Waldron, Founder & President of The Management Edge

My sister is starting to look at government contracting for her eco carpet business. I've been doing government contracting for 20 years, so I enthusiastically agreed to walk her through the steps, help her to establish her strategy and set up some initial meetings and appointments.

In order to even be considered for a federal contracting bid, every small business must first register with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), which is the primary registrant database for the federal government. The CCR stores company information for hopeful small businesses, and disseminate that data to agencies looking to hire contractually.

I am on the board of Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP) and along with American Express Open, WIPP developed a “Give Me 5” education and outreach campaign to encourage women owned businesses to register themselves in the CCR.

My sister decided to get the first step done, even though she was rushing out the door for an appointment. After a quick search on Google, she clicked on the first link, followed their directions and then left.

When she called me later to discuss whether she wanted to sign up just statewide, or pay the money for the national registry, I knew there was something wrong.

CCR is the official, FREE on-line registrant database for the U.S. Federal Government. You do not need pay to register in CCR.

So some lessons learned:

- 1) Be very careful when you refer someone to the CCR or give them the proper link. (www.bpn.gov/ccr/)
- 2) Do not use any site that does not end in .gov or .mil
- 3) Know that there is no cost to register as a government contractor, unless you WANT to pay someone to do it for you. But that really isn't necessary, it's an easy process.

My sister is getting her money back and registering for the CRR on the official government site. I wish Google wouldn't let the misleading sites be at the top of the list.