REGISTER FOR 2017 NATIONAL EVENTS!

WBENC’S STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM
MENTORS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

DECEMBER 2016
# Calendar of Events

This calendar includes events hosted by WBENC’s regional partner organizations and strategic partners. Visit WBENC’s Online Calendar for more events.

## December 2016

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<td>WIPP ChallengeHER</td>
<td>Washington D.C.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>WBEA San Antonio Networking Reception</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Sandia National Laboratories Open House</td>
<td>Albequerque, N.M.</td>
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<td>WBEA San Antonio Executive Networking Luncheon</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Sandia National Laboratories Open House</td>
<td>Albequerque, N.M.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>WPEO-NY Celebrating Our Partners</td>
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**NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS:** Axalta Coating Systems, B2Gnow

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**WWW.WBENC.ORG // DECEMBER EDITION 2016**
SEASON’S GREETINGS, FRIENDS!

The holiday season is an exciting time at WBENC, where we look back at our year together and look forward toward all that is to come. We took time at Thanksgiving to share our gratitude for the success of WBENC’s mission, our CORE accomplishments, and for each of you who make such a difference for women-owned businesses. We reinforced our commitment to be leaders in diversity and inclusion.

AS WE REFLECT AT THE END OF THE YEAR, WE CELEBRATE ALL WE COLLECTIVELY ACCOMPLISHED IN 2016:

Our market-leading WBENC CERTIFICATION program continued to grow with more than 14,000 certified WBEs and over 2,500 certified WOSBs now active within the WBENC network. In addition, we implemented our new certification system, WBENCLink2.0, and are receiving great feedback regarding efficiency in the certification process and ease of locating WBEs for opportunities. And finally, on the federal government front, we successfully passed our first Small Business Administration audit. Congratulations to all of the certification colleagues at our 14 Regional Partner Organization (RPOs) locations and at the WBENC National Office.

OPPORTUNITIES have been abundant throughout 2016. Our annual national events were record breaking in every aspect, including maximum attendance at the 2016 Summit & Salute in Phoenix and at the 2016 National Conference & Business Fair in Orlando. Speakers, educational sessions, and MatchMaking opportunities were all highly successful, and we were able to introduce our focus on innovation with the introduction of the WEInnovate program, which will become a permanent opportunity in 2017. We hope WBEs and Corporate Members will develop additional innovative solutions because of this important program. Congratulations to the tremendous WBENC team members as well as our RPO partners (WBDC-FL, GWBC, and WBEC-South) and their teams who worked tirelessly to advance our annual experiences in 2016.

We continue to enhance the many RESOURCES available to all of our constituents. We graduated the largest class of the WBENC Student Entrepreneur Program in June. Many WBEs took advantage of the Dorothy B. Brother’s Executive Education Scholarship Fund and many others participated in the Tuck-WBENC Education Program this fall. In fact, the strong interest in our quality Tuck program allowed IBM to commit to support not only our traditional Tuck-WBENC Executive Program, but also introduce a NEW program in 2017, our first Advanced Tuck Program that will focus on business growth and will allow for participation of WBE team members.

ENGAGEMENT is at an all-time high. In addition to our record-breaking events, we honored 62
America’s Top Corporations for Women’s Business Enterprises, the largest in the list’s 16-year history. We also have our largest group of WBEs from each RPO who are active in our Women’s Enterprise Forum. Our Board Members and committee activities strategically advanced our organization this year. Thank you to our Executive Committee, Board, and the many committee participants who bring their leadership to our network each day.

**IN 2017, WBENC IS EXCITED TO CELEBRATE OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY! WE HOPE YOU WILL PARTICIPATE IN ALL WE WILL OFFER NEXT YEAR AS WE PREPARE FOR OUR NEXT 20 YEARS. MARK YOUR CALENDARS:**

- **MARCH 21 TO 23, 2017 – SUMMIT & SALUTE IN NEW ORLEANS** WBENC’s annual Summit & Salute is a two-day event providing vital access to the thought leaders, elevating senior-level networking opportunities, and providing business intelligence that enables sustainable growth for WBENC-Certified WBEs.

- **JUNE 20 TO 22, 2017 – NATIONAL CONFERENCE & BUSINESS FAIR IN LAS VEGAS** The WBENC National Conference & Business Fair is the largest conference for women business owners in the U.S. More than 4000 attendees are expected, including WBEs; senior executives and procurement representatives from Fortune 500 companies and the U.S. Government; and select partner organizations whose missions’ align with WBENC’s vision of expanding women’s business opportunities in the marketplace.

- **AUGUST 2017 – CORPORATE LEADERSHIP RETREAT** For the first time WBENC will be hosting an intimate event at Nemacolin Woodlands Resort. Stay tuned for details!

As we close out 2016 reflecting on our progress, WBENC and our 14 Regional Partner Organizations wish to thank you for entrusting all of us in making our network the best for developing and growing WBEs in the corporate and government marketplaces.

Sending prayers of peace and wishing you a very happy new year from the entire team at WBENC,

**PAMELA PRINCE-EASON**
**WBENC PRESIDENT AND CEO**

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Happy New Year from WBENC!
MENTORS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN WBENC’S STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

The SEP Mentors feature a pair of co-mentors (one Corporate Member and one WBE) who work together to guide a student entrepreneur. The mentoring relationship begins before NCBF, as mentors connect with students to learn about their businesses and goals at SEP. Often these mentors find themselves as committed to the business’ success as their student mentees. For many student entrepreneurs, the SEP Pitch Competition is a major focus.

“She probably felt like we drilled her,” says Bev Jennings, head of Global Supplier Diversity & Inclusion at Johnson & Johnson, of her student mentee, Ya-El Mandel-Portnoy. “We wanted to make sure that we were really hitting the mark on what was required so that she could be more competitive. I think one of her big lessons learned is that she had to make her jargon more audience friendly. We had to ask her to make it more understandable to the everyday person. We challenged a lot, questioned a lot.”

SEP pairs each student with their mentors, with the hope of matching mentors and students in the same industry such as healthcare. Mentors work together to provide a wide range of strengths, from far-reaching network connections to on-the-ground advice from women who know firsthand how difficult and how rewarding running their own business can be.

Leah Brown, President of A10 Clinical Solutions was Ya-El’s WBE mentor, devoting hours to refining her mentee’s presentation. When she realized they were hitting a rehearsal rut, she called three clients to serve as a fresh audience. “It was an ‘Aha!’ moment for both of us that they got it: The practice has paid off.”

Jennings and Brown were overjoyed when Ya-El placed first in the SEP Pitch Competition for her company, Cardea Sciences, which features a device to assess patients with atrial fibrillation.

“Being a mentor is an honor, to empower women to equip themselves with the training, mentorship, and support networks [they need].”

– LYNN BOCcio, VP STRATEGIC BUSINESS & DIVERSITY RELATIONS, AVIS BUDGET GROUP

Even when a student entrepreneur doesn’t place in the pitch competition, mentors can lay the networking groundwork for their mentee’s goals. For Lynn Boccio, Vice President of Strategic Business & Diversity Relations for Avis Budget Group, hands-on networking was key to her mentoring success.

“I had [my mentee] Justine Avoudikpon stay at my side all along the way [while at NCBF],” says Boccio. “I told her every morning what time we would meet, where we would meet. From that point on, we stayed on an organizational road to introduce her to everyone I possibly could.” When she couldn’t accompany her mentee, Boccio worked as a “ringleader” to make sure her WBE co-mentor or a member of her corporate team could share some quality time.

Being an effective mentor demands a significant time commitment and dedication to learning the details of a mentee’s business. It is a foundational relationship that can affect not only the mentee, but also the mentor.

Read about Ya-El’s first place finish on the WBENC Blog!
“Realize that it takes time—patience is really important in this,” Jennings said. She recalled the pitch competition as a rewarding experience. “Yes, I wanted [Ya-El] to win, but it was about so much more than that. Seeing the other SEP participants and hearing their presentations I was so impressed. I thought, ‘Look at our future leaders. Look at these women.’"

Brown advised a tough-love approach. “Be candid with your feedback, be patient, have the stamina to work with the student and practice with the student over and over again until she gets it right,” says Brown. “If you’re too nice, you’re not helping them. We’re a practicing board for the real world.”

Boccio stressed long-term commitment. “Being a mentor is an honor, to empower women to equip themselves with the training, mentorship, and support networks [they need],” she said. “It’s just like being a mentor with your daughter. You need to have a relationship with them. It’s not just something you do for the conference, it’s something you continue.”

Long after SEP concludes at NCBF, mentors still help mentees cultivate connections. Boccio seized the opportunity to bring Justine to the Billion Dollar Roundtable Summit in Atlanta, Georgia subsequent to NCBF. Justine not only attended the two-day summit with access to Fortune 500 companies and certified MBEs, but also made her pitch to the Billion Dollar Roundtable’s Board of Directors.

Jennings and Brown have kept in touch with their mentee, as well. Jennings connected Ya-El to experts within Johnson & Johnson who could help her outline next steps as she further develops her invention.

The three mentors were enthusiastic about continuing to support WBENC SEP at the upcoming NCBF from June 20 to 22, 2017 in Las Vegas.

“(SEP) was just a pleasure to participate in,” says Brown. “I’ve learned so much from that, and networking with the other mentors was so valuable. I love the spirit and the tenacity of young women entrepreneurs. It’s just a blessing to be around it and deepen my love for these amazing women.”

ARE YOU READY TO BE A SEP MENTOR?

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS TO SEE IF MENTORSHIP IS RIGHT FOR YOU.

1. Am I prepared to commit to mentoring? Your mentee will be a significant time commitment, throughout all the events at NCBF. Plan in advance how you’ll make time for your business and mentoring goals.

2. Do I have skills I’m eager to share as a teacher and coach? If you’re in the middle of a rough business transition, you may not feel energized for mentoring. You can request a discussion with a previous mentor to get a firsthand account of what’s involved.

3. Am I open to the challenges of guiding emerging entrepreneurs? WBENC SEP participants come from diverse backgrounds, with different levels of education. Your mentee may make mistakes. Are you excited to help her meet her potential?

READY TO BE A SEP MENTOR? VISIT WBENC SEP AND SIGN UP TO MENTOR THE #NEXTGEN OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS!

www.wbenc.org/student-entrepreneur-program
PRESENTING SPONSORS
March 21–23, 2017
REGISTER NOW AT SUMMIT.WBENC.ORG

SAVE THE DATES
March 21-23, 2017
REGISTER NOW AT SUMMIT.WBENC.ORG

PRESENTING SPONSORS
SUMMIT & SALUTE
CORPORATE PRESENTING
SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: ACCENTURE

AS WBENC CELEBRATES OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY, WE ARE TAKING THE TIME TO REFLECT ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS WHILE CONTINUING TO PUSH FORWARD TOWARD THE HORIZON. ONE OF OUR SUMMIT & SALUTE CORPORATE MEMBER PRESENTING SPONSORS, NEDRA L. DICKSON, GLOBAL SUPPLIER INCLUSION & SUSTAINABILITY LEAD AT ACCENTURE, SHARES HOW SHE HAS OBSERVED WBENC AND THE MARKETPLACE GROW OVER THE YEARS, AND WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER TO LEAD THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN BUSINESS LEADERS ACROSS THE NATION.

Q: As one of the early adopters of corporate diversity and inclusion, Accenture has been a longtime WBENC Corporate Member. As our numbers of Certified WBEs has swelled to more than 14,000, can you speak to the enduring value of an inclusive supply chain and the value of WBENC Certification?

A: A big issue for business is how to maximize revenues and profits. Once WBENC-Certified, the business is eligible to participate in procurement initiatives to meet federal, state, or local government and corporate America’s goals for diversity spending. While holding a diversity certificate does not guarantee sales, it is a valuable tool used to open doors to opportunities, increase visibility, and build relationships. A diversity certification implies a certain aura of legitimacy that is respected by procurement professionals.

Q: WBENC’s Summit & Salute has also grown exponentially in the last half decade because of sponsors like Accenture. What has it felt like to be part of a successful program like this one?

A: It has been absolutely phenomenal to watch the growth of WBENC’s Summit & Salute. Each year we look forward to seeing the new WBE Stars, and the intimate setting at Summit & Salute allows us to really have a chance to meet the WBEs and understand their business models.

Q: In an organization as large as Accenture, leadership can take many forms. How have you been an advocate for women leaders over the years? Has it changed as you’ve grown as a leader?

A: Accenture has grown to over 380,000+ employees globally. With that growth, we have seen women leaders within take Accenture to new heights. Under the leadership of Julie Sweet, Accenture knows that the success of our more than 145,000 women around the globe is key to Accenture’s success and we are committed to supporting our women’s professional goals and aspirations.

Q: Women business leaders still face challenges reaching the C-suite or gaining access to capital. How do you see WBENC and corporations like Accenture working together to continue to erode those barriers in coming years?

A: Accenture acknowledged earlier this year the gap in women leaders within Accenture. Senior leadership made it a priority to grow the number of women employees in the company to 40% globally by 2017, and ensure that, both men and women are compensated “fairly and equitably.”
As Accenture’s supplier inclusion, diversity, and development programs evolve, we recognize the value and mutual benefit that can be realized by encouraging and providing opportunities for our diverse suppliers to explore ways in which they can partner on business opportunities. This collaboration often expands product and service offerings, increases innovation, and creates a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Q: In your Diverse Supplier Development Program (DSDP), you help women-owned (as well as other minority-owned businesses) by pairing “protégé” diverse-owned companies with executive mentors for 12 to 18 months. Mentorship is a keystone of the program; so what advice would you give WBEs who are looking for quality growth avenues through mentorship?

A: Through mentorship, networking, and robust training content, previous participants shared that the learnings gained through the DSDP enabled them to refine existing processes and increase the engagement of their employees, resulting in an increase in productivity and sales.

Although participation in the DSDP does not guarantee additional contracting opportunities with Accenture, it does provide an executive mentor, access to other program participants who are high performing businesses, and quarterly training symposia focused on core business practices. As a participant WBEs are also provided an opportunity to tell us the training content/subjects that are most meaningful to their organizations.

Our goal is to provide WBE’s with relevant information when they need it, enabling them to apply it within their businesses to yield High Performance results. As long as WBE’s continue to be open to new ideas, growth avenues will continue to present themselves.

As WBENC celebrates our 20th anniversary, we are taking the time to reflect on our achievements while continuing to push forward toward the horizon. One of our Summit & Salute WBE Presenting Sponsors, Anjali “Ann” Ramakumar, CEO of AMPCUS, shares how she observed WBENC and the marketplace grow over the years, and what we can do together to continue to lead the development of women business leaders across the nation.

Q: As a leader in IT consulting, Ampcus has clients around the globe. How has WBENC Certification and the WBENC network brought value to your business?

A: Ampcus is proud to be a Certified WBENC supplier and we strongly believe in taking full advantage of the many opportunities to engage with fellow WBEs, Corporate Members, government entities, and other non-profits. By participating in capacity-building programs, networking events, and the numerous other sessions offered by WBENC, our business teams have gained insight into current and future opportunities, which have contributed greatly to our success in building long-lasting relationships and ultimately increasing business opportunities with new and existing clients.

Q: WBENC’s Summit & Salute has also grown exponentially in the last half decade because of
Ampcus has been honored to be part of WBENC, and we are grateful for our partnership with such a respected organization. We are always amazed at the accomplishments of those being recognized as America’s Top Corporations for WBEs. Our entire team is especially proud to recognize many of those corporations as our clients. As the CEO of Ampcus, I also understand that it takes a great deal of support from WBENC members like us to make this event a success each year. We like to contribute in every way possible and do our part.

Q: How do you see WBENC-Certified business owners working together to continue to erode barriers to growth in the coming years?

A: The greatest way that WBENC-Certified women business owners can work together to erode those barriers that still exist today is by becoming involved in all that WBENC and their local RPOs have to offer.

In addition to attending national events, WBENC and their RPOs have provided an amazing platform for this collaboration. The opportunity to build relationships at the grass-root level with local corporations and keep abreast of current market trends, business needs, and expectations are simply endless. Whether its participating as an attendee at local events, taking advantage of the many educational programs offered by the RPOs or serving on boards, advisory councils or committees, we strongly believe in taking advantage of the entire suite of WBENC offerings.

We must stand together and drive change by demonstrating that diversity inspires innovation and generates value.

“We must stand together and drive change by demonstrating that diversity inspires innovation and generates value.”

– ANJALI RAMAKUMARAN, CEO, AMPCUS

www.ampcus.com
2017 EVENTS OVERVIEW

OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR IS HERE

Next year will mark WBENC’s 20th anniversary, and our signature events are going to reflect the level of excellence our network has come to expect of us. This year will bring record attendance, so don’t waste another second—register for both events today. Use the hashtag #WBENCis20 to spread the word!

2017 SUMMIT & SALUTE

REGISTER TODAY AT SUMMIT.WBENC.ORG!

WHEN: MARCH 21 TO 23, 2017
WHERE: NEW ORLEANS, LA

WBENC’s annual Summit & Salute is a two-day event providing vital access to thought leaders, elevating senior-level networking opportunities, and providing business intelligence that enables sustainable growth for WBENC-Certified WBEs. The event is sponsored by Accenture, EY, Ampcus, and ASAP and will honor America’s Top Corporations for Women’s Business Enterprises, all of the past Women’s Business Enterprise Stars, and the Women of Distinction.

Programming focuses on the future of various industries, business networking, and development opportunities. The Salute follows the Summit and is a festive evening that highlights our 2016 America’s Top Corporations for Women Business Enterprises.

2017 NATIONAL CONFERENCE & BUSINESS FAIR

REGISTER TODAY AT CONF.WBENC.ORG!

WHEN: JUNE 20 TO 22, 2017
WITH A PRE-CONFERENCE ON JUNE 19
WHERE: LAS VEGAS, NV

The WBENC National Conference & Business Fair is the largest conference for women business owners in the U.S. More than 4000 attendees are expected, including Women’s Business Enterprises (WBEs); senior executives and procurement representatives from the Fortune 500 companies and the U.S. Government; and select partner organizations whose missions align with WBENC’s vision of expanding women’s business opportunities in the marketplace.

With a preconference day followed by three days of robust programming, the conference features lectures and presentations from today’s thought leaders, engaging panel discussions, 1:1 MatchMaker sessions with Corporate Members, networking receptions, and a dynamic all-day Business Fair.
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TUCK-WBENC EXECUTIVE PROGRAM CLASS OF 2016

LIKE TO THANK THE CORPORATIONS AND REGIONAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS THAT SPONSORED WBES TO ATTEND THE 2016 TUCK-WBENC EXECUTIVE PROGRAM! BY CONTRIBUTING A SPONSORSHIP, THESE ORGANIZATIONS ASSISTED WBES IN THE ADVANCEMENT AND GROWTH OF BUILDING BUSINESSES TO THE NEXT LEVEL. THIS EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IS A TERRIFIC VEHICLE FOR ACHIEVING COMMITMENT TO BUILDING CAPACITY FOR WBES!

AN INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE. A LIFE-CHANGING EVENT.

“I learned many, many lessons – some for business (‘Status quo is risky and every product has a life cycle.’) and some for life (‘Use your wings to fly.’). All were profound. The professors and the support staff were nothing short of being rock stars. And the comradery of the entrepreneurs developed over the week will be enduring. The generosity of IBM to support women-owned businesses will be remembered by all and the ripple will turn into a wave.”

— Crafton Pease Langley, Creative Director, The Crafton Group, Inc.

“Program provides an invaluable experience that helps give women the knowledge, strength, and support to help us go back and run our businesses, knowing we can and will be successful. The professors are top-notch, both in their knowledge, and also in their passion. They teach you how to view your business more strategically. They also help you self-reflect, which is hard to do at times; however by building relationships with other women entrepreneurs, you’re all in it together and lifelong friendships are developed. Thank you, WBENC, Tuck, and IBM for this amazing opportunity!”

— Marce H. Roth, President & CEO, Agilea Solutions, Inc.

WBENC IS PROUD TO HONOR THE GRADUATES OF THE 2016 TUCK-WBENC EXECUTIVE PROGRAM BROUGHT TO YOU BY IBM! WBENC WOULD
“The Tuck-WBENC Executive Program was an extraordinary experience! After five days of intense instruction by A-list professors and amazing interaction with over 50 successful business women, I returned to my company with more knowledge, more inspiration, and more energy than ever before! In addition to incredible one-on-one interaction with Len and Elia, I had a wonderful opportunity to meet briefly with Pam and Candace to discuss specific growth strategies for my business. The entire experience was a game changer for my company!”

— Claudia Abercrumbie, President & CEO, The Abercrumbie Group

“The world-class teachers and speakers at Tuck made a profound impact and left an imprint on my heart. Their approach was fresh and cutting-edge. I left Tuck with a full set of business tools and strategies on how to strengthen and grow my business. As a result, I am incorporating the practical solutions into next year’s business plan and will continue to refer back to what I learned while at Tuck. Thank you!”

— Jeana Goosmann, CEO & Managing Partner, Goosmann Law Firm, PLC

“Words cannot express my gratitude for the Tuck-WBENC Executive Program learning experience! It was a life-changing event for me. I was able to get away and focus in a safe environment on my company versus working in my company. With my 34 years experience in search and staffing I thought I knew every trick. The education and techniques that were shared were spot on! I used them immediately upon my return with great results. The entire Tuck team is impressive to say the least. I feel like I won the business lotto for sure! Thank you so much for caring so much about my success!”

— Kathy Dawson, CEO, Dawson & Dawson, Inc.
My mom really didn’t have the money to send me to camp, but she sent me anyway and it changed my life,” says La Londe. “When I worked for Apple right out of graduating from the University of Texas, I never felt threatened by code. It always just gave me that confidence and that extra edge.”

After initially working at large technology organizations, La Londe went on to found her own global technology consulting firm, iTalent Corporation, in 2005. “I kept formulating this idea in my head that if I started my own consulting firm and software development firm, we could actually provide better service,” says La Londe.

Within the first year, iTalent was already profitable with two major customers. One of these customers, Cisco, recently awarded iTalent Corporation with its 2016 Cisco Diversity Award honoring exceptional suppliers. iTalent was recognized after achieving WBE SUCCESS STORY

iTALENT CORPORATION WINS 2016 CISCO DIVERSITY AWARD

FOR RENEE LA LONDE, FOUNDER AND CEO OF iTALENT CORPORATION, HER FASCINATION WITH THE WORLD OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STARTED AT A YOUNG AGE. WHEN SHE WAS JUST 13 YEARS OLD, SHE CONVINCED HER MOTHER TO SEND HER TO COMPUTER CAMP.

“iTalent has set the bar for supplier diversity with their track record of providing high performance and great value, as well as sharing Cisco’s commitment to both supplier and workforce diversity.”

— ALEXANDRA LOPEZ, CISCO

“iTalent has set the bar for supplier diversity with their track record of providing high performance and great value, as well as sharing Cisco’s commitment to both supplier and workforce diversity.”

— ALEXANDRA LOPEZ, CISCO
the highest company customer satisfaction score among all of Cisco’s global suppliers.

“Commitment to diversity among our suppliers is a Cisco business imperative, and we firmly believe diversity is good for our business, helps drive innovation, and creates social and economic vitality,” says Alexandra Lopez, VP and CPO of Cisco’s Global Procurement Services. “iTalent has set the bar for supplier diversity with their track record of providing high performance and great value, as well as sharing Cisco’s commitment to both supplier and workforce diversity.”

Winning this highly competitive award didn’t happen overnight. iTalent’s work with Cisco started with smaller projects and slowly grew because of their consistent delivery on quality and customer service.

“We founded the company on going above and beyond for the customer, so we do not see any of our interactions with our customers as transactions. We approach our customers with the idea that we’ve been in [their] shoes, we’ve been those managers and those directors with those budgets and we know what it’s like,” says La Londe.

iTalent decided to become WBENC-Certified in 2015 after their corporate clients stressed the importance of certification in their supplier selection process. In addition, iTalent became dual-certified with the National Minority Supplier Diversity Council (NMSDC). They participate in WBENC events at both the national and local level with their RPO Astra. In June, iTalent was a Ruby sponsor of the 2015 National Conference & Business Fair and plans to attend national events in the future after a phenomenal conference experience.

La Londe feels like iTalent’s WBENC journey is just beginning. “We’ve been very excited about what we’ve seen so far and I don’t even think we’ve scratched the surface of everything we’re going to get out of WBENC. We’ve very excited about the connections we’ve made.”

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Moving forward, La Londe wants to focus on growing both iTalent and their impact on the community. This year iTalent created Girl's Leadership Academy Meetup (GLAM) to mentor young girls on the topic of technology and leadership in the community.

La Londe hopes to help these girls grow as leaders just as her attendance at computer camp helped her.

“What gets me up in the morning is not only delivering on quality, but being able to give back,” says La Londe. “We’ve finally found something we really feel like we can get behind and to us it was a big success because the girls had a lot of fun and all of them want to come back.”

– RENEE LA LONDE, iTALENT
Russo answered her own question when she founded Bow K in July 2013 with her cornerstone product, the Bow K® Ribbon Craft & Keepsake, which allows for repurposing and reusing bows, ribbons, and other decorations to make collectible mementos. With 48 holes in the Bow K® surface, it is an easy-to-use tool for designing crafty creations.

“Although most people think of weddings with our product, there really is no wrong way to Bow K,” says Russo. “It can be used for any celebration or season. In addition to creating rehearsal bouquets, crafters can Bow K centerpieces, tree toppers, edible displays, and more. Fresh flowers are easily incorporated as are floral picks, wired decorations, balloons, cake pops, and many other possibilities.”

As the holidays approach, Russo is fast to point out that Bow K can help consumers create memories, be more intentional with holiday wrapping, and also save money.

“If every American family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, we could tie a bow around the entire planet!” says Russo. “With your family, especially kids, make a game out of decorating your Bow K with elements from your gifts. As you get your decorations out each year, use your Bow K to remember—and reuse—your keepsake ribbons and bows from the year before.”

Russo loves the transition to entrepreneurship after a high-pressure career in the gaming, banking, and

**WOMEN OWNED BACKSTORY**

**UPCYCLE YOUR KEEPSAKES WITH BOW K**

When Deanna Russo found herself struggling with scissors and a paper plate to construct a makeshift bouquet for her best friend’s wedding rehearsal, she saw an opportunity that changed her life. The question was simply: Why wasn’t there a product on the market designed to allow anyone to create beautiful bouquet keepsakes?
medical device industries. Headquartered in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, she got involved with the Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE), a WBENC Regional Partner Organization, where she learned about certification. She became WBENC-Certified in November 2015.

“I attended the 2016 Summit & Salute in Phoenix, and I went to the Procurement Opportunity Connection Meet and Greet, which was amazing,” says Russo. “I gained valuable feedback regarding my product and how it would be received by each retailers’ unique set of customers.”

Russo remembers that one Corporate Member didn’t feel their customers were do-it-yourself savvy enough to understand the Bow K sold on its own. However, they did feel their customers would be interested in the Gift Box Set, which was still in the planning stage at that time. Now that the Gift Set is prototyped, Russo is excited to circle back with this retailer to continue their conversation.

Russo also knows that doing your homework pays off at WBENC events. After a critical conversation with the Walmart representative at Summit & Salute, he suggested she apply for the Walmart U.S. Manufacturing Summit, which Russo had already done. Hearing that, the Walmart representative was immediately impressed—and during her flight home, Russo noted that her application was “suddenly” approved. As a result, Bow K was invited to onboard for Walmart.com.

In addition to developing relationships with Corporate Members, Russo is proud to be part of the WBE community around the WBENC network. “Take advantage of the network and find situations where you can support each other,” says Russo. “When I speak to audiences, I talk about Bow K being a Women Owned product, and how that helps open doors.”

Russo recently got involved in the Entrepreneurship For All program in Massachusetts, winning a pitch competition last month during which she articulated her differentiation as a WBENC-Certified business.

“I believe in building a tribe of believers in your brand,” says Russo. “My board of advisors was formed as a direct result of a CWE class with Sandra McNamara. It now includes Steve Graham from Toner Plastics, Inc. whose team has been invaluable in helping to further the Bow K product line. You never know how the WBENC network will work for you. They are there to help us.”

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bowk.com

1 Russo with her winning pitch competition prize and her display of Bow K tools and the Bow K Gift Set Box.
2 The holiday Bow K® Ribbon & Keepsake tool
3 Deanna Russo, Bow K Owner
#BuyWomenOwned

Proudly supporting those who support Women Owned businesses

Bringing consumer recognition to products supplied by Women Owned companies

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BY THE NUMBERS: WBENCLink 2.0

Since launching on September 20, WBENClinK 2.0 has brought the entire rigorous certification process online while increasing efficiency, integrating innovation, and ensuring security for new and recertifying women’s business enterprises.

Here are some statistics collected from September 20 to November 15, 2016.

User Logins

- 45,858

Page Views

- 1,974,769

Applications Started

- 2,408

Applications Submitted

- 1,503

Fastest Start-to-Submit Time

- 8 mins

Searches

- 51,099

Application Document Format

- 100% Electronic
- 0% Paper

Sign on at wbenc.wbenclink.org
WBENC has created the Legacy Bracelet as a statement of your participation and ongoing support of our organization.

Each beautiful hand-crafted sterling silver bead represents different aspects of WBENC that have made it the progressive and respected organization that it is today.

Whether you are new to certification, membership or supplier diversity and women’s entrepreneurship, you can build your own beautiful piece of jewelry that will tell the story of how you’re engaged with WBENC.

Isn’t it time to start your Legacy®?

Order Your WBENC Legacy® Online
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1-800-704-0546
Each year WBENC Corporate Member EY selects a group of high-potential women entrepreneurs for EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women™ program. EY identifies women entrepreneurs seeking to scale their businesses and provides them with the resources they need to grow through an elite business network and customized year-round education program. The Class of 2016 includes four WBENC-Certified WBEs in various industries from across the country.

These winning entrepreneurs are immersed in a community of ambitious women business leaders with common objectives and challenges. The customized leadership program works to expand their knowledge of growth strategies, increase company visibility, strengthen their executive leadership skills, provide access to guidance, and identify potential partners and capital sources.

“WBENC is an incredible supporter of the Entrepreneurial Winning Women program,” says Lisa Schiffman, Director, Brand, Marketing and Communications, Americas Growth Markets at EY and program founder, EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women. “Many of the Winning Women, including four from this year’s class, are WBENC-Certified WBEs. We see the positive impact this certification has on their companies and are proud to work hand-in-hand with WBENC to propel women-owned businesses further.”

KRISTI ALFORD, President & CEO of E2 Optics, LLC, an IT solutions provider specializing in data centers, structured cabling, audio visual, video, electronic physical security, wireless, and DAS solutions.

DR. DONNA L. MILAVETZ, CEO of OnSite Care, Inc., which helps employers manage workplace health costs through a unique model of personalized, affordable medical care and wellness programming.

MERRILEE ALEXANDER KICK, President & CEO of Southern Champion/BuzzBallz LLC, an alcohol manufacturer focused on premade cocktails called BuzzBallz, wine, and spirits.

RITA GUREVICH, President & Founder of SPHERE Technology Solutions, which offers specialized cyber security services and software for data governance, security, and compliance programs.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE EY ENTREPRENEURIAL WINNING WOMEN!

“Through the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women program I now have access to top US business advisors, financial institutions, and capital investors. The program allows me to access informal, one-on-one guidance and support from EY. These resources and tools allow me to expand my knowledge of leading business strategies and practices.”

– KRISTI ALFORD, PRESIDENT & CEO OF E2 OPTICS, LLC

“The EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women program has been transformative for both me personally and for OnSite Care. It has given me skills through their education platform, access to great mentors, and has challenged me to think bigger about my company’s growth.”

– DR. DONA L. MILAVETZ, CEO OF ONSITE CARE, INC.

“I didn’t fully understand what it meant to be a Winning Woman, but after getting involved [in the program], it really dawned on me what an important win this was. The forums/seminars, networking, and other entrepreneurs—it was like a pot of gold.”

– MERRILEE ALEXANDER KICK, PRESIDENT & CEO OF SOUTHERN CHAMPION/BUZZBALLZ LLC

“The choice to apply was incredibly simple and well worth the time it took to complete the very detailed application and interviews. I knew the competition would be tough and the selection process was very thorough, but after learning that I was chosen, being among the group of women who represent the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women was very humbling.”

– RITA GUREVICH, PRESIDENT & FOUNDER OF SPHERE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS
OPPORTUNITIES OPEN DOORS

WOMEN SUCCEED IN BUSINESS THROUGH THEIR AMBITION, MOTIVATION, AND COMMITMENT TO CONTINUING EDUCATION AND INNOVATION. AT WBENC, WE STAY ON THE LOOKOUT FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO EXPAND THEIR PROFESSIONAL REACH. WHETHER IT’S THROUGH EDUCATION, NETWORKING, OR AWARDS, WE HOPE ONE OF THE UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES CAN PROVIDE THE NEXT STEPPING STONE FOR YOUR BUSINESS’ SUCCESS.

SANDIA NATIONAL LABORATORIES
OPEN HOUSE HOURS

SANDIA NATIONAL LABORATORIES,
ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Sandia is pleased to announce Open House hours in Sandia’s Supplier Lobby that will allow suppliers to network with Sandia’s Supplier Diversity Team. Please review Working with Sandia website to ensure you understand how Sandia buys from suppliers and to determine if it is the correct market for your business.

OPEN HOUSE HOURS WILL OCCUR OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS:

First Tuesday of the following months from 9:00 am to 11:00 am
- November 8
- December 6

Second Wednesday of the following months from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
- November 9
- December 14
- January 11

Third Thursday of the following months from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- October 20
- November 17
- December 15
- February 7
- March 7
- February 8
- March 8
- January 19
- February 16
- March 16

PLEASE NOTE: All individuals must be a U.S. Citizen to enter Sandia’s Supplier Lobby.

TO INQUIRE ABOUT A TIME TO VISIT, PLEASE EMAIL SUPPLIER@SANDIA.GOV OR CALL 1-800-765-1678.

DIVERSITY ALLIANCE FOR SCIENCE – WEST COAST CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 22–23, 2017 | LAGUNA BEACH, CA

Diversity Alliance for Science, Inc. is committed to identifying and developing certified diverse suppliers, and fostering relationships between those suppliers and the corporate, academic, and governmental entities who work in health care, research, and development to help increase spending.

This conference provides a platform to identify, attract, and develop small and diverse businesses to drive inclusive procurement practices in corporate, academic, and governmental entities within the life science and healthcare industries.

REGISTER HERE.

WBENC 2017 SUMMIT & SALUTE

MARCH 21–23, 2017 | NEW ORLEANS, LA

WBENC’s annual Summit & Salute is a two-day event providing vital access to thought leaders, elevating senior-level networking opportunities, and providing business intelligence that enables sustainable growth for WBENC-Certified WBEs. The event is sponsored by Accenture, EY, Ampcus, and ASAP and will honor America’s Top Corporations for Women’s Business Enterprises as well as all the past Women’s Business Enterprise Stars and the Women of Distinction.

REGISTER TODAY HERE.
JOIN, READ, DISCUSS: THE WBENC BOOK CLUB

WE KNOW THAT HAVING YOUR OWN BUSINESS IS CHALLENGING. YOU’RE EXPECTED TO HAVE ALL OF THE ANSWERS, ATTEND TO EVERY ISSUE WITHIN YOUR COMPANY, AND SOMEHOW STILL HAVE TIME FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. ONE THING WE OFTEN LET FALL TO THE WAYSIDE IS OUR OWN PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT. THAT’S WHY WE’VE DECIDED TO LAUNCH THE WBENC BOOK CLUB.

Our book club has a unique approach. All of the books selected will be focused on professional and business development. This will help you develop as a leader while discussing relevant issues with other strong women in the WBENC network. Both your business and the WBENC community will be strengthened as we learn together.

JOIN: Register for our book club here.

READ: Each book selected will be focused on professional and business development, and will cover a wide range of authors and topics. Our first book was Presence by Amy Cuddy. In her book, Cuddy explains how we can tweak our body language, behavior, and mindset to perform in the workplace as our boldest and most powerful selves.

DISCUSS: Each book club discussion will be moderated by a member of the WBENC staff. The topics and questions will be shared on the WBENC Blog the week before the group discussion. We had a lively and thought-provoking discussion on December 9, when we discussed Presence. Read our digest.

THE NEXT WBENC BOOK CLUB SELECTION IS THE ADVANTAGE: WHY ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH TRUMPS EVERYTHING ELSE IN BUSINESS BY PATRICK LENCIONI. JOIN US FEBRUARY 10 AT 1 P.M. EST FOR OUR LIVE WEBINAR DISCUSSION.
Morning, Noon, and Night. As we move through the day, we have many opportunities to support the WBENC network. How do you ACT Intentionally?

#ACTIntentionally

EVERY DECISION. EVERY DAY.

A WBENC campaign. | www.wbenc.org
WBENC BLOG ROUND-UP

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ARE READING THE WBENC BLOG! ARE YOU? STAY UP-TO-DATE ON CERTIFICATION, OPPORTUNITIES, RESOURCES, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH WBES SHARING THE TOOLS AND TIPS FOR LEVERAGING THE WBENC NETWORK AROUND THE WORLD.

CERTIFICATION

Never underestimate the power of access to business opportunities through WBENC Certification!
• Unprecedented Value of Done Deals™ Completed with WBEs

Our column Focus on the Forum features voices from long-standing WBENC-Certified leaders on the Women’s Enterprise Forum:
• Alison Gutterman – 3 Insider Tips for Successful Family Business

OPPORTUNITY

Be the first to know when Corporate Members post opportunities for Certified WBEs!
• Sandia National Laboratories Open House Hours

Spread the word about WBENC and our partner programs!
• Apply to the WBENC Student Entrepreneur Program

Expand your knowledge of Corporate Member benefits and special events.
• Multi-Tier or Second Tier Programs – Expanding the Power of the Purse
• Women in Toys Empowerment Day 2016

RESOURCES

Sluggish start to the week? Enjoy Monday Motivation blog posts!
• Purpose
• Finding Your Why
• The Power of Appreciation

Embracing Change Means Embracing Millennial Culture
• “How I Built This” Podcast Review

Women Owned Wednesday gives you a chance to checkout great products produced by fellow Certified WBEs. Here are just a few:
• Van’s Kitchen
• Lynnvision, Inc
• Java Mountain
• Have A Healthy Holiday Season
• Garrigans

ENGAGEMENT

The WBENC Student Entrepreneur Program is open for applications! Get to know the future WBENC-Certified business owners who pitched their business ideas in SEP’s “Where Are They Now?” series:
• Naomi Thomas
• Justine Avoudikpon

Get to know the WBENC staff:
• Nettie Teter
• Vaughn Farris
• Rian Edwards
Q: “As we look toward our 20th Anniversary year, what is your fondest memory from a WBENC event or activity?”

A: Our experience as WBE Co-Chair of the 2015 National Conference & Business Fair in Austin, TX, where we were honored to be among outstanding WBE Co-Chairs and Host Committee Members. It was a powerful way to showcase our brand and capabilities. We were thrilled that it led to two first-time pieces of business with WBENC Corporate Members.

Keeli Jernigan
CEO, Trans-Expedite, Inc.
trans-expedite.com

As the first and only WBE Founding WBENC Board Member almost 20 years ago, I have many wonderful memories. The first board of directors meeting in Dallas was a special event. It was very exciting for me to see the WBENC dream come true. Being the first Chair of the Leadership Forum and serving on the board of directors for 10 years was an honor and very memorable. Receiving the WBENC Applause Award in 2001, the Star Award from WBCS in 2006, and the WBENC 2016 Women of Distinction Award were certainly all highlights for me, but the most memorable and exciting thing is to see where WBENC is today! To see what the WBENC Family Staff, Corporations, and Women Business Owners have accomplished in these 20 years is simply amazing!

Billie Bryant Schultz
CEO, CESCO, Inc.
cesco-inc.net

My fondest memory of a WBENC event was the Summit & Salute in 2015. I had the distinct privilege to be honored as the Women’s Business Council Southwest’s WBE Star that year. Both WBENC and WBCS made the entire year so special leading into receiving the actual award. Of course, the evening went by way too fast but it’s one I will never forget. WBENC definitely rolled out the red carpet for me and fellow WBE Stars. To be surrounded by amazing fellow women business owners, and all those that support us to be our very best is something I will treasure in my heart forever. I was able to share that night with my parents, brother, and husband and every time I think about it, it brings a smile to my face. Thanks WBENC for creating lasting memories.

Rachel Sanchez
CEO, Prestige Maintenance USA
prestigeusa.net

My best memory is the 10th Anniversary Women’s Business Enterprise Star Awards in Dallas. I was a WBE Star and WBENC made me feel like one. The PR I got from it was tremendous. The event itself was flawless. My parents visited from Malaysia and were spellbound by just the ambience of the event. Love WBENC.

Kanchana Raman
CEO, Avion Systems
avion-systems.com

WBENC has meant so much to me over the last 17 years, it’s hard to pick just one experience. My most humbling memory is being selected to the Women of Distinction. Collaborating with this fabulous group to give back to WBENC and its members by empowering women to be better leaders and catalysts for their businesses is an unbelievable honor.

Tara Abraham
Chairman, Accel, Inc
accel-inc.com

YOUR ADVICE
At one Summit & Salute the morning keynote speaker came down with laryngitis during breakfast, and I was asked if I would “pinch hit.” Without prepared remarks I spoke about “being ready when opportunity knocks.” I shared several personal stories including hanging up the phone on an Abu Dhabi Sheika who was inviting me to speak at a Women in Leadership Conference in the Middle East…which I did attend and yes, I did apologize! I also shared how WBENC, CWE, and the Forum have inspired me to grow and I have seen a tenfold return on my investment. To this day, I don’t remember all that I actually said, but people still come up to me talking about that speech. Will you be ready when opportunity knocks? THANK YOU WBENC and Happy 20th Anniversary as Banneker celebrates 25!

Cheryl Snead
CEO, Banneker Industries, Inc.
banneker.com

Congratulations WBENC in celebrating your 20th Anniversary! In 2002, ASAP was certified as a WBE from GWBC. Over the past 14 years, WBENC has had an incredible part in our growth as an organization; but, most of all, my personal growth. I got involved with the Women’s Enterprise Forum in 2003. I eventually became the Chair of the Forum where I had the pleasure of working with many wonderful ladies, members of the Board of Directors, the Executive Leadership, and the professionals at WBENC. It has been a wonderful experience and I am truly blessed to have been part of WBENC’s past and most of all, its future. My advice to WBEs across the US is to get involved with the organization and build your own personal brand. Position all WBEs in your mentorship, your procurement needs, and always try to establish partnerships that benefit all. You as a WBE can either stand on the sidelines and be someone who just watches; or, you can be in the game and WIN! Also, don’t forget to always pay it forward. Someone believed in you to help you achieve your dream – we all need to believe in each other! Again, congratulations WBENC and looking forward to the next 20 years!

Nancy Williams
Principal, ASAP Solutions Group, LLC
asapsolutionsgroup.com

As a newly certified WBE, I remember vividly that lost, fish-out-of-water feeling; and I recall just as vividly that one WBE who saw me struggling- the kind lady who reached out to me. I could have easily given up, never returned. She made the difference. My advice: reach out to your sisters. Walk the walk, we all need help. Partner, mentor, refer, listen, share, advise, volunteer. Together.

Joan LaGrasse
CEO, Imagen, LLC
imagenanything.com

Serving as Chair of the Forum in 2014 and 2015 was an incredibly rewarding experience that provided access to top influencers and executives at Fortune 500 companies. The connections I made and the leadership skills gained have helped propel the mission of Arbill and WBENC forward. I am so fortunate to be a part of such an amazing community of leaders!

Julie Copeland
Owner, Arbill
arbill.com

Upon reflection, receiving the 2006 WBENC Star Award and the 2007 Leadership Award inspired my dedication to support women in pursuit of their entrepreneurial spirit, and my commitment of time and financial resources to contribute to the success of WBENC in the future. Participation in committees, conferences, and events has been motivating and rewarding! Thank you Geri Swift and WBENC.

Maureen A. O’Connor
CEO, LEM Products Inc. Partners, LLC
lemproductsincom.com

Upcoming Question:
“What are your biggest business goals for 2017?”

Send your answer to wbenc-news@wbenc.org. Your response could appear on these pages. Please limit your answer to 60 words.
ESSENTIALS - WBENC COLLECTION

Make a statement with the premier line of WBENC signature products. Engage our community and share the WBENC brand when you travel. See the WBENC Collection during the National Conference & Business Fair to select items that fit your personal style. You can also view and purchase additional products today online at shopwbenc.com.