

Business passion: The workshop at Macy's

Written by

Friday, 28 October 2011 12:31

After a highly successful inaugural edition this past Spring, Macy's innovative business of fashion program - *The Workshop at Macy's*, returns to mentor and foster growth for a new class of up-and-coming minority and women-owned businesses. The retail 101 crash course, aims to take promising enterprises to the next level in order for them to achieve and sustain positive and successful vendor relationships. This industry first initiative reinforces Macy's long-standing commitment to vendor diversity and to providing customers with unique goods and services that meet their lifestyle.

The Workshop at Macy's is a four and a half-day intensive training course developed by a consortium of experts from Macy's Learning & Development, Macy's Multicultural Merchandising and Vendor Development, Babson College, the nation's leading business school for entrepreneurship, and with select Macy's merchants/vendors. The specially designed business development curriculum is aimed at minority and women-owned retail businesses that are poised to succeed on a larger scale, but need real-world business practice information and perspective on large-scale vendor relationships, to move to the next level and sustain growth. A potential goal of this annual program is to help create a pipeline of viable enterprises that will grow to become successful partners within Macy's own vendor community. First held this past Spring, the inaugural Workshop included 22 businesses that ranged from makeup/skincare companies to confectionaries, home textiles and ready-to-wear designers.

Said Shawn Outler, Macy's group Vice-President of Multicultural Merchandising and Vendor Development, "The support and information made available to Workshop participants is invaluable in taking these businesses to the next phase of growth."

The Workshop at Macy's allows selected participants to collaborate with fellow aspiring vendors, gain access to industry experts and solicit one-on-one business coaching.

The course work includes classes on merchandising and assortment planning, marketing, EDI, financial management, and access to capital.

Of the first Workshop class, Outler noted, "The entire week served as a revelation for participants, who had many breakthrough moments. The financial management sessions led by Elizabeth Thornton of Babson College, were especially eye-opening.

Every element of the Workshop at Macy's was designed to enhance and create long-term success for their businesses."

Michelle Tunno Buelow, Founder and CEO of Bello Tunno, a previous participant noted, "The Workshop at Macy's challenged us to examine our business on an elevated level. It encouraged us to realistically look at our current infrastructure and strategy, dream bigger, then bridge the gap. We left the week armed with a toolbox for success, a plan for growth and the support of Macy's."

"The opportunity changed my perspective and gave my business the retail insider information it needed to succeed even my own limits," said Kim Roxie, Founder and CEO of LAMIK Beauty.

Macy's is now accepting entries for consideration. Eligible applications will include a 250-word

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biographical statement, look book/line sheets or images of product including costs, resumes on all owners, financial statements for the business for 2 years, fall within the minority and women-owned definition of the program and provide verification of the business as a legal entity (i.e. Corporation, LLC, etc.), among other requirements. Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by Sunday, January 22, 2012 by 11:59pm ET. All information including full program requirements are available online at www.macysinc.com/workshop . All eligible applications will be reviewed and select applicants will be asked to attend an in-person interview. The program will aim to invite at minimum 20 businesses to attend the course which begins in early May of 2012.

For more information on The Workshop at Macy's, please visit www.macysinc.com/workshop .