Practical Case studies from some of the UK’s leading Companies
London is experiencing unprecedented levels of growth in business activity and wealth. At the same time it has the highest levels of deprivation in the UK with 30% of the working age population not in employment or economically active. These issues disproportionately affect the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, creating a situation that threatens social cohesion and long term sustainability for London’s economy. Yet these same communities comprise a rich mix of talent and entrepreneurial capacity that can be encouraged to flourish to everyone’s benefit.

Business in the Community (BITC) seeks to inspire, engage, support and challenge its members to continually improve the impact they have on society. In London our priorities include helping to raise the aspiration and achievement of young people, improve access to employment and support local community organisations and enterprise in areas of deprivation and regeneration. We believe that the greatest impact comes from companies addressing the way they do business and our Race for Opportunity (RfO) campaign helps to focus specifically on the organisational benefits of breaking down the barriers, employing a more diverse workforce and doing more business with ethnic minority communities.

We are pleased to be working with the London Development Agency (LDA) on a supplier diversity programme to increase communication between businesses and to provide avenues to help minority-led Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) gain access to large organisations. This publication, Business Action on Supplier Diversity, contains case studies demonstrating supplier diversity in action. It outlines the variety of approaches used by large companies to understand their current supplier base and to introduce smaller, minority-led businesses into their supply chain.

These companies see the commercial sense of engaging with SME’s who can offer innovation, flexibility, responsiveness and quality customer service. Minority-led businesses can in turn play their part in making a difference to the communities in which they operate. We encourage both large and small businesses to take action through London Better Together - a free, web-based menu of action and support inviting all London businesses, regardless of size or sector, to commit to improving their impact on the environment, workplace, community and marketplace (www.londonbettertogether.org.uk). We hope this publication will inspire other organisations to take action and to examine how they do business and with whom.
Supplier diversity is an initiative that aims to support under-represented businesses to supply goods and services to public and private sector organisations.

The LDA defines a diverse supplier (under-represented business) as a company/trader which is at least 51% owned, controlled or operated by one or more individuals who are members of an ethnic minority group, are women, or are disabled.

This publication showcases eight organisations that are practically trying to inject change into their procurement processes to ultimately diversify their supplier base.

This publication is aimed at companies that want to learn about supplier diversity and why it is important for them. It is for organisations that may be starting to think about developing their supplier diversity policy and for those that want to find out what approaches are being taken by companies in a range of industry sectors.

For companies that want further information and are seeking help with the development and implementation of their supplier diversity policies we have included the details of a number of organisations that are able to help at the back of this publication.

Similarly organisations that can support and guide SMEs wanting to become ‘fit to supply’ have also been listed.
BITC’s Race for Opportunity (RfO) campaign is a growing network of private and public sector organisations working across the UK to promote the business case for race and diversity. RfO challenges organisations to underpin strategies with concrete actions, guaranteeing a positive impact on business performance.

Since its formation eleven years ago, RfO has tracked the development of race diversity on the business agenda, the development of appropriate HR practice and the impact of race on company profits. The agenda is set by business leaders who are committed to action on race.

The RfO benchmarking is a unique tool and programme of self-assessment, where participants carry out a desktop evaluation of the current position of their organisation against a range of criteria under each of the 5 key performance indicators:

- Leadership and Business Case
- People and Employees
- Customer, Clients and Services Users
- Community Involvement
- Supplier Diversity

Historically, of those companies that complete the RfO Benchmark, supplier diversity has been the weakest area of business activity. In the 2005 Benchmark results 35% of organisations were able to confirm that an ethnic minority business had been awarded a contract within the last 3 years.

However, the 2006 survey shows that progress is being made with 63% of members publishing guidance for all potential suppliers to help and encourage them to do business with them, up from 48% in 2005.

Organisations that are committed to diversity need to apply this support throughout their business processes and the case studies that follow highlight the benefits for both the large and small companies involved.
We know race is good for business, because we have the measurements to prove it. Our involvement in Race for Opportunity allows us to unite with other businesses who share this view. The benchmark is a powerful instrument to keep driving progress on race and it is valuable to us because it gives us external, impartial verification that our strategy is at the leading edge of diversity practice in the UK.

Mike Fairey, Chairman of Race for Opportunity and Deputy Group Chief Executive, Lloyds TSB
Organisations that strive to be truly responsible businesses must regularly re-evaluate aspects of their business processes. Increasingly for British companies this includes trying to ensure that their procurement teams consider the potential wider benefits of engaging with small, local and minority-led suppliers.

Supplier diversity is not a social programme provided by generous big businesses nor is it a tool to provide ‘handouts’ to SMEs. Supplier diversity makes good business sense to companies who recognise and want to access suppliers who can provide:

- Innovation
- Responsiveness
- Flexibility
- Quality Customer Service
- Specialist skills and Services
- Lower costs

In America supplier diversity is well established and legislatively driven, originating in the civil rights movement. In 2004 corporate members of the National Minority Supplier Development Council – one of the America’s leading business membership organisations – spent over $87.4 billion with minority led businesses.

In the UK the driver for big business is via the Corporate Responsibility agenda and the desire of firms to invest in local economies, support neighbourhood regeneration and ensure their supplier and customer profiles reflect those of the local community, all of which bring business benefits.

Supplier diversity initiatives aim to support minority-led businesses to supply goods and services to public and private sector organisations. But why do these businesses need support? There are a number of challenges for minority-led businesses (as for all SMEs) when tendering for private and public sector contracts:

- The procurement process can be quite complicated and lengthy which can deter small businesses with limited time and manpower
- Those who do attempt to tender can then be put off by pre-qualification questionnaires which require them to demonstrate several years of experience and audited accounts
- Small businesses are unable to tender for single sizeable contracts which are proportionally larger than a firm’s total sales
- It can be difficult for small businesses to even become aware of potential contracts which are not advertised widely
- Poor feedback on unsuccessful bids can also hinder small businesses from trying to tender for future contracts as they don’t know where they need to improve.
Research by Barclays¹ shows that the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) business start-ups has reached record levels and in 4 years has increased by 33%. Yet for all their growth LDA commissioned research² has shown that these businesses still face disproportionate barriers to the growth of their business in a number of key areas:

- **Securing contracts**
- **Accessing start-up and growth finance**
- **Accessing affordable business premises**
- **Quality business support and**
- **International trade opportunities**

The case studies on the following pages highlight some of the reasons and methods used by leading companies to try and help BAME businesses to secure contracts. Although supplier diversity in the UK is still in its infancy, many more large businesses are committed to action in this area and will benefit from the learning presented in these case studies.

The eight case studies reflect a broad range of approaches adopted by companies when trying to adapt their procurement policies and in their efforts to engage with minority-led suppliers.

The case studies feature businesses that have for example:

- Mentored SMEs
- Instilled supplier diversity principles into tender documents
- Facilitated access to procurement teams through events and workshops
- Provided supplier diversity briefings for existing and potential suppliers
- Enabled small suppliers to engage with their primary suppliers.

The case studies demonstrate the variety of methods used as well as the key challenges and learning acquired by each of the companies.

Importantly the case studies identify the impact made externally as well as internally and include examples of a minority-led business that have benefited.

¹ Black & Minority Ethnic Business Owners, A Market Research Perspective, May 2005
² LDA: Redefining London's BME-owned Business, March 2005
The proportion of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic-owned (BAME) SMEs attending Heathrow Meet the Buyers has risen to over 25% as a result of targeted local ethnic marketing and a series of Understanding Airport Procurement events.

Processes

The Heathrow Meet the Buyers event has been sponsored by BAA each year since 1997. The event gives SMEs around the airport the chance to sell their products and services direct to procurement professionals.

BAA considers that local suppliers offer two key benefits to Heathrow’s sustainable development:

- Local suppliers create prosperity and employment in the communities closest to the airport
- Local suppliers can offer a more environmentally sustainable option than more remote suppliers by, for example, reducing transport mileage

BAA wants to ensure that those local SMEs that do not have capacity to operate as first tier suppliers still have the chance to access the substantial opportunities that exist further down the supply chain.

Additionally, those that sign up for Heathrow Meet the Buyers event are offered free training to help them improve their organisational capacity and prepare for the event.

In the run up to the Heathrow Meet the Buyers event in November, a series of “Understanding Airport Procurement” events are held locally. These events explain to local companies:

- How BAA’s supply chain is structured
- The procurement standards that apply to major supply chains
- The key business opportunities presented by the airport
- Encourages attendees to sign up for the Heathrow Meet the Buyers event
- It also signposts delegates to local support agencies (Business Link, Heathrow City Partnership etc) that can help SMEs become “fit to supply”
Impact

- The proportion of BAME companies attending Heathrow Meet the Buyers has risen from 10% in 2002 to 26% in 2005
- The proportion of companies winning business has risen from 14% in 2002 to 25% in 2005
- In 2005, a total of 639 business people from 444 companies took part in the Heathrow Meet the Buyers programme (Understanding Airport Procurement, pre-event training, and the Heathrow Meet the Buyers event itself)
- Since measures to increase local participation in the event were implemented, the proportion of companies attending from the priority area has increased from 77% in 1999 to 92% in 2005. Additional measures have been put into place to ensure that businesses in the immediate vicinity of the airport benefit from the event and participation from this key area now averages 43%
- Since its inception, the event has generated an estimated £75 million in new contracts

A Supplier’s View

Dhariwal Food Distribution

Jasvineerjit Dhariwal attended the 2004 Heathrow Meet the Buyers, generating £1,000,000 worth of business from the event. Not only did Slough-based Dhariwal Foods benefit from this significant contract but Jasvineerjit found the event to be a great learning experience which has subsequently prompted him to take a part time university course in business management. The company is now going from strength to strength and they are looking forward to attending future events.
BT is committed to expanding opportunities for Minority Business Enterprise, (including Race, Disability and Gender), to participate in their procurement activities. Recognising there are positive benefits in introducing more competition either directly or through sub-contractors from previously untapped suppliers BT believes a healthy business is a diverse business.

Processes

BT is one of the world’s leading providers of communications solutions and services operating in 170 countries. In 1998 BT created a Supplier Diversity Programme which aimed to ensure equality of access for businesses owned by ethnic minority and under-represented groups to BT’s procurement opportunities, either as suppliers or sub-contractors.

Its business case is based on the need to attract the widest possible talent pool. The procurement imperative lies in searching for creative, leading edge solutions which will enable BT to serve its customers better and enter new markets. BT also anticipates that a more diverse supply base will help them achieve better value for money.

A recent supplier survey undertaken to quantify BT’s supply base identified the fact that 14% of respondents consider themselves to be Minority Business Enterprises.

The introduction of electronic tendering and a dedicated website has helped to simplify BT’s procurement processes. This has resulted in a more direct point of contact to individuals responsible for buying in specific areas. The programme has also contributed to the transparency of the procurement process through procurement seminars and business-to-business mentoring.

This has been facilitated through “Meet the Buyer events” this year with Minority Supplier Development UK (MSDUK), and will continue next year with a widening of scope to encompass ethnic and gender based opportunities.
Emerging Market Economics Ltd

Emerging Market Economics Ltd (eme) is a leading provider of economic advisory services worldwide and brings together skills in development economics, business strategy and corporate social responsibility to assist companies and governments with enhancing competitiveness, strengthening investment and creating wealth.

eme was engaged by BT to design a bespoke risk assessment tool (C.RAT) to monitor and assess the reputational risk of operating in 158 countries. The principle benefit eme has received from working with BT is the ability to finance the development, maintenance and marketing of the C.RAT. It would have been difficult for eme to independently develop this tool, which eme have successfully sold to other public and private sector clients.
The Capital One Group is a credit card issuer in both the UK and United States, with more than $112 billion in managed loans and 50 million world-wide customers, serviced by more than 21,000 employees. In 2005 Capital One’s Procurement team instigated its supplier diversity programme in a move to support, mentor and provide opportunities for qualified minority-led businesses.
Capital One places a great deal of emphasis on Corporate Responsibility, investing to ensure it has a positive impact on local communities and to develop a work force which is representative of the local area through a co-ordinated Diversity program. Capital One’s Procurement team took the step of joining MSDUK - Minority Supplier Development UK (then Supplier Development East Midlands) to help them develop and support their supplier diversity programme.

The programme objectives are to support and mentor minority business to help them be competitive and to provide visibility and access to minority business so they can be given the opportunity to compete for suitable contracts from Capital One.

Working in partnership with other like-minded firms through the auspices of MSDUK several workshops have been organised for minority businesses to provide an insight into how companies such as Capital One identify suppliers and tips on how business can help improve their chances of tendering successfully. These events have been attended by over 30 SME’s and also provide opportunities to meet and network with a range of buyers.

Next steps are to identify the ethnicity of Capital One’s current suppliers and to focus on influencing its main supplier’s to help create the right opportunities for minority businesses to compete for contracts.

In addition to its focus on supplier diversity, Capital One’s Procurement team have also been piloting a mentoring programme for local voluntary organisations.

They have partnered with Enable, an organisation who co-ordinate skills and learning provision in Nottingham to help them with their procurement needs. Whilst still in its early stages, this has been well received and is set to be offered more widely.

**Impact**

- A rewarding experience for Capital One staff involved in the events and acting as mentors
- Series of successful workshops with minority-led businesses which are set to continue and develop
- Development of improved standard contract and Service Level Agreement documentation to support Enable’s engagement with skills and learning providers
Enterprise Rent-A-Car (ERAC) is a $9.2bn rental car company with more than 6,900 locations worldwide and more than 850,000 vehicles in its fleet. ERAC wants to get the best value from suppliers and in its experience, companies with diverse ownership offer flexibility, competitive pricing and the ability to get them the products and services they need when they need them.

The supplier diversity policy for the company is set on a worldwide basis but is implemented on a regional basis. Within the UK and Ireland fewer levels of management means that procurement is generally undertaken by heads of departments which makes for closer working relationships with suppliers. ERAC has also implemented an intensive 2-day diversity training course for all employees which will help and support employees to understand the reasons behind the firm’s commitment to engage with diverse suppliers.

In terms of challenges, ERAC found that coming from the US it did require some cultural education. The company
CASE STUDY

Impact

- Contract awarded to **Canary Wharf and City**, a company specialising in technology recruitment.

- Contract awarded to **Portable Group**, a company that delivers courses that are designed in partnership with the client. ERAC’s partnership with the company is ongoing and has supported **Portable Group** in being seen more favourably with other potential clients.

- ERAC’s total number of diverse suppliers currently stands at more than 37%.

- The estimated value of contracts with diverse suppliers was US $6.3 billion dollars in 2006.

A Supplier’s View

**Canary Wharf & City**

Canary Wharf & City first met with Enterprise Rent-A-Car in the Spring of 2006. They attended an event where Daryl Scales, Enterprise Rent-A-Car’s Finance Director, presented an overview of the company’s operations in the UK & Ireland and the firm’s commitment to broadening the diversity of their supplier base. Canary Wharf & City were delighted to take the opportunity to pitch for business a couple of weeks later at the firm’s European headquarters.

Following their successful bid, Canary Wharf & City have gone on to help Enterprise successfully fill technology vacancies as well as provide bespoke services to help them with recruitment in other functional areas of the business.

A great way to establish those initial relationships is through MSDUK (Minority Supplier Development UK), which ERAC is a founding member and their Finance Director is the treasurer.

Via the Supplier Development East Midlands network (MSDUK) ERAC has met with several minority-owned businesses to familiarise themselves with the services on offer.

Two recent examples of ERAC’s commitment to broadening the diversity of its supplier base are the contracts awarded to two women and ethnic minority owned businesses.

operates from the view point that supplier diversity is ‘doing the right thing’ and a part of the giving back to the neighbourhoods where they do business - that needed a little explanation. Secondly, finding a database and building their own was and remains a challenging exercise as it largely remains an emerging issue in the UK. Lastly, implementation is always a challenge. Will it be successful or do we have the right approach for our business and so on.

To take a purely bottom line approach, at first, can sometimes only tell half a story as it is in the relationships that are established that business benefit is defined.
IBM’s commitment to diversity is a key business imperative in all aspects of its business, including its workforce, customer base and supply chain. As a global organisation IBM’s existence and business depends on the willingness of people from many different cultures and backgrounds to work and to buy from them.

**Processes**

Building and maintaining a community of diverse suppliers increases IBM’s opportunity to hear new ideas, apply different approaches, and gain access to additional solutions that respond to its customer needs.

Supplier Diversity is one of the key procurement measurement areas, and IBM maintains a focus on achievement within the programme by tracking progress monthly, and providing feedback to the Executive management team as part of the monthly management system.

As supplier diversity is still a relatively new concept in Europe, the initial challenge was to identify businesses that are able to supply. Typically, small suppliers lack the necessary skills and experience to compete against larger firms.

To overcome this, IBM worked with outreach organisations, sponsoring events and workshops as well as providing advice and assistance through mentor programmes to small businesses on topics such as:

- how to become an approved supplier
- how to bid for contracts with large organisations
- working and partnering with IBM

In addition, it was important that the internal buying teams understood the importance of supplier diversity in meeting the needs of its internal and external clients as well as opening up access to a wider market place. A number of workshops were set up to help buyers understand the issues faced by smaller suppliers when competing for work with larger organisations.
Impact

- In 2000 the IBM Supplier Diversity programme exceeded the $1 billion dollar mark in spend with diverse suppliers and in 2005 IBM had doubled this to $2 billion dollars of spend with diverse suppliers worldwide.

- The IBM spend with diverse businesses from within Europe, Middle East and Africa increased 100% year on year from 2003 to 2004 and a further 20% in 2005.

- Within the UK & Ireland IBM is currently working with 16 diverse suppliers. These include providers of complimentary workforce services, hardware maintenance services, software, and others.
Lehman Brothers serves the financial needs of corporations, governments, institutional clients, and high-net-worth individuals worldwide. A dynamic supply base is an integral part of Lehman Brothers commitment to diversity and the Firm is dedicated to the initiative as part of its efforts to engage with the most entrepreneurial and innovative businesses in the global marketplace. The European Supplier Diversity Initiative was formalised in early 2006.

**Processes**

Lehman Brothers believes that attracting and retaining the best suppliers from the widest pool of talent is a key driver for future business success. Its European Supplier Diversity Initiative seeks to achieve the following:

- **Raise awareness amongst its supplier base**
- **Broaden its supplier base**
- **Effectively identify diverse suppliers, both current and prospective**

Lehman Brothers recognised the need to establish the level of diversity among its existing supplier base and in June 2006 launched a series of Supplier Diversity Breakfast Briefings. At these sessions senior leaders speak about the Firm’s commitment to diversity in all aspects of the business, including the strategic procurement of goods and services. The sessions offer suppliers the opportunity to network with members of the team who are responsible for the procurement of goods and services across Europe.

The briefing sessions are organised by procurement area, allowing the supplier relationship managers within Lehman Brothers to also become involved.

Following each briefing session, a questionnaire is sent to suppliers covering topics such as ownership demographics, diversity policies, and general company information. The submissions enable the Firm to understand more about the diversity of its supplier base, as well as to better understand the diversity-related efforts of suppliers.

The questionnaire results are used to further develop the supplier diversity processes and procedures already in place throughout Lehman Brothers and to identify mentoring opportunities with suppliers.

These mentoring activities can include a review of current diversity policies, working to establish consortiums, or referrals to third-party organisations that are able to provide specific business guidance.
Impact

- The supplier questionnaire response rates demonstrated that nearly two-thirds of the suppliers in these procurement areas are SMEs.
- Additionally, suppliers self-identified as diverse on the basis of ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation, highlighting that the Firm already does business with many diverse-owned businesses.
- The results of the questionnaire also highlight areas for further opportunity, where the Firm’s supply base is not as diverse as in other areas. This allows Lehman Brothers to review internal processes to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers for small businesses.
- By engaging with supplier relationship managers in the business through the Breakfast Briefing Series, internal awareness was raised of the importance of supplier diversity and the benefits of working with SME and diverse businesses.

A Supplier’s Views

Goddard International Ltd

Dockland’s based Goddard International Ltd, headed by Gabriella Goddard, is an innovative provider of executive coaching and leadership development training. In 2005, Gabriella was asked to develop a monthly lunchtime leadership programme for Lehman Brothers’ European Women’s Network as part of their diversity initiative.

Not only was the programme a resounding success attracting between 80-100 women each month, Lehman Brothers went on to sponsor the launch event for Gabriella’s first book. Plus, having a reputable name like Lehman Brothers as a client opened new doors in other corporate organisations.
With more than 600 offices in 30 countries around the world Morgan Stanley pursues diversity in every aspect of its business and believes that a diverse vendor base not only strengthens competition and the potential for cost savings, but also provides a means for building the economic base of the communities in which it operates.

**Processes**

In the UK supplier diversity is jointly led by the firms Procurement and Diversity divisions. Morgan Stanley has recognised that in order for the firm to fully engage with small suppliers a certain amount of educational work must be undertake with its buyers. Buyers must understand that Morgan Stanley is trying to “broaden the pool” (of suppliers) not “rock the boat”.

The supplier diversity programme combines training for its buyers to understand the importance of engaging with diverse small suppliers as well as assessing who its current suppliers are both in business size and ethnic make-up.

The next step for Morgan Stanley is to look at how small suppliers can be certified to ensure that they meet basic criteria for tendering for contracts. All certified suppliers will then be collated in a database as a tool for its buyers. Morgan Stanley will also look to introduce a small business engagement model to better define how they work with small businesses.

Morgan Stanley feels it can potentially have greater impact by raising awareness and influencing supplier diversity through its supply chain. Supplier diversity has been championed by the Firm’s senior management as a leading priority but Morgan Stanley’s challenge is to further engage its primary suppliers and help them understand the business case for supplier diversity.

**Impact**

- Introduced supplier diversity awareness training for buyers within the procurement team
- Worked with its prime suppliers to encourage increased local community employment within its workforce
- Surveyed 150 of its main suppliers to identify their demographics including business size and ethnic make-up and to increase their awareness of Morgan Stanley commitment to supplier diversity
- 30% of suppliers surveyed self-classified as SME’s, ethnic minorities and women owned businesses. 10% of these stated they were ethnically owned businesses
Transport for London’s (TfL) Supplier Diversity Programme has achieved spend of ca. £80 million with diverse suppliers in 2005/06 and this has led to TfL’s recognition as a best practice model within the public and private sector.

Processes

The Supplier Diversity Programme is a cornerstone for TfL’s Group Procurement’s strategic direction. Typically, TfL contracts with large suppliers to build a complex infrastructure around the capital and wanted to find a way to include diverse suppliers in these supply chains. TfL is one of the first transport organisations to apply conditions in tenders and contracts to encourage diverse suppliers.

Four diversity standards were created to be included in the tender documents:

- An equality policy - outline of equality objectives and implementation
- A supplier diversity training plan - explaining the bidders’ proposal for optimising the participation of diverse suppliers, including details of how this will be encouraged and measured
- A diversity training plan - outline how employers and contractors will be trained in diversity issues
- A communications plan - Outlining how bidders will manage external relations, local employment and in particular communicating in different languages.

The East London Line Project (ELLP) is the flagship project to ‘make diversity happen’ where these standards were applied. TfL supported bidders by running workshops to help them prepare for the tendering process. The contract conditions also asked bidders to cascade the requirements to their sub-contractors and report implementation progress to TfL. Furthermore, the contract was given ‘teeth’ by including a termination provision which could lead to the removal of the contractor and sub-contractor if the diversity standards were not met.

Existing suppliers were also asked to provide details of their equality policy, diversity training plan, supplier diversity and communications plan. Assessment of the documents has resulted in joint action plans to improve existing suppliers’ performance in diversity.

To address the issue of engaging with diverse suppliers, TfL held three “Meet the Buyer” events in 2006. The first of these events was held in June and formed the basis for the larger scale event in October 2006. The June event provided an opportunity for suppliers to learn about
The most recent example of where the supplier diversity requirements were applied was the East London Line Main Works contract, ca. £360M, awarded to a consortium comprising of Balfour Beatty and Carillion.

Since the application of the diversity standards into the ELLP, the Group Procurement team has worked closely with TfL’s procurement professionals to incorporate these standards into more than a dozen new contracts of varying size and scale. This includes a ten year £1.4 billion Highways Maintenance and Management contract.

Supplier Diversity requirements have been applied to the ca. £220M Tube Carriage Manufacturing contract, for the East London Line—awarded to Bombardier.

TfL’s business and put forward their views on the barriers they have with large organisations. The October Meet the Buyer event included information seminars where suppliers could obtain knowledge on public sector procurement, TfL and the GLA family, and how to tender for TfL’s business.

Suppliers booked appointments with TfL’s buyers and the number of appointments increased by more than double demonstrating the value that the Meet the Buyer events present.
The case studies demonstrate a number of different approaches that companies have used to try and engage with minority-led SME’s. Some key learning’s that could be applied to other businesses thinking about supplier diversity within their organisation are:

1. Any company looking at diversifying its supplier base must first identify who its existing suppliers are (in terms of ethnicity of ownership, size, gender, disability etc.) and think about how it will monitor this information in future for new suppliers.

2. As well as a strong management commitment to supplier diversity, buyers within procurement teams need to understand why this is important for the firm and how they can go about making it happen across the business.

3. Senior level commitment to implementing supplier diversity should also be communicated to all existing and potential suppliers.

4. Meet the Buyer events can successfully support small business engagement with a company’s primary suppliers.

5. Mentoring small businesses can be a source of learning and development for both large and small businesses. This promotes innovation and enterprise.

6. Ensure procurement processes are as accessible as possible for SMEs with no unnecessary complications or barriers.

7. Communicate with SME’s on how to go about approaching a big business to supply goods or services, perhaps by providing information specifically for small suppliers on company websites.

8. Facilitate networking opportunities between company procurement teams and minority-led businesses through events and workshops.
### For Big Businesses

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<td>Business in the Community</td>
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Further information about BITC’s Supplier Diversity programme and a PDF copy of this publication can be found at www.bitc.org.uk