



U.S. Small Business Administration

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PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS
funding, training, and federal contracting opportunities

10 STEPS TO START YOUR BUSINESS

Small Business

RESOURCE GUIDE

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SUCCESS STORIES FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY



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Rozanne Garman
President, RHD Enterprises, Inc.



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PRESIDENT, RHD ENTERPRISES, INC.
Lacey, Washington

Rozanne Garman started RHD Enterprises, Inc., an 8(a) and HUBZone-certified, woman-owned design build firm, in 2005 out of her home, incorporating in 2008. By the age of 26, Rozanne designed pre-engineered buildings across the U.S. solely with the benefit of on-the-job training. The company specializes in a broad range of construction projects primarily in the federal, commercial, and industrial sectors. RHD has specialized divisions focusing on design, general construction, metal fabrication, and welding. Its projects range from small service projects of less than \$100,000 to complex projects valued at \$10 million. RHD currently operates throughout Washington, Oregon, California, Montana, Minnesota, and Arkansas and has 27 employees. The company received assistance and training from the Washington State Procurement Technical Assistance Center, SCORE, and the SBA's Women's Business Centers. This training helped RHD secure more than 30 projects with upwards of \$9 million in bonded work and \$10 million in hand with agencies, including the Veterans Administration, the General Services Administration, and the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration. RHD recently received a contract with NOAA that serves all states west of the Mississippi and all of the Pacific Islands. The company's revenue has increased to \$12.5 million.

- **Can you talk about the experience of becoming a small business owner?** It was terrifying. I honestly had no idea what I was doing. I didn't know what the steps were. I didn't even know how to get your 8(a) certification. I didn't even know how to get a bond. I had a small child and no steady income. I used the SBA's website, and I ended up just taking one thing at a time. One of the first things I did was put together a good team—Diana Drake from the SBA, an accountant, and a bonding insurance agent. That team was critical in the beginning.
- **What are the biggest challenges you face as a small business owner?** I started my company at the beginning of recession, and the biggest challenge was finding the work. I didn't have the past performance, so contracting officers wouldn't even look at us. Cash flow is always hard as a small business. Lately, one of the biggest challenges has been finding quality and experienced team members. When competing against large businesses, which have more resources than small businesses do, it is often hard to retain good talent and offer a package that attracts and keeps people.
- **What advice do you have for other small businesses?** Make sure you have good people around you who believe in your vision. My team of advisers is larger now than in the beginning, but they believed in me when other people didn't. You also need to be very clear about your vision and what you want to create. Sometimes that changes, and that's ok. Be clear about your "why." Sometimes when you have failures and everything is going wrong, reminding yourself of why you are doing it is the one thing that will pull you through—especially in hard times.
I also advise other entrepreneurs to take advantage of every learning opportunity you can. The SBA offers workshops that are free or low-cost. They are a great resource. And networking is so important. I am the most reluctant networker, but I make myself do it, and I'm always glad I did. Every single time something great comes out of it.
Another important lesson I've learned is, don't be afraid to hire people who are smarter than you, who have different gifts. They are a huge asset to your team. Hire experts, celebrate them, and take your ego out of it.
- **Have you continued to utilize your local SBA district office? If so, how?** I continue to work with my local SBA office. My questions have changed as I've grown. They always provide advice, and I still take advantage of classes.
- **What do you find are the satisfactions of small business ownership?** The absolute best benefit has been having the ability to give back to my community. We are actively involved in our community. My personal philosophy is that of those who have been given much, much is expected, so giving back to the community is an important part of our mission. It also has been very rewarding to be invited to speak at events, giving me a platform to talk about diversity, equity, and supporting women and minorities in business. Helping other women and minorities in business has become a passion project. Another reward is my team—we are more like family than like a business. We have an incredible group of people who like to think of ourselves as disruptors in the industry.