

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

THE COMMUNITY OF BUS



2016

Small Business Awards

AN ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO THE SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL



San Diego
Small Business
Development Center
San Diego & Imperial Regional Network

SBA

2016 Small Business Awards Winners

Financial Services Champion of the Year

**Elizabeth Schott, CEO
ACCION-San Diego**

Nominator: Center Team, North San Diego SBDC

Minority Small Business Champion of the Year

**Alexia Fernandez Spivey, Senior Small Business Project Manager
SANDAG - San Diego Association of Governments**

Nominator: Center Team, North San Diego SBDC

Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year

**Wayne D. Gross, Outreach Liaison
CA Department of General Services, Procurement Division**

Nominator: Center Team, North San Diego SBDC

Women In Business Champion of the Year

**Erica L. Beal, Supplier Diversity Program Manager
SDG&E - San Diego Gas & Electric Co.**

Nominator: Center Team, North San Diego SBDC

District Director's Special Appreciation Award

**Sunita V. Cooke, Ph.D., Superintendent/President
MiraCosta Community College District**

Sponsor: Jill Andrews, SBA Deputy District Director, San Diego

Director's Award for SBA Mission Support

**Jim Fitzsimmons, Volunteer Counselor
SCORE San Diego**

Sponsor: Jill Andrews, SBA Deputy District Director, San Diego

Anthony Vigil Advocacy Award

**Bill Minter, Volunteer Counselor
SCORE San Diego**

Sponsor: Sally Broff, Chapter President, SCORE San Diego

Director's Award for Innovation and Growth

**Benjamin Hemminger, President
Sarah Davis, Founder/Chief Creative Officer
Fashionphile LLC**

Sponsor: Rob Buckner, VP, Relationship Manager, JPMorgan Chase

Director's Award for their Commitment to Supporting and Working with Small Businesses

ViaSat Inc.

Nominator: Center Team, North San Diego SBDC

Director's Awards for Assisting SBA Launch a New Program - Winning Work

**Karen Linehan - San Diego School District
Robert Zaccarie - NavFac**

**Ivette Jorge - Customs and Border Patrol
Nominator:** SBA Winning Work Team

Family Owned Small Business of the Year

**Harley and Veronica Perry
Perry Plumbing, Heating & Air**

Nominator: Michelle Burkart, President, THINKbusiness

Minority-Owned Small Business of the Year

**Regina Talamantez, Principal Engineer, President/CEO
RT Engineering & Associates Inc.**

Nominator: Nermin Nergis, Ph.D., MBA, Principal, Greenpole Research Inc.

Veteran-Owned Small Business of the Year

**Gregg Torwick, President
Diamond Pacific Construction Inc.**

Nominator: Alex Galicia, President, DVBA San Diego & National Board VP, DVBA

Woman-Owned Small Business of the Year

**Gulsum Ozturk Rustemoglu, Founder/President
GEPPermit**

Nominator: Vivian Shimoyama, Regional Executive Director, Southern California Region Goldman Sachs - 10,000 Small Businesses

Small Business Exporter of the Year

**Gulshan "Gil" Dhawan, President
Applied Membranes Inc.**

Nominator: Victor Castillo, Director, San Diego Center for International Trade Development

Small Business Person of the Year

**Sam G. Mousavi, President/CEO
DigitalPro Inc.**

Nominator: Steve Doss, Senior VP, Regional Sales Manager, Wells Fargo Bank - SBA Lending

Presenting Sponsors



Platinum Sponsor



Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Reception Beverage Sponsor



Table Sponsors



Financial Services Champion of the Year**Elizabeth Schott, CEO ACCION - San Diego**

Elizabeth Schott leads ACCION San Diego, the largest non-profit Community Development Financial Institutions in Southern California. ACCION programs help clients build or improve credit and boost and increase self-sufficiency.

The program has grown between 15-30 percent each year, which includes San Diego, Imperial, San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Schott manages a portfolio of almost \$5 million in loans to more than 700 entrepreneurs.

Schott works collaboratively with various community, nonprofit and government groups to collectively bring awareness of the importance of small business in a local economy. She volunteers on various bank community advisory boards, participates on the San Diego Foundation Center for Civic Engagement Community Advisory Board, as well as the City/County Reinvestment Task Force serving as a voice for small business.

Schott strives to support small business in every aspect of her professional and personal life, by purchasing from small businesses whenever possible and connecting resources, providing training and access to capital for local entrepreneurs.

Minority Small Business Champion of the Year**Alexia Fernandez Spivey, Senior Small Business Project Manager
SANDAG - San Diego Association of Governments**

Alexia Spivey is recognized as one of the foremost supporters of small and disadvantaged businesses in the San Diego region. Spivey manages and implements the project's subcontracting plan, which ensures 11.3 percent or up to \$200 million of the project costs are awarded to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.

Spivey developed a comprehensive DBE outreach program to increase the awareness of certified DBEs, community stakeholders, noncertified minority, female and small business owners to the opportunities available through SANDAG contracts.

SANDAG and Spivey have been proactive in leading the Calmentor Program, along with Caltrans, into its sixth successful year. The program is designed to encourage and support small and disadvantaged businesses through voluntary "Mentor-Protégé" partnerships with midsize and larger firms.

Spivey efforts at SANDAG directly impacts expanding opportunities for women, minority-owned, and disadvantaged small-businesses. Her commitment to small business outreach and the leadership she brings both within SANDAG and the larger San Diego community is a valuable contribution to improving growth opportunities for women, minority-owned, and disadvantaged small-businesses.

Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year**Wayne D. Gross, Outreach Liaison
CA Department of General Services, Procurement Division**

Wayne Gross, as the outreach liaison for CA DGS, helps veteran businesses with the application process for the Small Business/Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise certification programs and provides them with the tools needed to successfully attain a state contract once they are certified.

Gross has participated in approximately 300 SB/DVBE events. Gross has been instrumental in the success of the Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center Annual Business Conference for the last five years. Gross created two training videos, "Doing Business with the State" and "Tips to Winning State Contracts."

Gross has taken the leadership role in securing other public agencies and private sector-owned utilities in accepting the State's DVBE Certification through DG's Reciprocity Program. Through Gross's ongoing commitment, the State has added approximately 15 new DVBE certification reciprocity partners.

In addition, his family donates to the Wounded Warrior Program, Operation Gratitude and adopts service members abroad with care packages during the length of their deployment.

Women In Business Champion of the Year**Erica L. Beal, Supplier Diversity Program Manager
SDG&E - San Diego Gas & Electric Co.**

Erica Beal is a program manager for Diverse Business Enterprise for SDG&E with more than 10 years of experience working in DBE, Supply Management and Energy Efficiency with Sempra Energy Utilities.

Beal is committed to providing women business owners with encouragement, assistance and information to work successfully with SDG&E. She is instrumental in helping many women-owned small businesses become suppliers of goods and services for SDG&E.

Her efforts have helped SDG&E increase its usage of goods and services provided by women-owned businesses to 12.3 percent or \$136.5 million.

Beal is president of the Family Readiness group for the Navy Special Warfare Team One Command, serves on the Board of the National Council of Minorities in Energy and the Board of the Sustainability for San Diego State University Extended Studies. She has also served as vice president of the SDG&E Diversity Council and was a team lead for the Sempra Energy Diversity Council.

District Director's Special Appreciation Award**Sunita V. Cooke, Superintendent/President
MiraCosta Community College District**

Dr. Sunita "Sunny" Cooke was selected as the winner of the Director's Appreciation Award for her outstanding support of the SBA and the North San Diego Small Business Development Center for which the SBA provides funding.

Cooke is a collaborative and innovative leader with a strong dedication to the promotion of community colleges and workforce development.

Cooke is an active member of the greater San Diego community. She is a board member of the Carlsbad and Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego Economic Development Corp., Biocom, and the San Diego Workforce Investment Board.

She is a strong, committed partner of the Small Business Administration and the North San Diego Small Business Development Center based at MiraCosta College in Carlsbad. Through her commitment and leadership the SBDC always has the resources it needs to serve small businesses in North and Central San Diego County.

Director's Award for SBA Mission Support**Jim Fitzsimmons, Volunteer Counselor
SCORE San Diego**

Jim Fitzsimmons is being recognized for his role as an advocate for veterans and his leadership and extraordinary assistance, which have been instrumental in the coordination and management of the SBA's Boots2Business Program. Boots2Business is a two day program teaching active duty and retiring military entrepreneur skills conducted on four military bases in San Diego County.

Fitzsimmons is a San Diego and Imperial County SCORE volunteer, counselor and mentor. Fitzsimmons' planning, execution, discipline, integrity and motivation were developed in early years in the U.S. Marine Corps, which included combat duty in Vietnam with Marine Reconnaissance. His tenacity, attention to detail, focus and entrepreneurial single-mindedness were further developed during 25-plus years as an attorney working with small business owners, as well as being a small business owner himself.

He is also an active member/participant of several other organizations including the American Red Cross, the Historical Foundation in Support of Marine Corps Museum at MCRD and more.

Anthony Vigil Advocacy Award**Bill Minter, Volunteer Counselor
SCORE San Diego**

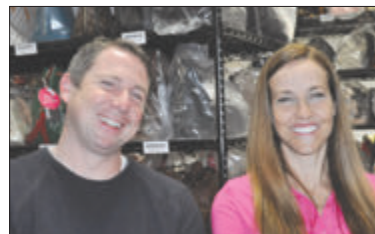
Bill Minter is a SCORE volunteer, counselor and mentor who has more than 30 years starting and running small to large corporations in San Diego. He is currently running a commercial real estate firm and volunteering with other charities.

Minter spent more than 600 hours in 2015 preparing for and meeting with clients to listen to their needs and give them the tools and support needed in their small business efforts.

As a SCORE counselor, Minter also mentors ACCION San Diego clients who are seeking to borrow money for start up or expansion of their business. Minter is fluent in Spanish, which allows him to communicate with ACCION's Hispanic clients in their native language.

He helps a wide variety of clients define their target market and plan how they will repay their loan.

This award was created to honor former SBA Deputy Director Tony Vigil and is given to those who help minorities succeed in business.

Director's Award for Innovation and Growth**Benjamin Hemminger, President
Sarah Davis, Founder/Chief Creative Officer
Fashionphile LLC**

Fashionphile, founded by Sarah Davis in 1999, is a leading and trusted source in the secondary market for luxury handbags. Davis started Fashionphile while attending law school and never looked back.

In 2006, Davis was joined by business partner Ben Hemminger, who evolved the brand by expanding the collection and presenting it to a

SBA**2016 Small Business Awards Winners**

larger market. Hemminger previously worked for The Staubach Co. and with Chevron Corp. in its real estate divisions.

Fashionphile received a SBA 504 loan for \$6.3 million, through JPMorgan Chase Bank and California Statewide CDC, in order to purchase a 30,000-square-foot headquarters facility. In addition, the company received a \$350,000 SBA line of credit through JPMorgan Chase Bank to assist with growing working capital needs.

Since 1999, Fashionphile has grown to more than \$30 million in revenue and employs 65 people. Fashionphile now exports its products all over the world and has become one of the world's leading pre-owned luxury handbag sellers.

Family-Owned Small Business of the Year**Harley and Veronica Perry
Perry Plumbing, Heating & Air**

Harley Perry, president, has more than 38 years of experience serving San Diego County's residential and commercial plumbing needs. He is highly respected by his peers as an honest, reliable, community-oriented businessman who treats his employees and his customers like family.

His wife, Veronica is the vice president and handles the administrative and financial side of the business. Their daughter, Anndrea Perry, oversees the office management and the dispatching for Perry Plumbing Heating & Air. Their son, John Perry, is a technician with a certification in HVAC repair and installation. Michelle Selitto-Perry maintains the daily schedules of every member of the team.

Harley is active in his community involvement in addition to growing his company. He has served on the Board of the Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors Association and is responsible for the PHCC Apprenticeship Training Program.

His philosophy at Perry Plumbing is "we will not do work that is not needed to be done."

Minority-Owned Small Business of the Year**Regina Talamantez, Principal Engineer, President & CEO
RT Engineering & Associates Inc.**

Regina Talamantez founded RT Engineering in 2011, after she lost her job as part of a layoff. The company is a Hispanic woman-owned civil engineering firm. Talamantez is a licensed civil engineer in California with more than 24 years of experience working in the industry. Her experience is diversified in design, construction and program management both in the public and private sectors.

Talamantez and her employees have attended several SCORE and Small Business Development Center seminars, covering a variety of topics. She feels the seminars are informative and well worth the time.

Talamantez is active within the community and is a strong believer in "paying it forward." She is an active member in the Hispanic Inland Empire Chamber of Commerce, the Mexican American Business Professional Association – San Diego and makes STEM presentations to Southern California high school and community college students, sharing her story and encouraging students to stay in school and get an education.

Veteran-Owned Small Business of the Year**Gregg Torwick, President
Diamond Pacific Construction Inc.**

Gregg Torwick, president of Diamond Pacific Inc. started his business six years ago with six people. Diamond Pacific now has five crews and 30 employees. The company anticipates nearly doubling its revenue and profit for 2016.

Diamond Pacific received an SBA guaranteed loan for \$200,000, through Pacific Commerce Bank in January 2015, which allowed them to expand into a 12,000-square-foot office and yard, and work out of two locations. They also received a \$50,000 SBA guaranteed line of credit, through Pacific Commerce Bank.

Torwick contributes monetary and human resources to a number of veteran's organizations in the San Diego area and focuses primarily on helping veteran entrepreneurs find the mentorship and guidance they need to succeed. He has been an involved member and served in key positions for the Elite SDVOB Network, and the Disabled Veterans Business Alliance, San Diego Chapter. He also served a three-year term on the City of San Diego's Equal Opportunity Commission.

Woman-Owned Small Business of the Year**Gulsum Ozturk Rustemoglu, Founder & President
GEPermit**

Gulsum Rustemoglu started GEPermit, an environmental consulting business, as a home-based business in 2009. Gulsum has 15 years of project management, planning and permitting experience specializing in the development of federal and state environmental compliance documents for numerous projects.

Gulsum came to the U.S. as an international student in 1998. After working for large corporate firms, she started and grew GEPermit to where it is today. After impressive growth percentages from 2012, sales doubled from 2015. In addition to fantastic revenue growth, Gulsum was able to increase the company's number of employees by 500 percent, within the past six years.

Gulsum received SCORE counseling in finance in 2010 that was instrumental in helping her reach her goals. She is passionate about entrepreneurship and mentorship, and a current aspiring speaker member of the National Speakers Association.

Gulsum has been involved in a variety of volunteer leadership and board positions. She is the current program director for the National Association of Women Business Owners San Diego Chapter.

Exporter of the Year**Gulshan "Gil" Dhawan, President
Applied Membranes Inc.**

Gulshan Dhawan, founder and CEO of Applied Membranes, has a Ph.D. in chemical engineering and has been active in membrane applications for water purification, water reuse and desalination for more than 35 years.

Applied Membranes Inc. provides complete systems, membranes and components for water treatment, beverage production, desalination and other applications for power generation, pharmaceuticals and other applications. The company has expertise in providing reverse osmosis systems for several applications. AMI has more than 10,000 commercial and industrial systems in operations in almost all industrialized countries located on five continents.

Dhawan credits his international success to establishing relationships, setting up distributorships and representatives, conducting seminars and participating in trade shows.

Applied Membranes has received a number of 7(a) and 504 loans from SBA Lenders such as U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, CDC Small Business Finance and Pacific Western Bank.

The company has been in business for 32 years, has been exporting for 30 years and has 175 employees. AMI has seen a 20 percent increase in total sales.

Small Business Person of the Year**Sam G. Mousavi, President & CEO
DigitalPro Inc.**

Sam Mousavi has 30 years of management, business development and operations experience. He founded Digital Index Tabs Manufacturing in 2000 and DigitalPro Inc. in 2003.

DPI Direct, a DigitalPro Inc. company, provides commercial printing products, mailing services and package printing. DPI Direct is a driver of digital printing technology in San Diego and also serve wholesale and retail clients in Southern California and nationally through online services.

Since 2010, DPI Direct's sales have been growing at a rate of 12 percent; net profits have doubled and the number of employees has grown at a rate of 10 percent.

Several lending institutions have assisted DPI Direct with their lending needs, including Wells Fargo Bank, Sunrise Bank, Banner Bank, AmericanWest Bank, the CDC Small Business Finance and Capital Access Group. The most recent loan was a 504 loan for \$2.3 million to purchase a new 35,000-square-foot building.

Mousavi, believes in giving back to the communities that helped his company grow. Through DPI Direct, the company donates print to many local organizations.

SBA

U.S. Small Business Administration