

A better L.A. is our business

Focus on small business:



A Big Break for Small Business

Ali Mohammadi is the owner of a luxury chauffeur business based in Los Angeles. Since starting the company in 1986, he'd envisioned expanding his business worldwide, and by 2010 he'd begun to take tentative steps towards achieving that goal. Mohammadi was unsure of the next step, but got a big push forward when he was accepted to **Goldman Sachs'** newly-announced 10,000 Small Businesses Program.

A five year, \$500 million initiative, 10,000 Small Businesses aims to help small businesses in urban and rural communities across the United States. The program is designed to help small businesses grow and create jobs by offering business owners free access to education, mentors, networking and financial capital.

"When you're serious about your business, you can take all the help you can get," says Mohammadi. "This program offered a great education that cost nothing but my time, and came at just the right moment since I'd been wanting to grow my business."

In L.A., the program's business and management education program is led through a partnership with **Los Angeles City College** and **The Long Beach Community College District**. The program is free to accepted business owners, and includes nine modules that cover traditional business disciplines, including sales and marketing, financial statement analysis, human resources, operations and entrepreneurial leadership. Courses are taught through a practical, peer learning-based approach, and each business owner develops a growth plan as a capstone to the course.

"When they go through the curriculum, the scholars—business owners—get an understanding of how to work on their business instead of in their business," says Alex Davis, dean of economic and workforce education and executive director of the 10,000 Small Business program at Los Angeles City College. "Often scholars obtain contracts



and funding as a result of going through the program and learning how to become bankable."

With 325,132 small businesses (compared to the national average for metro areas of 78,289) the L.A. area is an ideal location for 10,000 Small Businesses, and the program has gained the support and partnership of local mayors, including Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster and L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

"Scholars come into the program with one idea about the program, but they really don't understand all the components," says Davis. "Once they go through all the modules there's a transformation. That's the sentiment that they share; that they're able to see their business with fresh eyes."

Mohammadi couldn't agree more. "I'm more motivated, focused and growth has been more consistent," he says. "10,000 Small Businesses gave me the push I needed to move forward, and in the next five years I hope to expand my fleet in L.A. and open offices in San Francisco and New York – maybe even London or Paris. The sky's the limit."

For more information, contact Bridget Netter, 213.580.7576 or bnetter@lachamber.com.



10,000 Small Businesses Eligibility

To be considered for the program, applicants must be the primary owner or co-owner and key decision maker of a business that meets the following criteria:

- ▶ Business revenues between \$150,000 and \$4 million in the most recent fiscal year.
- ▶ At least four employees (including the business owner).
- ▶ Business has been in operation for at least two years.
- ▶ The potential and desire to grow and create jobs in the community.

The program will be most beneficial for business owners who:

- ▶ Own an established business that is poised for growth.
- ▶ Have a diverse base of customers.
- ▶ Can demonstrate that they have thought critically about how to grow their companies.
- ▶ Demonstrate a need for the program but are unable to access or afford a business management education.

For more information and to apply to the program at L.A. City College, visit lacc10ksb.com

For more information and to apply to the program at Long Beach Community College, visit bcc.edu/10000smallbusinesses.

SMALL BUSINESS CORNER

Building a sustainable community one garden at a time

Is Your Garden Green?



Gardeners, a full-service landscaping company with a commitment to water conservation and sustainable gardening. Philips reduces water waste through the use of smarter irrigation systems and by planting native and drought-tolerant plants. She does not use gas-powered mowers or blowers, pesticides or herbicides.

Anne Philips left her job at an investment group 12 years ago to pursue her love of gardens and gardening. She is now founder and president of **Go Green**

Last year, she was interested in finding some capital, and a Chamber staff member pointed her to the Inner City Capital Connections program (ICCC). Established in 2005, ICCC is a free program, sponsored by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City and **Bank of America**, that is designed to stimulate the flow of capital to inner city businesses.

"It was a great experience," says Philips. "Hearing the speakers talk about what they're looking for and how to present yourself as a business was very useful. With the experience and contacts I made through ICCC I feel very prepared for future growth."

Since going through the program, Philips has expanded her commitment to sustainability in her community, both to the environment and people in it. She has partnered with Villa Esperanza, a group

that helps developmentally disabled adults to find employment. "We have hired their landscape maintenance crews to assist us in several of our accounts," says Philips. "It has been a very positive experience for all involved. We are looking to attract businesses that are interested in having their landscapes maintained in an environmentally friendly way, and are also interested in helping the developmentally disabled in the community find jobs."

Visit Go Green Gardeners online at gogreengardeners.com. **Go Green Gardeners has been a Chamber member since 2007.**

The Inner City Capital Connections program is now accepting nominations for its 2011 program. For more information, [visit icic.org](http://visit.icic.org).

Bottom-Line Benefits

Save up to 50 percent by utilizing the advantages provided by the L.A. Area Chamber and its members.



Connect 4 Lunch

Chamber members can now "Connect 4 Lunch" to make personal connections with three other members in an intimate lunch setting. lachamber.com/bottomline.



Certificates of Origin

The Chamber has adopted the next generation eCert technology as our standard to process your Certificates of Origin. lachamber.com/ecertify.



Human Resources Expertise

Chamber members will receive a free six-month membership with the Employers Group, California's preeminent human resources expert. employersgroup.com/lachamber.



Los Angeles Area Rx Card

As a resident of L.A. County, you and your family have access to a FREE Discount Prescription Drug Card program. Download and print a Los Angeles Area Rx Card. lachamber.com/rxcard.



Office Depot

Save up to 65 percent on office supplies from Office Depot, with next-day delivery and convenient ordering by fax, phone or web. www.lachamber.com/bottomline.



The Parking Spot

Save 20 percent at both locations of The Parking Spot at Sepulveda and Century. www.lachamber.com/bottomline.

Find out more at lachamber.com/bottomline. For more information contact Pat Clark, 213.580.7595 or pclark@lachamber.com.