



"We've received a tremendous amount of support from Staples. Staples executives not only served as mentors but champions as well, sharing best-business practices in strategic planning, finance, marketing, legal, and other areas."

*Beth Williams, President and CEO,
Roxbury Technology Corporation*

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Staples® Diversity Program connects qualified minority, women-owned and disadvantaged suppliers to corporate customers seeking MWBE purchasing opportunities.

Beth Williams, president and CEO of Roxbury Technology Corporation, has seen a lot of corporate diversity programs. She spent nine years at Blue Cross/Blue Shield — most recently as director of Business Diversity — prior to stepping into the top job at Roxbury Technology Corp. "Lots of companies just exchange purchase orders," she says. "Staples made a capacity-building commitment and helped us build a business."

A vision of something better

Beth's father, Archie Williams, had a vision. Roxbury Technology Corp. would help reinvigorate one of Boston's most neglected neighborhoods. According to Williams, there was a basic flaw in economic plans that encourage inner-city residents to get into retail businesses. "Those businesses take money out of the consumer's pocket, but do nothing to put money in." But a primary business like manufacturing, he reasoned, enriches local consumers by providing jobs that match their skills.

Archie Williams had a 25-year background in electronic manufacturing with Digital Equipment Corp., Raytheon and Polaroid. He founded Roxbury Technology in 1994 with a 2-phase plan: start by distributing remanufactured toner cartridges, and then move on to producing them. But it was a fortuitous September 1998 meeting with Tom Stemberg, founder and CEO of Staples, that gave his plan a giant push forward.

An opportunity to make a difference

Stemberg, together with 19 other corporate members of the Boston Coalition, had just made a commitment to "do something significant" to help minority businesses. Roxbury proved to be an ideal candidate. Through Stemberg, Williams began a relationship with Laser - Tek Industries, a leading cartridge remanufacturer and a major Staples supplier. Staples capacity-building commitment gave Roxbury an 800 percent boost in annual sales and positioned the company for phase two.

Williams was poised with plans to start manufacturing in the spring of 2003, but his unexpected death in November 2002 put everything on hold. His daughter, however, was determined that his dream and legacy would not die. When Beth stepped in as president and CEO the following January, she knew where to turn for help. "We've received a tremendous amount of support from Staples," she says. "Staples

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executives not only served as mentors but champions as well, sharing best-business practices in strategic planning, finance, marketing, legal, and other areas.” Today, Roxbury Technology is Staples® preferred MWBE remanufactured toner supplier and the only MBE remanufactured toner supplier in the 2005 catalog. “Staples has assured me that Roxbury is a part of their own long-term strategy,” she adds.

New partnerships

When Staples helped Roxbury negotiate a \$400,000 loan from Sovereign Bank, “Bank President Joseph Campenelli met with us himself to confirm the bank’s commitment,” Beth marvels. Staples also helped Roxbury initiate a new strategic partnership with Ottawa, Illinois-based Clover Technologies Group, a leading imaging supplies company that manufactures Staples own brand of toner.

This new partnership was pivotal to Roxbury’s move into manufacturing. Beth flew to Ottawa to meet with Clover’s CEO and Founder Jim Shiefelbein. Shiefelbein flew to Boston three days later, and “within four months Clover had transformed Roxbury’s facility into a turnkey operation,” Beth says.

“Clover did an awesome job,” she explains. “They sent a construction crew to Boston that stayed three weeks building out our manufacturing site. They did everything from building hoods and venting systems to setting up the racks.” Eight Roxbury employees spent a week of intensive training in Ottawa at the Clover manufacturing facility, and a Clover “champion” remained on the Roxbury premises for a 6-month supervisory stint.

Manufacturing began in August, with total production projected at 100,000 cartridges for the first year. The addition of 10 people has swelled the RTC workforce to 15, a number Beth hopes to increase to 75 by 2007. Roxbury’s lease also allows for expansion from the current 12,600 square feet to 20,000 square feet. Under Beth’s stewardship, the company racked up \$5.2 million in gross sales in 2003, and should hit an annual \$8 million as manufacturing revs up.

An ongoing team approach

Tom Stemberg’s original commitment is stronger than ever. Staples sent Beth to the Minority Business Executive Program at Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business and is covering her costs for advanced sessions. She is in frequent communications with Staples Treasurer Bob Mayerson and Marketing Vice President Jim Dorman, and she meets with Stemberg two to four times a year. “We have a unique relationship with Staples,” she says. “They were there for my father at the beginning, taking Roxbury through the transition from a distributor to a manufacturer. Now Archie’s vision is becoming a reality, and they’re still here for us every step of the way.”

To learn more about Staples commitment to diversity, or if you are a minority-owned business interested doing business with Staples, visit our Web site at www.StaplesContract.com/MWBE.asp.

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