



Federal OSDBU Directors Interagency Council

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March 19, 2008

ActionNET: U.S. Department of Transportation Success Story



Ashley W. Chen received her Master of Science Degree in Computer Science from Binghamton University and achieved the highest level of professional certifications from both Microsoft and Novell. After working for other small businesses as a technical and management consultant on high profile projects on Capitol Hill, Ashley founded ActionNet in 1998 with a “dream to build something great.” She was inspired by an enlightening piece written by a traditional Japanese philosopher that stated, “action without vision is a nightmare, vision without action is only a daydream.” Ashley has transformed the company from an individually-operated company in 1998 to a dynamic information technology solution provider with over 140 staff members and over \$16 million in revenue today.

Ms. Chen started by reading the publication “How to Do Business with the Department of Transportation” and promptly called the Small Business Specialists within the Agency. ActionNet’s first opportunity was a Year 2000 Project for the Department of Transportation (DOT) for just over \$50,000. The project was delivered on time and under budget. Based on the results of this project, Ashley was asked to provide Enterprise Software Development services. This effort grew from two to twelve support personnel and resulted in Ashley receiving the DOT Outstanding Women-Owned Business Enterprise Award. Ashley has also been featured in the DOT “Transportation Link” newsletter in an article titled “Lights, Camera, ActionNet!”

ActionNet’s Enterprise Software Development efforts within DOT have evolved into a mature and process-oriented approach that started with SEISM CMM[®] Level 3 and later CMMI[®] Level 3 and ISO 9001:2000 Certifications. ActionNet brought its process-oriented approach to other functional areas including IT Infrastructure and Cybersecurity, which recently resulted in ITIL Certification. Through word of mouth, strategic marketing and a reputation for providing outstanding customer service, ActionNet has expanded its business opportunities with multiple DOT modals, working on exciting projects relating to Web Content Management, Inter-Agency Web Initiatives, Data Sharing, Collaboration, Enterprise Architecture (EA), Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) and Cybersecurity.

ActionNet’s most recent project was in support of the DOT Move from its prior Headquarters location to the new Southeast Federal Center. ActionNet was tasked with supporting the move of all critical systems to the new facility and accomplished this within a month. As part of ActionNet’s support for one of the DOT modals, ActionNet was the first and only group to be fully operational during the week-long move activities by activating the Continuity of Operations (COOP) site as the Production environment.

DOT has provided a fertile environment and has consistently supported small businesses in their goal of understanding how to effectively market and support new business opportunities. The OSDBU community has been unwavering in its support throughout the journey with the many challenges that face small businesses today.

Through hard work and persistence, Ashley turned her vision into action and her dreams into reality. Ashley was featured as a success story and selected as a panelist by the US Women’s Chamber of Commerce and AFCEA International in 2007. Ashley was named the SBA Washington Metro Region Minority Small Business Person of the Year and the Asian Entrepreneur of the Year by Asian Enterprise Magazine in 2004. ActionNet was a Deloitte Technology Fast 50/500 and Virginia’s Fantastic 50 award winner for the past five years as well as Washington Technology Fast 50 and INC 500. The foundation for ActionNet’s success is based on our customers, our employees, commitment to growth and continual process improvement. Ashley stated “As a small, woman-owned, minority business, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the DOT OSDBU Office and the OSDBU Community for its encouragement and support.”

For more information on ActionNet, contact Ashley Chen by phone at (703) 204-0090 x108, by email at achen@actionnet.com, or you can view the web site at www.actionnet.com.