

NEWS & TRENDS



John Neubaier

Dun & Bradstreet's Dennis Gormley. They're in the matchmaking game now

CONTRACTING

D&B ENTERS MARRIAGE BROKERAGE BUSINESS

Dun & Bradstreet is playing matchmaker. In its newly developed prototype "Purchasing and Procurement Information System," the credit rating company is attempting to wed would-be government and private contractors with small businesses.

Such marriages of convenience are prearranged to a degree by Public Law

95-507, which in part mandates that a certain percentage of government contracts be set aside expressly for small businesses. To comply with this law, the Small Business Administration several years ago set up a computerized "Procurement Automated Source System" (PASS) to help bring contractors and small businessmen together. As of September 1981, the SBA operates with a data bank of about 53,000 small businesses, a figure they say increases at a rate of about 2,000 new companies a month.

D&B sees its system as a comparable tool, to PASS. "We think we provide more comprehensive data," says Dennis Gormley, D&B's project director. The Purchasing and Procurement Information System offers the same information as PASS—including the company ownership, capabilities, and size—but has some extra features:

□ Large as well as small businesses are in the data bank.

□ The search can be conducted three ways—by Standard Industrial Classification code, Federal Supply Classification, or Key Word.

□ The small businessperson can indicate whether he or she wants to deal only with government, only with private industry, or with both.

□ Businesses can receive a listing of government agencies—compiled through the Federal Procurement Data System—that have been awarded contracts. The contractors' names and the dollar amount of the awards are available in one report.

The current prototype system, developed by D&B over the last 10 months at an estimated cost of several hundred thousand dollars, was put into operation in mid-July 1981. To test the possible demand for this service, 9,500 companies—about 70% of them small businesses—were put on a data base this fall for use by several government agencies and private contractors.

D&B will make a decision on the future of the system by the end of this year. Should it be a "go," the company will put from 300,000 to 400,000 company names, 70% to 80% of them small businesses, on the data base. Gormley estimates it will take 9 to 12 months to get the system ready for use.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

HOME-BASED BUSINESSES SHOW RAPID INCREASE

"When I had small children at home," recalls Toni L. Goldfarb, of Teaneck, N.J., the editor and publisher of *Medical Abstracts Newsletter*, "I used to commute to New York to work. Now, years later, I've found that not only can I work at home, but I can run a business from here as well."

Goldfarb is one of millions of women who base their businesses at home. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, female self-employment increased from 1,475,000 in 1972 to 2,102,000 in 1979, a rate of increase more than four

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Ringel and Schwartz of Coradian Corp.

Peter Jones

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