

Interview Questions – Premier Pest Control 2/12/2014

Premier Pest Control, a local minority owned business, was started in Las Vegas and has prospered in the local community for approximately thirteen years. As the name indicates, this company provides pest control services.

UNLV Purchasing and Contracts recently met with Premier Pest Control owners Thomas Duran and Sherwin Avila to discuss the company's history and their desire to provide UNLV departments with pest control solutions.

(Q1) Share with us Premier Pest Controls' story. How did you get started? Years in business? Local/Small/WBE/MBE? What products and/or services do you provide?

Premier Pest Control began operating in Nevada in 2001. Both Thomas and Sherwin worked for many years in the pest control industry prior to opening Premier Pest Control and gained valuable knowledge and understand the unique challenges of this business. The company currently has nine employees and they provide services to both commercial and residential customers. The commercial side is approximately 85% of the total business.

(Q2) How did you become familiar with business opportunities with UNLV?

Premier Pest Control participated in a campus wide Request for Proposal (RFP) for pest control services and was awarded a contract as a result. Contact information and contract details are located on UNLV's campus contracts website: <http://www.unlv.edu/purchasing/agreements5035>.

Sherwin explains that "when we were thinking about responding to the RFP we were not sure that we would be able to compete with the national firms, however, we decided to take the opportunity and submit a response. We were very pleased to get the contract and this helped us to be successful in competing for other business such as the Fashion Show Mall account." Sherwin went on to say that "being awarded the UNLV account opened up other opportunities for us and now we have several strip resort accounts and I credit it to our success at UNLV."

(Q3) To better help the UNLV campus departments understand what Premier Pest Control offers, can you offer a few reasons why they should consider doing business with Premier Pest Control? What sets Premier Pest Control apart?

Thomas explained that "they have been successful in solving problems where others have failed."

When asked what sets Premier Pest Control apart, Sherwin says "We are not afraid to tackle issues and use various resources to accomplish various tasks. One

example of this is when we worked with an entomologist on campus to identify a type of wasp so that we knew how to best approach the situation.” This collaboration was very helpful in solving the issue effectively and efficiently.

(Q4) How does Premier Pest Control interact with UNLV campus department to assess pest control needs?

Communication is the key to their success on campus and they use various methods such as emails, phone conversations, and meetings to gather information. Sherwin stated that “they interview each client on campus to understand their unique needs and then keep the flow of communication going to ensure that any changing needs are being met.”

(Q5) What is Premier Pest Controls’ commitment to providing a quality service, best pricing, and meeting the needs of the campus?

Premier Pest Control is a customer service oriented and Sherwin stated that “they will do whatever it takes to keep the customer happy.” They have training programs for their employees and stay updated on the latest products and methods to ensure that the customer is receiving the best service and products available. Safety is a key issue and they keep this in mind at all times. The majority of products they use are considered green which are safer and have less impact on the environment.

(Q6) In your opinion, what are the major obstacles for small and disadvantaged businesses in Las Vegas and how can UNLV be a part of the solution?

Sherwin explains that “one of the challenges is that many companies want to deal with nationally known firms and this does not allow small businesses an opportunity to expand. Another obstacle for small businesses is insurance requirements. The level of insurance needed for a large account is very expensive. UNLV should be flexible when appropriate so that small businesses can be competitive with the larger ones.”

(Q7) The Nevada System of Education has recently published a Supplier Inclusion statement. I know you have had an opportunity to review it. What does it mean to you and how would you like to see it impact the business community serving UNLV?

The Nevada System of Higher Education supports equal opportunity for minority-owned, women-owned, and other small disadvantaged business enterprises (MWDBE) to compete for contracts awarded by NSHE institutions. The NSHE also supports efforts to encourage local businesses to compete for NSHE contracts. In addition, the NSHE supports finding opportunities for such MWDBE and local business concerns to participate as subcontractors or Tier 2 suppliers in large contracts. A “Tier 2 supplier” or subcontractor is a supplier who is contracted for

goods or services with the prime contractor, and may include, but is not limited to MWDBE and local business enterprises.

“UNLV should consider being more flexible in the rules and regulations when dealing with small emerging business.” Sherwin went on to say that “UNLV should limit obstacles like lowering insurance requirements whenever possible.”

(Q8) What one word or phrase best describes Premier Pest Control?

“Raising the bar through innovation” answers Thomas. We are a very innovative group and consistently come up with different or more efficient ways to approach a problem.”