

A Look at Raytheon's Involvement in the DoD Mentor-Protégé Program: Focus on UEC Electronics

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Since 1991, the Department of Defense (DoD) Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP) has offered substantial assistance to small disadvantaged businesses through the assistance of prime contractors like Raytheon. Enacted in 1991 under the direction of former Senator Sam Nunn and former Secretary of Defense William Perry, the DoD Mentor-Protégé Program provides incentives for DoD prime contractors to mentor small disadvantaged businesses and women-owned small businesses, so they can better develop the technical and business capabilities to become valued suppliers for the defense industry.

Raytheon has been active in the program since the mid-90's mentoring over 30 protégé companies and has been the proud recipient of 15 Nunn-Perry Awards for participant excellence in the program. Raytheon currently manages eight such agreements. One of those protégés, UEC Electronics (UEC), is a thriving and growing women owned business located in Hanahan, South Carolina.

UEC Electronics has been in business for 15 years and specializes in responsive and comprehensive product life cycle support including product design and development, prototyping, manufacturing, system integration, and test. In 2006, UEC was the U.S. Navy's first graduate of the Manufacturing Technical Assistance Production Program (MTAPP). The U.S. Navy's Small Business Office suggested that UEC would be an ideal candidate for the DoD Mentor-Protégé Program. UEC's strategy was to diversify from ground and vehicle systems into more sophisticated assemblies in support of aviation and weapon system applications. This was a lofty goal for a small business without corporate experience, past performance or applicable contracts. UEC was undeterred in achieving their goal and found a company that agreed to mentor them through this growth process, Raytheon. After two

years in the program, UEC has significantly expanded their capabilities and customer base, produced and delivered avionic and aerospace production assemblies and test systems. The technical developmental assistance provided by Raytheon was the major catalyst supporting UEC's strategic development and growth.

UEC has been able to advance their Technical Certifications throughout the relationship which has enabled them to use and gain experience with their new capabilities, equipment, and processes. Many of the projects delivered and underway were possible because of their J-STD-001 Class III CCA line, advanced Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), advanced Manufacturing Readiness Levels (MRL), mature Quality Management System and UEC's production facility compliance. A dynamic Lean Six Sigma program was created to ensure continuous efficiencies and improvements.

Recently, UEC was able to review and select usable electronic support equipment no longer required for use by our Raytheon Network Centric Systems. Four pallets of equipment and a large oven were donated by Raytheon to UEC. This equipment is being integrated into the UEC production lines. This equipment increases UEC capabilities particularly on their surface mount technology line, which has been a major area of focus for this mentor-protégé agreement. UEC's participation in the DoD Mentor-Protégé Program and its accomplishments has positioned UEC for continuing growth.

Their earned reputation and qualifications, improvements in technology, business processes, certifications and past performance (currently possessing a supplier rating of 100 percent) has created a robust infrastructure for UEC to succeed in platform for new markets with new customers. Representatives of UEC have stated on more than one occasion that the Mentor-Protégé Program provided the skills, tools, guidance and assistance to reduce their anxiety of a rapidly changing market, and provided invaluable knowledge and wisdom in avoiding the many pitfalls that small businesses battle while attempting to grow, expand and thrive.

The table on the opposite page outlines the current active agreements that Raytheon has and information about our eight protégés. Successful mentor-protégé agreements provide a winning relationship for the protégé, the mentor, and the DoD. The mentor/protégé arrangement is a positive arrangement for everyone involved: mentors build mutually beneficial partnerships, protégés develop a stronger business base, and both contribute significantly to the defense of our nation!

