

# In the Driver's Seat with Crystal Khalil | Impacting Supplier Diversity and Redefining Leadership

by Nicole Holman



At PCNA, we value high-performing women behind the wheel, within the automotive industry and leading corporate initiatives. As a high-ranking woman in our organization and a driving force behind our Strategy 2025 vision, Director of Procurement **Crystal Khalil** continues to move supplier diversity\* forward at Porsche. Recently, she was awarded and featured in *Diversity Plus Magazine's* Top 25 Women Impacting Supplier Diversity for leading the expansion of PCNA's supplier diversity program to include second-tier suppliers. (Read it [here](#).)

With other key programs and projects such as Porsche Finish Line and e-invoicing well underway, Crystal and her Procurement team show no signs of slowing down when developing strategic solutions to improve our business. In addition to her procurement expertise, through her Mastermind course, she's impacting the way PCNA employees define leadership. So far, 32 employees have completed the 10-week course.

Read on to learn more about Crystal's vision for Procurement at PCNA, her definition of leadership and her secret to success.

**Q: Congratulations on your award! How does it feel to be among 24 other women impacting supplier diversity?**

**Crystal:** "It was awesome. I had the amazing opportunity to meet many smart and powerful women at the WBENC Conference last week. It was good to learn how companies like Accenture, BP, Delta Air Lines, West Rock and the New York Power Authority are advancing supplier diversity. Events like these are important to attend so we can benchmark our progress and exchange ideas. It was inspiring to be amongst rock star women in this space."

**Q: Why is supplier diversity important to Porsche?**

**Crystal:** "Our spend is 60 percent Marketing, a difficult space to find diverse suppliers. Also, one of our biggest challenges is finding suppliers that have already done business with luxury automotive brands. We have high standards, so it can be hard to bring in experienced suppliers. Working with our brand can help a supplier's business grow tremendously. However, if no one gives them an opportunity, how can they get experience? My team and I work diligently to find those standout suppliers and give them the opportunity to at least bid. Like most companies, once they're in, we give them one project with our business to prove themselves and then offer more opportunities so they can grow with us overtime."

**Q: What goes into building a successful diversity program? What is essential for its success?**

**Crystal:** "It's important to make connections with certifying organizations such as, WBENC, the Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council and the Greater Women's Business Council to build partnerships and gain visibility amongst our peers as well as potential suppliers. **Temitayo Younge** and I work together to attend matchmaker sessions, share information during an open bid and vet suppliers to ensure they have the experience needed to bid on our business. When we meet suppliers, we're looking for innovation. It's imperative for us to look beyond those who have worked in the luxury automotive space so we don't miss out on suppliers with innovative ideas who have worked with big companies like Google and Facebook. Also, because we're small, most of our spend goes to agencies, and it's important that our first tier suppliers do business with second tier suppliers. For example, JLL is one of our first tier suppliers, but they contract with second tier, diverse groups such as our landscape and cleaning company suppliers. This counts as second tier spend for us."

**Q: What are some goals you wish to accomplish here at Porsche that you haven't touched on just yet?**

**Crystal:** "Although we have made significant strides in supplier diversity, we have a long way to go to align with our Strategy 2025. I would love to recognize our suppliers with a supplier diversity awards program or ceremony. The awards would serve as a stamp of approval from Porsche and thank our suppliers for being a premier or platinum partner. It could help them advance their business to the next level and make us a customer of choice for innovative ideas to grow our business. In the big picture, our purchasing spend is a fraction of our competitors, so we need to find innovative ways to utilize our brand image and attract innovative suppliers, especially as we strive to become leaders in mobility.

As for my team, the goal is to empower the business as strategic partners. Sometimes, it can be quite difficult for the Procurement team to earn a seat at the table. Typically, the business sees us as a roadblock or necessary evil, however, I want to challenge that thinking and change that perception. I want us to be seen as a trusted partner to get things done efficiently while saving money, working with innovative suppliers and growing the business."

\* A supplier diversity program is a proactive business program which encourages the use of minority-owned, women owned, veteran owned, LGBT-owned, service disabled veteran owned, historically underutilized business, and Small Business Administration (SBA)-defined small business concerns as suppliers.

**Q: In the opening of the Diversity Plus feature, it says “all of the Top 25 Women have established and/or grown successful diversity programs because they can lead and influence people.” We know that leadership is near and dear to you. In fact, we know that you started a leadership course at PCNA. Tell us about the John Maxwell Mastermind course and why you started it.**

**Crystal:** “Leadership is influence. I became a certified John Maxwell speaker last year because I’m fascinated with leadership, and I truly believe in my motto, ‘Hard workers work hard and networkers move up.’ In order to network, you need to influence and make connections. Too often, people think working hard is enough. At the end of the day, it’s all about human to human interactions. We all have a job to do, but we work with humans so you have to build connections. I’ve mentored many people in the organization, and when I became certified, I wanted to offer what I learned to help others grow. Since starting the course, I’ve received a lot of support and great feedback. Actually, Klaus came to one of my first classes to share what leadership means from his perspective and hear the perspective of employees. This is my passion. I love seeing the growth in the Mastermind participants. The teachings can even be used in your life outside of work.”

**Q: What is your secret to success?**

**Crystal:** “Service, excellence and humility. I’m a servant at heart. If you give people what they need, you’ll always get what you want. Sometimes, people just need empathy, a listening ear and someone to recognize and appreciate them. I come from a place of authenticity and appreciate the human behind the work. For excellence, I strive in everything I do and aim to exceed expectations. The **excite!** values are instilled in me to go the extra mile and make sure my work represents me well. And with humility, it’s all about realizing we are all the same. Everyone’s doing their best to advance Porsche to the next level. Treat everyone with respect, from the people at the security gate to the CEO. When you work with service, excellence and humility, the universe will reciprocate.”

#### **About Crystal**

Crystal Khalil was born and raised in Rochester, NY. She is the first African-American woman to reach the director level at Porsche. Before joining the Company, she worked for Zepp Manufacturing and the Coca-Cola Company. For four years, she was a television host for the Comcast show, *Reflections of a Diva*, an all-woman talk show based on diverse women’s issues in America. Crystal has three children, two dogs, and resides in Decatur, Georgia with her high-school sweetheart and husband Mikal. She is passionate about leadership, serving the community, empowering women, diversity and inclusion and growing as a public speaker. She also runs a non-profit organization for teen girls called Divas in Training.

