

## Opening Statement

My name is Tatiana Bonilla, and I'm the president of Andrew Design Group, an A/V Technology Design and Engineering Firm. It is in our DNA to help our clients navigate even in the most challenging and complex environments.

Clients like Disney, UCLA, LAFC, hire us to design Audio/Video, and Control Systems (AVC) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Over 20 years of experience has helped us to understand our clients' vision and bring them to life.

### **Company Profile:**

Andrew Design Group was founded in 1998 by my husband, Carlos Teran, and by me. Carlos emigrated from Ecuador, South America when he was five years old. He attended a local public school in Pasadena and continued his education at CalPoly Pomona, where he obtained his degree in Electrical Engineering. On the other hand, I immigrated to the United States from Ecuador as an adult. I had to enroll in several English classes and work my way up to college. I graduated from CalPoly Pomona with a degree in Business Administration.

By 1998, Carlos had been working in different companies ranging from Imagineering at Disneyland, Universal Studios, and several consulting firms. Carlos's expertise in AV Design and Engineering was well known in the industry. By then, we identify an opportunity to work not only for one company but to serve all, and that is how Andrew Design Group started. Since then, we have been providing AV Technology Design and Engineering Services to architects, commercial property owners, education and healthcare institutions, building developers, AV Contractors, and Entertainment based companies.

We have been working non-stop for the past 20 years, and we are proud to say that we are "recession proof." When many businesses similar to ours closed when the recession hit in 2007, Andrew Design Group grew; in fact, it has been growing steadily since its inception.

Looking back to what we have accomplished in the past 20 years, we are very proud to be part of many important projects around the world, our clients have been returning to us, and we have grown our client portfolio. But what is next? Like all small businesses, we have been so absorbed in the operations, and this blocked the vision of where do we want to take our company. This, I found, is one of the biggest obstacles when it comes to growing our business; in fact, most small businesses like ours suffer from what I now call "isolation." As small business owners, we have to be involved in all aspects of operations, which leave us with no time to strategize. We harvest the low hanging fruit, but how about the rest? About a year ago, I started to take time to go to networking events; there, I meet many business owners like me.

They started their business just like we did; however, they managed to grow exponentially. What is that they did that I didn't do? I realized that they knew where to get help, and I did not. In one of these events, I met Beatriz Davis from the Small Business Association, and she encouraged me to apply for a free, yes free, program called Emerging Leaders. This program has allowed me to understand what I should be doing as a business owner, and where do I need to take my company. I started the program questioning if I wanted Andrew Design to grow, and if so, if that was something that I was capable of doing. Every module provided me with the tools to understand not only my capabilities as a leader but also to understand my business. This program has open so many doors from training to advisory, the resources are there at our reach.

We are looking forward to moving to a bigger facility, increase our workforce, and become advocates and mentors for small business owners like us.