

THE EBONY CACTUS magazine

Vol. 1. No. 12

December 4, 2002

A New Perspective on Business



Inside

One Arizona
African American Leadership
and
The Napolitano Administration
Christmas Business
Cody Williams for
Mayor of Phoenix?

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This Edition

Happy Holidays. Welcome to the twelfth edition of The Ebony Cactus Magazine. We have crammed a lot into this issue. Six businesses, Three seminars, new advertisements and a partridge in a pear tree.

We hope you'll enjoy the issue. Most of all, we hope you'll be encouraged you to contact the companies profiled or advertised within that issue. We African Americans spend more dollars outside our communities than inside. The dollar is powerful but, its only as powerful as the hand that uses it.

Readership

As mentioned on the next page, readership is way up. As an example, please let us share with you a letter we recently received.

I live in the Greater Chicago area and received your website from a relative who lives in Phoenix. I've already forwarded it to many of my Midwestern friends. Love to see Black folks doing positive things. Kudos to you and staff...

Earnest
Evanston, Illinois

These sentiments are typical of those we receive from our many well wishers. We feel blessed and are highly encouraged to continue to do the work you find interesting and beneficial..

Hyperlinks

To use the hyperlinks, save the magazine to your desktop and then re-open. The embedded hyperlinks may then be used.

Patronize the Advertisers

The Ebony Cactus magazine brings quality articles and information and quality advertisers as well. For example, The fourth annual Fatherhood Conference is coming up soon in February 2003. The Kappa Alpha Psi New Years Groove is always a place to be and the money goes to a good cause. The commercial companies from LAS Catering to Aqualogy BioRemedics all provide quality and unique services. Give them a call. Give them a try.

New Advertisers

This issue, we wish to welcome three new advertisers
The Fourth Annual Fatherhood Conference: Page 4
The Grand Fraternity of Kappa Alpha Psi: Page 10
and our good friends at
First Fridays Phoenix: Page 24

Spread The Word!!!

The Ebony Cactus magazine presents information that can aid you in being a better employee or employer. It showcases service providers that can help your company do business. It builds bridges between those who have the services and those who need them. So to this end, we ask you to SPREAD THE WORD. Let other folks know about the Cactus. Send them a copy. We are now in the "Idea Economy." Thus the more knowledge shared, the better off we all are.

Re-Introducing THE EBONY CACTUS magazine

This has been a tremendous month for us. We estimate the last issue reached more than 24,000 people, up from just the few hundred we started with in March 2002. With so many new readers however, we decided we needed to use this space to re-introduce the magazine.

To begin, published twice monthly, The Ebony Cactus is a new concept internet magazine that is sent directly to the reader. Created in PDF format, the magazine can be viewed equally well by both Macintosh and P.C. users. Hard copies made by the reader retain the exact format as seen on the screen. Past issues are archived at www.TheEbonyCactus.com.

Who reads The Ebony Cactus?

- Currently, the monthly readership is about 24,000. The following is a partial listing of where The Ebony Cactus is read: Motorola, Intel, Aztec Engineering, Evans and Kuhns, First Institutional Baptist Church, Southminster Presbyterian Church, Arizona State University, Arizona State University West, Maricopa County Community Colleges, University of Arizona, University of California Davis, Palomar College (San Diego), Los Angeles Unified School District, Berkeley County South Carolina School District, Medical University of South Carolina, The J. Paul Getty Trust, University of Phoenix, Flagler Hospital (Florida), San Francisco State University, Nokia, City of Phoenix, Roosevelt School District, South Western Bell(TX), BellSouth (Atlanta,GA), NTL.com (UK)/ Arizona, California, Nevada, Minnesota, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia, Tennessee, Japan, Belgium, UK, Japan and South Africa.
- 99% use computers
- 99% use the internet
- 58% have family incomes exceeding 50K (www.census.gov)
- 35% have family incomes exceeding 75K (www.census.gov)
- 42% hold a bachelors degree or greater (www.census.gov)

Why should I read The Ebony Cactus?

There is only one answer to this question and that is VALUE. Your time is valuable and need not be wasted. The mission of The Ebony Cactus is to be an easily accessible source of often hidden information that both interesting and directly useful to you. This includes business tips, insights on business and economic trends, and direct "how to" management instructions. It is also our goal for this valuable information to be written in an easily readable, and intelligent manner.

To accomplish these goals, The Ebony Cactus magazine presents in-depth interviews with a wide variety of successful businesses. We seek to look beyond the superficial to see how they work and why they succeed. Non-Profit organizations such as Kappa Alpha Psi, Planned Parenthood and First Institutional Baptist Church with strong business backgrounds and programs of interest to the African American Community have also been profiled. We utilize a cadre of professionals to present detailed lectures on business management. Finally, the Ebony Cactus seeks to provide you information on new business opportunities before they come over the horizon.

Should I advertise in The Ebony Cactus magazine?

Yes you should. Your full color advertisement in The Ebony Cactus will be seen by thousands of potential customers world wide who possess the resources and the need to use your products and services (see demographics). A service unique in the nation, the nature of the Ebony Cactus encourages it to rapidly propagate across the globe through "Word of Net." The higher the quality of information in the magazine, the more it is passed along for more eyes to see. Your quality advertisement will synergistically add to the overall value of the of the magazine thus increasing the number of individuals that will see your services.

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Cover

(Left to Right)

State Representative Leah Landrum-Taylor
Eloy City Councilmember Byron Jackson
Governor-Elect Janet Napolitano
Chandler City Councilmember Phil Westbrook
Phoenix City Councilmember Michael Johnson

A Lesson in Buying While Black

Do unto others as you would have then do unto to you. I've heard this over and over again during the course of my existence. As I sat in my gas starved car driving across a 21st century desert landscape, I recalled my youth and what I thought was just some tired old saying. When I was a young woman, that saying would effortlessly roll off my shoulders and down my back. While in our youth, we don't often entirely comprehend the meaning of some things we're taught. For the record, I was immensely lacking in understanding.

There are a multitude of Black owned businesses across the continental United States. They can range from a South Dakota bed and breakfast to a Vermont skeet shooter's pro shop. To define the African American as a business person is to journey an endless trek into infinity. Indeed, there are many out there who are still struggling for our business while you and I steer our jalopies to the nearest fashion mall or designer boulevard. Many of us profess to be African Americans yet, we buy more of what is associated as "Traditionally American" influenced goods and services than African-American produced or marked products. All the while swelling the pockets of others as our brothers and sisters sit aimlessly wondering where's the love.

As our profiled individuals in this issue (Jackie Muhammad, Sarah McCoy, Nick Alozie, etc.), and every issue have demonstrated, they have love for us or they wouldn't be in business. A few have been at the business game for only a short span of time while others are old pros and can fire off advice at the drop of a dime. You may now be asking what am I pecking at? You might even have asked yourself by now if I haven't read the latest book on saying everything you need to say in five minutes or less. Well, here it is my powerful Africans in America. Buy Black. Buy a lot of it and often. I am formally requesting your assistance in making their (black businesses) end of the year books look like the grand climax of Fourth of July fireworks show! Buy Black and think before you go back. Remember, everyone is reaching for the American Dream. That struggling shop keeper might be you one day. Do unto others... It has a nice ring to it now that I am in my summer years. Please, write me about your experiences. Merry Christmas and Enjoy

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We interrupt the series ...

Last issue I promised to continued my series on empowerment. However, two recent headlines forces me to; "interrupt this series with a special commentary!"

Cody Williams for Mayor of Phoenix?

Cody Williams for Mayor? I have been hearing this rumor for months. I've even joked with Cody about it. However, a recent Arizona Republic article acknowledged that Cody could be a "wild card" candidate that could have a significant effect on the coming contest.



Would Cody make a good Mayor? More importantly, could he be elected? I believe the answer to both questions is yes. He is intelligent, articulate and educated. Most importantly, he has demonstrated a capacity for effective leadership. He has the ability to walk between worlds and gather support from a diverse constituency. He had to develop this capacity to succeed in his former seat representing District 8 in the City of Phoenix. He is the first African American to be seriously considered by "the powers that be," to have an actual chance to achieve the office. Mr. Williams, has a difficult decision to make. To run for Mayor would be hard in this city. The process would be uncomfortable for him and his family. However, if he should decide in favor of the race, I believe his candidacy would change the face of Arizona politics.

The End of Affirmative Action?

The foes of Affirmative Action have finally got the question before a conservative Supreme Court. The sad thing is, that the Court will likely focus on the narrow question of what some call "race based preferences," and not all such "preferences" based on what a student is instead of a student's demonstrated ability and potential. The implications are clear. If affirmative action is found unconstitutional, then this hand up (not hand out) that has unlocked the doors for so many to walk through, will be ended and the historic status quo will be restored. The effect will not be limited to education, but will echo to employment and business setasides as well. This could have a profoundly negative effect across the nation, unless we decide to take matters into our own hands.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we need a new plan! We need to implement strategies to move African American students in and through all universities. To insure Black people continue to be fairly employed. To insure Black business thrives. We need a new plan that depends not on the largess of others, but only on our own efforts. We are empowered to do this. It is our choice! Enough for now, on with the show.



One Arizona

African American Leadership and the Janet Napolitano administration

By: George B. Brooks, Jr. Ph.D.

At a meeting hosted by Phoenix City Councilmember Michael Johnson with refreshments and food provided by the Greater Phoenix Black Chamber of Commerce, the Arizona African American Strategy Leadership Group (AAASLG) sat down with Arizona's Governor-Elect Janet Napolitano and Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsa to discuss the issues facing Arizona's African American community. As stated by Reverend Alexis Thomas of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church "We (the African American Community) want a voice in how things are done and handled. We wanted to come together in a united way to say that the people in this room represent a strong constituency that must be at the table when decisions are made. We want to be known by you."

"I will work with you, I will listen and I will work for you." Stated the Governor-Elect. "I've said from the beginning, my

administration will reflect the diversity of Arizona." This philosophy is summed up by the proposed theme for her inauguration: many peoples, many lands, many faiths, One Arizona. As a reflection of this philosophy, former Phoenix City Council member Calvin C. Goode serves on the Governor elect's transition committee. The meeting continued with a frank and extended discussion which included questions ranging from visitation rights for families of Arizona prisoners transferred to Texas to the future of Arizona's Universities. At the close of the meeting, the Governor-Elect encouraged the group not to forget the other 14 counties in Arizona beyond Maricopa. To remember, that the are African American communities state wide that need to be represented here. Mr. Johnson assured the Governor-Elect the AAASLG represented African Americans from across the state.

Under the leadership of Michael Johnson and State Representative Leah Landrum-Taylor, the AAASLG is an alliance of African American elected officials, clergy, business, community and educational leaders who have come together to provide a unified voice and to develop strategies. The bipartisan groups long term goals are to influence how the actions of State's government affects African Americans. Issues of concern

include the effects of State shared revenues, where the cutbacks are going to be, what appointments the Governor is going to make to her executive staff, what department heads the Governor will appoint in state government, They will also look at issues dealing with education, employment, health and public safety.

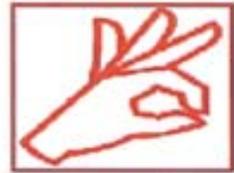
Their next action is to meet in January to continue to build the strategy. In the meantime however, lead by Reverend Thomas, Representative Landrum-Taylor and with the assistance of the Arizona Informant newspaper, the AAASLG will host a reception and tribute for Governor-Elect Napolitano at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, 1401 East Jefferson Street, Phoenix, Arizona. The event will be held on Wednesday, December 18, 2002, with a reception at 6:00 p.m. Pilgrim Rest Baptist was also where the first African American political debate between all candidates for governor was held earlier this year.

For more information on the Arizona African American Strategy Leadership Group, contact Phoenix City Councilmember Michael Johnson at 602-262-7493.

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Gifts Worth Giving

Sarah's Gifts and Collectibles

by: Angela Miller-Brooks

Sarah McCoy

Owner/Partner

Type of Business:

Specialty Gift and Collectable Boutique

Location:

5270 North 59th Ave. Suite 3, Glendale, Arizona

Contact Info: 623-847-6040

Years of Service: Less than 1 year (Phx)

Employees: None

Partner: Ella Montgomery

Background: My sister and I owned a business called Sister's Boutique in California, during the late sixties. In 1999, I started another business in Vellejo, California. I didn't want to close the business upon my moving to Arizona so, I transferred it to Glendale.

Description: Sarah's Gifts is a very warm, unique and friendly place to visit and shop. We have a little bit for everyone. It does lean to the Afrocentric flavor, however; we do have something for everyone her. We have collectibles from notables Annie Lee and "Touched by An Angel Star," Della Reese. We also have scarves, neck ties, bath and body fragrances, frames, art pieces and much more.

Location: Location is important. Prices are as well. In Phoenix, I was shocked to find such a big difference in the requirements for opening a retail shop. Prices in Phoenix were so high that I was unsure I'd be able to afford the monthly payments. Shop and space owners often require triple net before occupancy is obtained. Fortunately, I found this place in Glendale which is over 1,500 feet and the owner was willing to work with us.

Clientele: Sarah's Gifts clientele includes the entire African American community. Of course the items we carry are of use to everyone. Our doll, art and figurine collection is wonderful. Some are limited editions like the Annie Lee Collection. When you actually think about it, we don't have an extensive representation of our culture in most leading department stores or specialty stores. The demand and opportunity was there.

Value: Our items have value to those who have an eye for style, elegance and smart investments. Figurine collections such as the ones we carry, are very valuable and have been considered so for years. Some pieces such as our Holy Ghost figurines go for \$600 to \$1300. High end shops have only recently begun carrying our art. We can see them in the front displays. Black art of any type has always been beautiful. Others are just becoming aware of our diversity.

Competitive Edge: I am up front and care about my clients and the service they receive. I have the ability and capacity to order from out of state special items and my prices are lower than those in locations such as Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and Chicago. I also take charge payments which makes it easier for all of my customers.

Marketing: We've only been open in Phoenix since October of this year. Although we've not done a great deal of advertising the location is great for our business. The foot traffic here is continuous throughout the day. Thanks to my niece who owns a small braid shop in the rear, Sarah's Gifts was recently on (we began at 4 am) the Channel 12 early morning news. Chusette, my niece, does a great job of getting our name out there and television exposure is always good for business. She actually braided the reporter's hair during the morning show coverage.

Internet Marketing: We don't have an Internet presence other than Chusette's e-mails.

Networking: Every contact is a networking extension. I work in faith. I feel that your good name and what you do will push your business.

Business Obstacles: They're only obstacles if they're seen as obstacles.

Enhancing the Sunset

by: George Brooks, Jr. Ph.D.

Art Treasures That Matter Framing Concepts

Jackie Muhammad Sr.
Owner

By appointment only

Telephone:

480-217-4593

Type of Business:

Picture Framing

Year Established: 2002

Years Experience: 18 years

Number of employees: 0



Description: Art Treasures That Matter Framing Concepts specializes in enhancing art work through creative framing ideas. Framing enhances the art work. You can not properly frame art based on a pre-program color scheme on a chart. For example, on a very clear day, if you see some clouds roll in as the sun goes down, you are struck by the beauty of the scene. The clouds enhanced the sunset. The same is true for the picture frame. The frame should not take you away from the art, but pull you into it.

Products: Custom framing services, conservation framing, home/office consultations and artist referrals.

Clientele/Market: I currently have approximately 150 clients. My company is reaching out to high end customers who appreciate framing as an art form. Also part of the clientele are artists who need quality framing for what ever venture they may be doing.

Goals: I would like to be more of a consultant. To physically frame the art is a skill that many people have. But the designing and bringing it together, is the part that really makes the art.

Break though Opportunity:

After being in retail business for 7 years, I realized that I enjoyed selling art, but my gift was in framing. I learned I wanted my clients to know me not for the art I sell, but instead for the framing work I do.

Mission: To provide quality picture framing, that defines my client's taste, while offering a courteous and personable touch of service. When you bring me a piece of art, together we should be able to find the right combination that satisfies your (the customer) spirit.

Key to Success: Have faith in God and yourself. Start the process of finding out why God put you here. And then always follow that first mind in righteousness. To be success, you must know what success is and that it is not always money. When you can find peace and contentment, that is success. Heaven is within.

Most Memorable Experience:

There is nothing greater than meeting people, doing things and becoming friends. Also, I found out that I was a servant of the people. Once you understand that relationship, it is a wonderful thing.

Marketing: Word of mouth and business cards

Motivation: To get back to who is Jackie. What is my sole purpose.

Special: For any purchase over three hundred dollars (\$300), if you say you read it the Ebony Cactus, I will give you 20% off.

Dazzler

by: Angela Miller-Brooks

Dazzle With Baskets

Proprietor:

Cynthia Kerford

Location:

1434 S. Hedge St. Mesa Arizona
85210

Toll Free :

1-877-291-8119

Local and FAX:

480-844-7361

Type of Business:

Full Service Gift Solutions Provider
Corporate Gifting * Personal *
Holidays * Ethnic * Custom Labeling

Established: 1999



Description: Dazzle with Baskets began and still operates as a sole proprietorship. Its a full service provider of gifts, quality gourmet foods, balloons, promotional, center pieces and conference needs. I provide gifts to both corporations and individuals. The business began in August of 1999. I had a flair for arranging gifts in a container that the recipient wouldn't have expected. Family and friends enjoyed receiving my gifts at Christmas and birthday time. The creativity started for me then.

Clientele: My clientele (most are corporate HR Personnel) are small business owners and hiring business managers. These are people who are looking to say thank you for a job well done. My clients have included organizations who were involved with various Phoenix golf tournaments.

Value: I have local vendors but, I've found that if I go out of state for product I get the best value and that value is passed on to the client.

Competitive Edge: My edge is that I am able to customize my baskets to client needs. This customizing also involves: design, product content and price.

Marketing: I noticed that there was a market and a need for unique gift baskets here in Arizona. I worked for American Express and Boeing. At both companies there was always some special occasion where a unique gift was given. I've seen really nice gift baskets at conferences and events and I thought; there has got to be a better way as well as room for another business in the market. I began marketing my gift baskets with the networking groups that I belong with such as Toastmasters International, National Black MBA Association and with my church, family and friends.

Networking: Since my beginnings, I was a member of the Greater Phoenix Black Chamber of Commerce. Being affiliated with that group has proved to be very beneficial for me. It offers great benefits but as a business person we have to use our dollars wisely. Great representation is what's important. That is what I was looking for when I made a decision to change from the Phoenix Chamber to the Black Chamber of Commerce.

Business Obstacles: Many entrepreneur magazines have rated the gift basket business as one of the top small businesses that can be started with as little as five hundred dollars. However, one has to become creative when seeking inventory because wholesalers have an opening minimum of \$50-\$100 or in 2 case volumes. Therefore, creativity is key to initial start up and savings. When I began my gift basket business I was fortunate enough to find the Arizona Professional Gift Basket Association. That associating was very helpful and instrumental in that now I participate in co-op buying. This allows my company to get in on a purchase for myself and we meet the minimum order qualifications. Its a win-win situation.

Internet Marketing: The Internet's been remarkably helpful. It allows me to the ability to look out for trends, colors and what the competitors are doing.

Hot from the P.H.X.

by: George B. Brooks, Jr. Ph.D.

**Valley Design Concepts
Ultimate Funk Shop 3
2806 E. Thomas Phoenix, Arizona
Proprietor**

Cedric Smiley

602-954-3206

Years in service: Feb 2002 Funk Shop 3

Promotional services: 20 years

Employees: 3

Description: Valley Design Concepts (VDC) is a promotional company that owns and uses The Ultimate Funk Shop 3 (UFS3) as its base for contracting, design and promotional work. UFS3 houses the office for VDC and is also a retail store that sells promotional items between festivals. There were two others Funk Shops. Eighteen years ago at 4th and Mill for 5 years, and 3 years ago at 24th Street and Washington.

Background: I went to ASU 3 1/2 years in the 70's as a theater major. In January of my fourth year I moved to Anchorage Alaska where I lived for a full year. There I found my freedom and my character. When I returned I started by promotional enterprises. I was the original Windfall Willy for the Arizona lottery. I was also Freddy Firebird for the Phoenix Firebirds and Willy the Wonder Dog for the Phoenix Giants. I developed the "Mill Man" character for the Mill Ave Merchants association.

Products: (VDC) Promotionally we offer characters for grand openings, parties, holidays. We offer character development for corporate identity. We provide route distribution, churches, retail stores, restaurants. Any fact of graphics, design and promotional photography.

Products: (UFS3) We own our in-house product line Hot from Phoenix™. The only answer to "I love NY." We say you are just not cool if you are not "hot from Phoenix." We have our own concept, Funky USA. Funk America and we will Funk Phoenix First. We also sell Incense, oils, candles, watches, hip hop, fubu, jeans, belts and colones. Well sell every thing that is funky If it is hip and trendy, we try to bring it in.

Clientele: Primarily it is for those who can identify with the concept. However, we say funk is for everybody. So we provide a diversity of products to meet the needs of a diverse clientele base. For promotions, we serve any production/promotion activity, concerts, plays, etc. I've worked with the Back Theater Troop and the Arizona Theater Company. Any corporation that has a character identity or any corporation that would be willing to develop a character.

Motivation: Truth be known, I think its a calling. I do what I do because God has blessed me to do this. God gave me my identity, my character and made me who I am.



Networking: Word of mouth and civic activities including fairs, festivals, plays and concerts. What ever I can become active and involved in. For example, we had a booth at the last George Clinton (P-Funk) concert where we did merchandising and sales. We've also done Sunday on Central, Fourth of July, Cinco de Mayo. The next one will likely be King day 2003.

Break Through Opportunity: I had the first Funk Shop for 5 years. The second for 2. Out of every thing I ventured to do, the first funk shop was the most successful thus far. I came back to this retail space for it was presented to me as an opportunity. The rent was right, the land lord was willing to work with me and concept is rock solid.

Competitive edge: Funk is a niche all by itself. Hip hop is hip hop and every body is doing it. To be based in the Funk however, is a whole different premise. Funk is a combination of every other concept. Its a little hippy, its a little trendy, its a little cool, its a little hot, its a little bit of everything.

Special: We offer 10% off for anyone who mentions the Ebony Cactus.

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Taylor Made Promotions

by: George Brooks, Jr. Ph.D.

Charlie M. Taylor: Owner

2580 W Erie Street

Chandler Arizona 85224

Phone 480.786.0773

Fax 480.786.5460

taylormadepromotions@cox.net

www.taylormadepromotions.com

Established: 1998

Employees: 0

Personal Background: BS in business from Arizona State University, Masters in Marketing from WIU. I worked for US West (Quest), IBM and ATT and still do consulting from time to time.

Description: Branding is more than the creation of a memorable name or logo. Branding reflects the customer's impression about you as a company, and the quality of the products or services you provide. Taylor Made Promotions provides businesses, organizations and individuals with advertising products to promote their name.

Location: I was born and raised in Arizona and love it here. Phoenix is also an excellent business location. 99 percent of my customers are in Arizona. As more become computer savvy, I plan to push the internet base of my business.

Competitive Edge: Because I am a home based business I can give my customers a quality product at a low price.

Revenue: The business is still growing by leaps and bounds. Business went down a little due to 9/11, but is now growing at 20% a year.

Clientele/Market: I really cater to the small business. Anyone I talk to is a potential client. I provide products for family reunions to large company affairs. Anyone who needs marketing or promotional items, I market to.



Impact: The impact is not great because I have a lot of competitors who can drive down the quality and the cost. I tend to pull out of bidding wars because that is counter productive for all parties.

Products: I sell anything you can put a logo on including: "T" shirts, pens, pencils, mugs, cheerleading outfits, accessories and stereos. For Christmas, we have Christmas cards and all kinds of business accessories including watches, calculators, and stereos.

Break Through Opportunity: After working in the corporate world and due to a variety of family and professional circumstances, we decided to move to Phoenix. I had grown tired of the corporate life and was looking for a home based business. I was introduced to this business by a friend in Los Angeles, I tried it and I really enjoy it.

Philosophy/Goals: They are one in the same: customer service, quality, accuracy in the order and the low prices.

Motivation: The opportunity to help individuals and companies market their business at a reasonable rate. For example I found a truly unique award for ABE magazine. I really enjoy this type of work. It is exiting when I can do something and someone can smile about it.

Key to Success: Learn as much as you can and get a good education.

Memorable Experience: I do a lot of work for the schools. Instead of the typical plaques, I came up with small unique "iceberg" trophy which they were really pleased with. I try to not be like other firms and have a distinct difference in the products that I offer.

Special: When making an order, indicate you saw this profile in the Ebony cactus, get a free gift.



Taming the Desert

by: Angela Miller-Brooks

Africana

Nick Alozie, Ph.D. CEO

Type of Business: African Art

Gallery & Custom Framing

Location: Phoenix, Arizona

Address: 1780 West
Montebello

Phone: 602-242-3332

Mobile: 602-284-2943

Website:

www.public.asu.edu/~nalozie

Years of Service: Since 1999

Employees: 1

Revenue: \$500K (in 2000)

Background: I'm a naturalized U.S. citizen originally from Nigeria. I've been in the United States for 20 years. I've lived in Texas, Iowa and now Arizona. In 1989, I received a Ph.D. while attending the University of Texas in Dallas. Now, I am a tenured professor at Arizona State University. At the university I teach in the School of Public Affairs.

I started Africana in 1999 with the idea of offering the best available in African American goods to the public. When I first entered the business, I saw how expensive things were. I sought to alleviate the cost factor which keeps many of our people and others from doing more than merely admiring the art. I wanted to help people enjoy the art by affording them the ability to actually buy it. I began as a sole proprietorship but, Africana is now a corporation.

Description: Africana is an art production business that caters mostly to African American clientele. In many ways, we are not like other places that sell African artifacts. We do not sell what is considered *market art*. Essentially, market art is factory produced art. We sell original art from villages in Africa.

Africana is a full service gallery which means we do our own production. Typically, some galleries purchase the merchandise already framed by other people and prepare the art for resale. We are a manufacturer. We purchase all the necessary merchandise that we need. Then, we put the picture together with our own hands.

Africana continued on next page

The process is not more expensive as some people might think. If one is doing the production, the savings can be estimated to be 45 to 50 percent less than if the purchase was made in a regular gallery. Although we have the capacity to get into the wholesale market, we've decided not to go into that area just now.

Clientele: My market is the African American buyer. Many people from Scottsdale, Tucson and other parts of the valley shop at Africana. At Africana, we have items for all types of people priced from two dollars to six hundred dollars.

Value: We take great pride in our work. I think the clients can see that. Because we have production at the store, clients are able to save money. Saving has always been of value to those who are buying.

Competitive Edge: The business owner has to realize his or her abilities and be careful not to expand to rapidly. The length of time that Africana has been in business has been a period of learning. We began with a general concept, that we should reach out and offer services at reasonable prices. Also, we recognized that the business would not be able to survive from the sale of the art alone. That's why we offer other services such as the custom framing. By supplementing, we can offer for example, a \$300 picture for half the price which is a tremendous benefit to our customers.

Marketing: The name Africana was developed to capture the idea that this is really supposed to be an African American business. I came into this because as I spoke to many people, it became very clear that there really was not this type of African American grassroots store here in Arizona.



CEO Nick Alozie, Ph.D.



Business Goals: We are keeping to our original business plan. When Africana began, our start-up capital was about \$35,000 to \$50,000 and was all from personal savings. I kept in my mind the thought that there's nothing that can stop me from becoming a businessman. Our strategy is to be recognized as one of the top three leading African American businesses in Arizona.

Networking: At the University I teach Theory. There, I can teach others that starting and maintaining a successful business can be done. I often take the opportunity to talk to young brothers when they want to start their own businesses. The young need to know that they too can do it. They need to know that they have what it takes to become successful in business.

Business Obstacles: When the Arizona Mills (a Tempe, Arizona designer outlet mall) was constructed, I went to open up my business. I could not get a space. So, I waited until the other merchants' sales dropped off. At that time, available space was opened and I was able to begin my business there. It's not easy to get into a place like that. Just because a business person has the money doesn't mean that person can do what ever they want. There are obstacles everywhere.

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Construction Compliance Pt. 4

Special guest lecturer: Darrel Keesee



Darrel Keesee provides specialized services in EEO audits, investigations and HR performance. He is a veteran of over fifteen years in high technology and associated industries. Additionally, he has been an active member in a dozen high schools for business and computer instruction. Darrel has assisted diverse groups of students in finding their career paths in society as well as motivation for at-risk high school students to stay in school and achieve advanced training. He acquired a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Management from the University of Phoenix and Master of Education in Human Relations and Counseling from Northern Arizona University. For questions and answers, forward them to: **darrel_keesee@hotmail.com**

Recruitment practices are continued in this issue. As mentioned in the last issue, space does not allow for a complete and contiguous accounting of the detailed analysis. Referenced to these sections are contained in 41 CFR 60-4.3(a)7.a. through p. Descriptive activities are annotated to justify compliance of the contractor. Audit parts are grouped within the audit sections, as the regulations are not always taken in a sequential manner. Sub-parts are listed to aid in clarifying the audit requirements.

Sub-part d relates to contractors that use organized labor for its crafts. This section is one of the few that the Agency (DOL/OFCCP) actually works for the contractor. Under this part a contractor must notify the Agency when a trade union, for which it has a collective bargaining agreement, did not refer minorities and women. Additionally, this part also deals with a union that impedes the referral process for the contractor to meet its good faith obligations in minority and women recruitment.

What does it mean to say a contacted union is impeding the contractor's efforts? If there is an exclusive agreement exists to use only union labor, then a contractor would refer all potential applicants to the appropriate union hall for acceptance processing and their certification of skills. A contractor is required to track the applicants that come to the business for employment. Should the contractor notice there is a deficiency in applicants referred to the union for hire but not referred back to the contractor without explanation, the contractor has an obligation to report these actions to the Agency.

Part i is very detailed in its scope and application that takes many contractors by surprise. These actions need to be initiated by any contractor that is providing training or apprenticeship no-later-than one month before accepting applications. These notifications are also in effect for verbal and written communications for recruitment to other entities. Documented recruitment communications can be to minority and community organizations, training facilities that include women and minorities, and to related schools that have women and minorities as part of the student body.

Notification of recruitment is not enough. In the notifications for recruitment the contractor must be descriptive of the employment openings. Notices need to include a job description, any testing involved, as well as screening procedures used in the selection process. For contractors that use labor halls, these agreements typically place training and qualification processes in the union's court for implementation.

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The Job Search Pt. 5

Special guest lecturer: Ella Dawson



Ella Dawson is the Business Department Chair and instructor of Everest College, (formerly Rhodes College), in Phoenix, Arizona. She is the senior staff member, with fourteen years, at the college and is currently responsible for three program areas of Accounting, Business Administration, and Office Management and Technology. Each program offers an Associate of Applied Science Degree. She has also worked in the position of Area Director with the Arizona Cactus-Pine Girl Scout Council, in Phoenix, and was the first Black female supervisor at Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation, in Petersburg, Virginia. Her undergraduate and graduate studies were completed at Virginia State University. For related questions and answers, forward them by e-mail to:

mandedawson@qwest.net.

To the readers of the "Job Search" segment, I hope you have utilized some of the information generated from my past four articles. This is Part V of our job search strategies.

We often wonder, how is it that employers respond to some contacts and not to others? One of the things I look at when looking for potential candidates to interview include not only the resume content, but a simple thing like the "cover letter" accompanying the resume as well. Therefore, let's look at the purpose, content and why the cover letter with your resume is so important.

The purpose of the cover letter is to accomplish three things. It should introduce yourself and your reason(s) for writing; it should sell yourself, and it should help to make a plan for yourself. Because of these areas, you should never send out a resume without a cover letter. The cover letter's purpose is to also serve as a separate function from your resume because it should describe what you can do for the employer.

The overall content of the cover letter should contain three main paragraphs. The first paragraph needs to be an attention-getter to the hiring manager. Include why you have sent the resume, where your source comes from (i.e. newspaper, magazine, date of your source), demonstrate your interest in the position, show your connection to the position with your career field of and professional interests. If you have been referred by a mutual friend or company employee, it is okay to mention them in your letter (be sure to get their okay, though). Avoid any inaccurate statements, but, be specific as possible.

The second part of the letter can briefly state the skills you bring to meet the employer's needs. Details can be limited or brief simply because your resume will provide more details for the position. Too many I's can be a turnoff (i.e. I feel, I want, I can, I am, etc.) Instead, begin your sentences with how you can help. This will take some getting use to. Go on line to the variety of sites on getting hired, cover letters, job hunt, etc. to give you insight on sample cover letters to practice with. Some research is always needed in any endeavor and this is no different. Use "key words" to help in your search, especially if you are not sure of specific sites to view.

The third part of the letter is your closing. It should contain or indicate what you would like to happen next from this cover letter contact. Indicate where you can be reached with accurate home phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and/or cellular contact. Don't ever have a potential employer wondering how you can be reached. You can also indicate that you will make contact in a few days, or follow-up with a phone call to make sure your cover letter and resume has been received. If you are not sure of a contact name, that information can be gathered when you do your follow up to the company of interest.

Some additional tips:

- a. Personalize the letter--make every effort to have a name of the recipient.
- b. Be natural--use action words to describe and simple language and sentence structure to convey your message.
- c. Be specific and get to the point--your first paragraph can lay the ground work for why you have written.

Dawson Continued on Next Page

- d. Be positive--don't complain about previous or present work situations. Display a positive attitude.
- e. Display professionalism--pull together the factors that will display why you should be interviewed.
- f. Provide a professional looking document--show balance and formatting skills.
- g. Discuss availability--be sure the employer can reach you by the means you indicate in your cover letter and resume.
- h. Proofread, Proofread, Proofread--there is nothing worse than reading a document with misspellings. It is a turnoff and could be a reason for you not getting the interview.
- i. Sign off on your document--as you would any other business letter. Don't allow the employer to wonder about the validity of your document.
- j. Use quality paper and a good printer--for both the cover letter and resume; be consistent.
- k. Maintain a file copy--use a 3' x 5' card attached to keep track of the results of any contact made with the potential company and for future reference.

Many job-seekers dread writing the cover letter or do not use a cover letter; mainly because we don't think about its effectiveness, or no one perhaps has told us the significance of its usefulness, or our writing skills are not up to the task. Cover letters (and resumes, which will be covered in the next segment) require good, solid writing and attention to detail. The cover letter is addressed to a particular person, which should be the person who is hiring, and it requires the job-seeker to answer the question: "Why am I the best qualified candidate for the job?" A well-written cover letter can play a large part in how effectively your resume will be viewed. The cover letter should also provide a small summary on your expanded resume content. Lastly, keep in mind that a good cover letter may get you an interview, and it is your chance to sell yourself to a potential employer, which is why the cover letter with your resume, is so important. Good luck and let me hear how you are progressing!! My e-mail address is located at the beginning of this article.

My e-mail address is located at the beginning of this article.

Economic Agendas

by: George B. Brooks, Jr. Ph.D.

The following are the results of our second monthly measure of what our local economy is doing. Every month, we will ask a sample of at least 10 individuals the following questions:

1. **Where is the economy now?** Assuming a number of 10 to be the best that the local economy could be doing and 0 to be the worst, in your opinion, what number would best describe the economy at this moment?
2. **Where is the economy going?** Assuming a +5 to indicate the local economy is getting better over time as fast as possible, a -5 to indicate the economy is getting worse over time as fast as possible, and 0 to indicate the economy is getting neither better or worse, what trend would you assign to the local economy at this moment?

We don't claim this monthly study is performed using established statistical sampling protocols. However, we believe the results presented here will be useful in providing some insight into the opinions of some African Americans on where our nation is going. The following are this months results:

Name:	Response 1	Response 2
Jackie Muhammad	6	+4
Cedric Smiley	4	0
Dale Everett	4	0
Cash Sutton	4	+1
Charlie Taylor	5	-1
Pete Hemingway	5	+2
Clovis Campbell, Jr.	7	+3
A. J. Miller	3	-2
Vivian Smith	5	0
Alice Harper	4	-1

Results:

Where is the economy now? (4.70 ±1.16) Within a margin of error of 1.16 points, our respondents continue to believe the economy is hovering just barley below the mid point of 5.

Where is the economy going? (0.60 ±1.90) Within a margin of error of 1.90 points, our respondents believe the economy is just barley creeping up but generally is not changing. Both measures are slightly improved from last months (4.43±1.74) and (0.07±2.06) respectively. However, the change is well within the standard deviation. Again, the continuing uncertainty is given as the reason particularly with the looming war with Iraq. Once again, we do not claim our poll is scientific. Never-the-less it is an interesting snap shot.

To use the hyperlinks, save the magazine to your desktop and then re-open. The embedded hyperlinks may then be used.



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Why Advertise in The Ebony Cactus

Here is why you should advertise in The Ebony Cactus. Primarily, the Cactus is designed to connect you with your desired customers.

1. **Demographics:** Part of the mission of The Ebony Cactus magazine is to showcase African American businesses to all who could use their services. The magazine's format is simple, open and easy to read. The content is focused on people and issues that will be both interesting and valuable to both small and large business. In this case, small business people include both those whose full time occupation is their business and those who may have a full time job, but work their own businesses on the side. These are large demographics. Free access to the magazine via the internet also works to increase the number of eyes viewing the magazine.
2. **Capacity Building:** To "Build Capacity" is to increase a business' ability to do more and to overcome barriers to its growth. One way to accomplish this goal, is to build synergistic relationships with other successful firms and/or workers in an industry segment. The Ebony Cactus is a source of timely and comprehensive information about what African American businesses are doing and what services they offer. This information will give you the data you need to increase the capacity of your business and improve your ability to grow.
3. **Building Bridges:** The Ebony Cactus is read by increasing numbers of companies seeking outsourcers, contractors and partners. Their readership further enhance your opportunities for growth.
4. **A New Application of Established Technologies:** Unlike a web based Ezine, The Ebony Cactus does not dwell on the net. Instead, like any print magazine, is sent directly to the reader. There it resides on their computer desktop just as a newspaper would reside on the reader's kitchen table. From there the magazine can be read at any time. Macintosh and P.C. users can view it equally well. If so desired, copies can be made by the reader for their personal use. Add to this the ability to hyperlink (weblink) directly from the magazine. Now the direct link to your website can travel with The Ebony Cactus wherever it goes.

The Ebony Cactus magazine is a powerful source of potent information for small and large businesses alike. We encourage you to use this service and allow us to help your business grow. If you would like to know more, drop us a line at: publisher@TheEbonyCactus.com. Let us help you Make It Happen!

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Friday, January 3, 2003



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Got the blues over all of the bills that are waiting on your after this holiday season? Come out to our event and talk to some debt counselors and financial experts that will assist you conquering your financial woes. We will also donate \$100 towards any one of your bills! Don't miss out!

 Hennessy®

To learn more about First Fridays:
www.1stfridaysphoenix.com
Hotline: (480) 513-8384

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