

THE EBONY CACTUS magazine

Vol. 1. No. 13

December 18, 2002

A New Perspective on Business

Inside

Spotlight on

Pete Hemingway

Aztec Engineering

and

Ricky Colter

Midway Auto Team

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Happy Holidays. Welcome to the thirteenth edition of The Ebony Cactus Magazine. 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 32,000. 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, The Thunderbird Graduate School of International Management, 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, Arizona State Government offices, Roosevelt School District, South Western Bell(TX), BellSouth (Atlanta,GA), NTL.com (UK)/ Arizona, California, Nevada, Minnesota, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia, Tennessee, Kansas, Oklahoma, Washington State, Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina Japan, Belgium, United Kingdom, 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)

Who is Profiled in The Ebony Cactus?

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 Fraternity, Planned Parenthood and First Institutional Baptist Church with strong business backgrounds and programs of interest to the African American Community have also been profiled. In addition, 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.**

The Ebony Cactus magazine's definition of business includes individuals who sell their services for a fee. In other words, any one who earns a living, is in business. This unique perspective allows The Ebony Cactus to provide additional insights on individual success, for example the spotlight on Ricky Colter in this issue.

Expanding concept of individual success, The Ebony Cactus also presents the Success 101 seminar series. In success 101, notable achievers discuss their personal "keys to success." This conversation between the writer and the reader explores those nuances of experience that are often lost, but are now recorded here for posterity.

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The Year in Review: Success Breeds Success

“Successful people are those who dare, risk and challenge conventional thinking.” Some time ago (over 20 years ago to be exact), I had an idea. With fond memories, I can recollect sitting in a greenish-blue webbed lawn chair with legs manufacture of very easily breakable aluminum, sweating heavy drops of water from my forehead and thinking of ways to catapult a writing career. I used to tell everyone who crossed my path about “The Plan” I was putting into place. I was even so detailed as to point out that I could see myself communicating with masses of people simultaneously.

Fast forward now to just a few years ago. Someone once emphatically told me that what makes me happy means nothing to most folks. I took that statement to heart and could not understand how something I was interested in could not be of interest to another. After all, it was something positive and useful. Even so, I detached, regrouped and began to align myself with those of similar life aspirations. Success comes in many packages and is seen differently by different groups of people. What is considered as being exceptional by one may not be worth two lizards in Death Valley to another.

In March 2002, my husband and I launched this Internet business magazine. We had no idea where is was going. What we were sure of was that it would go where none had gone before. To my knowledge this still holds true. I can say that at one point, I asked myself (when we had less than 100 readers) if this was really going to work. Were people interested now in something I was interested in? The answer so far has been yes. In a nutshell, you are those interested people I've been searching to align with. Your numbers are in the tens of thousands to date. You are located in places such as; Arizona, California, Nevada, Tennessee, Illinois, the District of Columbia, Africa, Japan and the United Kingdom. It's been a great year and for that, I want to take this time to publicly thank you all for your readership and advertising support.

Many of you are seeking to expand your business knowledge or your businesses in general. Conventional methods have been great mainstays, but you are not conventional. You are growing and need another outlet, a source of empowerment. You seek to align with others of similar ambition. You seek to go where your contemporaries have not gone before and so do I. I am on a success journey and as the new year unfolds I hope you'll continue to come along. In the meantime, may you continue to have vision coupled with prosperity all the days of your life. Happy Holidays from the Ebony Cactus. Enjoy.

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Trent Lott is not alone!

Last edition, I implied now that affirmative action is before a conservative Supreme Court, it could be ruled unconstitutional. I also stated, that we need to have a new plan to deal with its possible loss. I still believe this, and will expand on these thoughts in later editions. However, over the past couple of weeks, we have received two powerful messages as to why affirmative action remains exceedingly important today.

First, let me state, this is not a Republican vs. Democrat issue, but Trent Lott is not alone in his thinking. He just happened to be a Republican who got caught so the light is shining on his side. I'm sure there are others perhaps, as Julian Bond stated “a significant minority” out there whom also could use a good dose of sunlight. Secondly, beyond Lott's hidden feelings on race, there was also the release of a MIT study which clearly demonstrated that when qualification are equal, Black sounding names (and thus the individuals who hold those names) are discriminated against in job “call backs.”



A powerful argument used by the foes of affirmative action is that; “affirmative action may have been useful in its day, but times have changed and it is no longer needed.” Trent Lott and the MIT study show us that discrimination remains rampant and systematic in America today and is far from a thing of the past. Now to most Black professionals who have been working for a while, this is old news. However, to those who do not experience racial discrimination in their personal lives, this must be an unwelcome revelation.

One important facet of the anti-affirmative action argument above is correct, times have indeed changed. Today, few dyed in the wool racists blatantly show their heads. Most are content to be the wolf in sheep's clothing with good jobs and control over who is hired, fired and what legislation is passed. However, I would wager that most discrimination in the United States is totally unintentional. As subconscious as locking their car doors when a Black man crosses the street at an intersection. This is what is meant by “systematic.” It is the almost instinctive desire to protect ones group against a rival group, tribe, people or race. However, the beauty of the human is our ability to overcome and rewrite our instincts to adapt to the situation at hand. This is why we have laws, to overcome our instincts for selfish behaviors. They establish a set of rules for all to follow to the benefit of the individual and the society. Racism is an evil and discrimination is one of those selfish instincts that is counterproductive. Affirmative action is an effective remedy for the effects of both. Enough for now, on with the show.

James Rodriguez, M.S.W., a member of the faculty at Mesa Community College (Mesa, Arizona) is the Chairman for the Arizona Fathers and Family Coalition (AFFC). An organization whose members and associates share a common interest in creating more opportunities for the children of both working parents; the AFFC will convene in Phoenix for its 4th Annual Southwestern Fatherhood Conference from February 5th through the 7th of 2003 at the Phoenix Airport Marriott Hotel. For information call 480-461-6135. Register on line at www.azffc.org



Vision- The vision for the Arizona Fathers and Family Coalition (AFFC) was necessitated by the needs of children who are impacted by the absence of their fathers. The inaugural conference established a commitment to addressing those impacted individuals.

Mission- The mission of AFFC is in developing opportunities to promote the advancement of those in poverty towards maintaining family sustaining incomes, developing healthy family relationships and, increasing the involvement of responsible fatherhood.

Opportunity- The conference provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate a commitment for fathers, families and the community at-large. The conference provides another opportunity as well. It enables a diverse group of the country's leading professionals to present as key notes and workshop lecturers.

Conference Highlights

- A Native American workshop track to address the unique needs of Native American fathers and those working with Native American families
- The Inaugural John S. Martinez Father of the Year Scholarships and Awards (In October of 2002, Connecticut State Representative and National Conference of State Legislators Hispanic Caucus President John Martinez was killed in an automobile accident. He was an instrument of change and has left a legacy of undeniable compassion for the underprivileged through his work in both government and the community)
- 30 workshops presented by some of the nation's leading professionals

Keynote Speakers

This year's conference will host well-known keynote speakers:

- Tommy W. Dortch, Jr.- Chairman of 100 Black Men's National Board of Directors and President/ CEO of TWD, Inc.
- Wallace O. McLaughlin, Ph.D. - President and CEO of the Fathers and Families Resource, Inc. (an affiliate of Wishard Health Services in Indianapolis, Indiana).
- Loren Sekayumptewa, Ph.D. - CEO of the Native American Community Health Center in Phoenix.

Key Endeavor- The conference participants should return to their respective communities with a sense of urgency. They are encouraged to make plans to enhance services, public policies and increased faith-based involvement. These endeavors are not only directed toward fatherhood programs but, toward other programs such as welfare reform, higher education and health and human services as well.

Southwest Independent Black Filmmakers celebrated at Annual Showcase!

It's an educational celebration and a great finale to Black History month 2003. The Arizona Black Filmmakers Showcase (AZBFS) is an annual film showcase dedicated to supporting and promoting the dynamic works of Black filmmakers in Arizona and the Southwest. The AZBFS wants to celebrate the true essence of Black Independent filmmaking and is soliciting feature film entries shot for under \$100,000 and short film entries shot for under \$50,000. This challenges Black filmmakers to be competitive by pushing the envelope, utilizing their creative resources and displaying their true talents by shooting a feature or short film on a "true" shoestring budget. The Black Filmmakers Association is a non-profit organization created to celebrate African American's in Film and is the only competitive Film showcase for African American's in Arizona. Celebrated during February, the Black Filmmakers Association brings undiscovered African American Directors, Writers, Actors and Producers together in a collaborative environment, giving them the opportunity to show their work and network with film industry professionals.

The first annual event put together by this group was the Arizona Black Film Festival which was held in February of 2001 at the AMC Theaters in Downtown Phoenix. The opening night reception, attended by over 300 movie-goers, community leaders and film buffs was held at the famed "A League of their Own" in downtown Phoenix. Next year's event will take place February 21st through the 23rd, 2003 at the Arizona Science Center in Downtown Phoenix, Copper Square.

The Showcase and celebration will include a complimentary opening night Reception to the public with live entertainment and celebrated guest speakers at the Arizona Science Center on Friday Night February 21st from 5:30 – 7: 30 p.m.. The Official Independent Film screenings will be held all day Saturday, February 22nd , including workshops, panel discussions and a resource fair at the downtown Phoenix Science Center and in Heritage Square. An award presentation will take place Saturday evening February 22nd at 7:30 p.m. at the downtown Phoenix Hard Rock Café. Tickets to the event can be purchased the day of the event or on our website detailed below.

Detailed information is provided at the Arizona Black Filmmakers website, www.azblackfilmmakers.com, through e-mail azblackfilmmakers@hotmail.com, or by calling 480.632.5744.

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Spotlight on

Pete Hemingway

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

Title: Founding Principal
Vice President

Business: Aztec Engineering Inc.
a subsidiary of Aztec Engineering Group

Type of Business: Transportation Engineering

Location: 3747 E. Grove Street
Phoenix Arizona 85042

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Email: phemingway@aztec.us

Web: www.aztec.us

Years of Service: 10

Joined firm 4.5 years ago

Founder: Mr. Hemant Patel

Minority owned firm

Revenues: 15 million



Background: I am a registered professional engineer (PE) in Arizona, with registrations pending in several other states. I am a graduate of the University of South Carolina with a BS in Civil Engineering. I had graduate studies in business at Lamar University in Texas as well as Arizona State University in Tempe, and graduate studies in engineering at the University of South Carolina. I received my professional engineering license 10 years ago.

Description: The main background of our business is transportation engineering. We are involved in the design of many major projects across the (Phoenix) valley. Some of the projects I'd like to highlight include a segment of the loop 202 freeway where we were the prime engineering consultant. We are the only Arizona based company that has done a major freeway project in the state of Arizona. One of our goals is to become the premier Arizona based engineering firm. Our focus is to service people here in the valley. This is demonstrated by our locating here in South Phoenix.

Other major projects that we have worked on include the last segment of the Squaw Peak freeway to the 101. We are currently working on the largest traffic interchange to be constructed in Arizona, the "SuperRedTan", where the Red Mountain, Superstition and San Tan freeways will converge in the east valley. Its about a 5 year design project that we have just started. These were three of the largest design projects ever put out by ADOT (Arizona Department of Transportation).

We also do a number of municipal projects for the City of Phoenix including sewer lines, several roads, bridges and renovations on the Civic Center downtown. With Valley Metro Rail, we are the only local firm to be selected to design a segment of the new light rail system. Another major project we have won a significant role in is the automated people mover at Sky Harbor International Airport. We are also the project manager responsible for Civil Engineering for the new Sky Harbor consolidated rent-a-car facility, a two hundred and fifty million dollar project. I serve as the project manager for several of these efforts.

We do smaller projects as well. For example we are working with a gentleman (Christopher Bailey) on a manufacturing facility at 16th Street and Broadway in Phoenix, that will bring jobs and high tech job training to the area repairing jet engines for Boeing. We will be as proud to have assisted in this project when it opens as we will be with the completion of the consolidated rent a car facility. We are a part of this South Phoenix community and will remain a part.

Location: We made a conscious decision to be where we are. While other have talked about being part of the community it was easy to move up-town. We saw this as an opportunity to invest in the community of South Phoenix and we were here before the recent renaissance. We are proud that we have filled 3 building here and in the past 4 years, and have gone from about 40 to 140 employees and expansion into two other states, Nevada and California. When you go to another state, you know there is that local firm you must team up with. We wish to be that firm for Arizona.

Hemingway continued on next page



The SuperRedTan Freeway Interchange

Goals: Long term is to continue to grow to a 400-450 person firm within the next 10 years. This will be done through providing the highest level service we can to our clients. We not only wish to grow geographically, but into various disciplines. For example we are venturing into web pages, subsurface utility engineering and environmental engineering (NEPA, Environmental mitigation etc).

Business Model: Diversify not only geographically, but into different market segments. This gives protection against market cycles. If one segment slows, lost revenues may be offset by another segment that is growing. We never enter a market without first having that expertise in-house. If we did, we could do the client and our employee owners a disservice by not being able to complete the job.

If some body has a skill set and they have a proposal and sound business plan on how to develop a new market, we sit down and discuss it. If we as a company have the necessary resources, then we present it to our board. This is an entrepreneurial view, where each segment of the business is literally its own enterprise supported by the larger organization. This model is what has allowed us to grow. You also have to leave your ego at the door. To build a business you have to be willing to do what is necessary. Even those things you may done in the past, but advanced beyond. This may include sweeping the floors and typing your own memos.

Competitive Edge: The entrepreneurial concept is part of it. Also the concept of doing the best possible job for our client, even if this means making less profit. This helps to develop long term relationships. If we do a good and fair job, when time slow down, the clients will remember us and still wish to do business. My task is to help the client reach their goals as efficiently as possible.

Revenues: About 15 million annually.

Impact: We have demonstrated that a local engineering firm can grow. At one time we were part of the local disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) program. However, we are proud to say that have now out grown that designation. We now successfully compete against firms that do billions of dollars annually. We have cultivated a sense of professionalism and we are a firm that people want to come work for.

On the community side we re-invest in our neighborhood. Many members of our firm serve on commissions within the City of Phoenix. I for example serve on the Development Services Advisory Board for the City of Phoenix. We support the community any way that we can, including youth, sport and professional organizations. We want to see our community grow. Some of our employees have purchased homes here.

Clientele: Ninety percent of our work is public sector including work for ADOT, City of Phoenix, City of Mesa, City of Avondale and the City of Glendale. We also work with individuals and other engineering firms.

Target Market: Our target market is mostly transportation related, primarily in the public sector. This may always be our core business. However, as we diversify into other markets, we will look at opportunities as they present them selves.

Break Through Opportunity: Five years ago, our president took on the philosophy to hire good people believing that with good employees, the business will follow. And business took off from there. The founder also made the decision to spread wealth with an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan). I was one of the founding principals of the company.

Motivation: My motivation is to have fun. To every day get up and make a difference in somebody's life. To have the opportunity to take a dream and make it real is exciting to me.

Philosophy/Key to Success: Provide the highest level of service to our clients. If you do that you will always retain business. I was always taught that we as engineers are professionals and that we need to conduct ourselves accordingly and that there is a higher level of service that come with that. It is your responsibility to provide that service.



12.31.02

Happy New Year!
03

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FFP Style

Spotlight on

Ricky Colter

by: Angela Miller-Brooks

Title: Sales Manager
Business: Midway Auto Team
Type of Business: Auto Dealership
Location: Phoenix, Arizona
Address: 2201 West Bell Road
Phone: 602-866-6600
Email: ccybuch@vtaig.com
Years of Service: 2 years
Employees: Over 10
Company Revenue: Undisclosed



Background: At one time I worked in the stock market. There were changes in the market and business was not going well. Investing was not what it once was. So, I decided to get into something else. Throughout my career I've always managed to be involved in the area of customer service. I did have some formal training in sales and I was looking for something different. A friend (Rodney Berry) who's employed within the automobile industry thought I'd be a good candidate for automobile sales. After discussing it with him I decided I'd give it a go. Initially, I thought I was too soft for the business due to all the horror stories we hear about car dealers and salesman. In reality, it's a totally different ball game.

At Midway, we're taken through a series of classes before we're even let loose on the lot. There's a great deal of technical and general training involved which takes about six weeks to complete. Personally, I can say that by no means was I unprepared to talk to customers after my training. I actually graduated second in my class and sold a car on my first day out. The goal was to sell 7 a month. At the end of my first month, I had sold 22 cars. Since that time, I've been salesman of the month approximately 5 times. I've been just recently promoted to manager.

Description: Here at Midway, we are an auto team. We're a family and that philosophy is encouraged throughout the company. Being a part of a family sounds a lot better than just being a part of an auto dealership.

Specifically, we are the number 1 dealership in Arizona and the number 3 dealership in the world. Sales is the number two business in the nation. At Midway there's money to be had. The average salesman makes in the neighborhood of 60 grand a year. Some can make as much as or more than a medical doctor.

Location: Bell Road and Camelback are probably the hottest streets for the car sales industry here in Phoenix. Years ago, our location was considered to be far away but, not anymore. With all the surrounding developments, we're more than ever considered to be just a part of the city.

Clientele: I serve the public and that public includes families. Our Altima is the number one seller in the nation. We do sell to ball players and businessmen but, our target market is the general public.

Value: We have something for everyone at Midway. We can accommodate someone with the budget for a \$2,500 vehicle. We also have high end Infinities, pre-owned Mercedes, and even a pre-owned Bentley. Our motto is like - *If you can't find a car here you can't find a car anywhere.* In the back of our facility we have over 30 acres of new cars. If we don't have it we'll get it.

Colter continued on next page >>>



“My business goal is to own a dealership.”

Ricky Colter

Competitive Edge: I love my job. I do recognize that I am a salesman and it's my business to sale cars but, I'm not pushy. Midway encourages us to be personable. Also, we believe we have a car for everybody. We really know our clients. Those who purchase from us receive surveys which enable us to understand the buying market better. Our customers are recognized on birthdays, anniversaries, etc. I really feel that Midway, in many instances, goes beyond the norm. I want to build a relationship with my customers. Midway as well as I want not only your business but, your children's as well.

In reference to staying competitive, we've just introduced a new vehicle - The Murano . Its a new choice for those who want an SUV but, want something just a little different. An SUV positioned between the Pathfinder and the Xterra models, it has a 245 horsepower aluminum engine, and a DVD - based Nissan Navigation System. We call it the urban SUV. This vehicle can be for anyone but, it's marketed most toward the urban individual.

Marketing: In so far as the minority, I've gotten Midway involved in marketing toward Arizona's African American public with events where we've had an entire vehicle on a resort ballroom floor. Midway has been involved in other events such as the Juneteenth celebrations and the Martin Luther King Basketball Tournaments. At this point, I feel that there isn't anything I can ask them (Midway) for and they wouldn't do it. Their eyes, ears and wallets are open to do what it takes to get the business.

Business Goals: My business goal at this point is to own a dealership. I believe the goal of the dealership is simple, to corner the market.

Keys to Success: Dedication

Motivation: I tell my employees that if they're loyal, this company will take care of you. What motivates me is in seeing a person leave the lot happy.

Business Impact: As far as the African American community, I feel Midway is possibly more open than other dealerships. As far as myself as a salesman, I began to do things (such as sponsorships) that brought me out and in front of new potential customers. Over a short period of time, I believe about 40 percent of my sales came from those types of activities. So, going to meet the public in an unconventional way has definitely had an impact on business for myself and the company.

Breakthrough Opportunity: I think it's been the support of upper management. They really took me under their wings. That alone allowed me to feel I could do anything. At any other business that I've been associated with, I've never seen as much support from upper management as I've seen since I've been at Midway. Success breeds success and that's what their doing.

Business Obstacles: The hours are long. Sometimes, it may take being here until 1am to close the deal.

Philosophy: You should always be able to look yourself in the mirror and not feel bad about what you see.

Most Memorable Professional Experience: I sold three cars to the same family in one day. They came in to buy an Xterra and left with 3 vehicles. We had such a good time. That was a wonderfully rare day.

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Construction Compliance Pt. 5

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

The referenced sections contained in 41 CFR 60-4.3(a)7.a. through p are the sixteen steps that contractors engaged in construction contracts that are direct government contracts or government-assisted contracts. This issue contains the last recruitment practice and the training audit items.

To finalize the recruitment area of the audit, sub-part j is used to support or not support recruitment compliance through use of referrals from existing employees. This part is specifically aimed at referrals from incumbent women and minority employees. Efforts must again contain focus on the recruitment of additional women and minorities from incumbent women and minorities. Once again these efforts must be documented to develop a paper trail for the Agency to follow. This element will be a verification questionnaire item during the site visit.

More comprehensive elements of part j are additional youth employment opportunities. The key wording here is "Where Reasonable" in the workforce. These will include support areas in the contractor's business, after-school, summer and vacation periods for female and minority youth. Along with support positions, on-site work is also included. What the Agency does not understand is the liability issues involved in these areas of work. Additionally, union contracts may not allow on-site work without completion of an approved training program and referral to the contractor.

Training has only one item in the audit procedure contained in sub-part e. Compliance can be part of the complied recruitment resources. Of particular note are programs that are funded or approved by the Department of Labor. One such program is Job Corps. The contractor can also develop their own OJT (On-The-Job-Training) program or participate in a program that expressly includes minorities and women. Apprenticeship and upgrading programs also qualify. A check with the contracted agency may provide resources to help assist in this area. Union contracts may preclude self-initiated programs in these areas and also may have to be approved by DOL's training division.

Documentation is the key criteria in all these audit requirements. It is what the Agency is looking for to support your good faith in compliance of the contractual requirements. Make sure they are valid as there should be the expectation that the sources will be called to verify your effort.

Coming in the next installment are the requirements that deal with the Affirmative Action Policy (AAP) itself. These include the policy elements and their implementation. Many parts are comprehensive. It must be remembered that failure of any part of a sub-part is reason to issue a violation and be under the control for additional reporting to the Agency for at least a year.

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Managing in the Millennium

Special guest lecturer: Zondra Evans



Zondra Evans is the Founder of Empowering You, a sister company to Empowering Women. Zondra is the President of Empowering Women and the CEO and President of Novado Solutions, Inc., a Northern California consulting and staffing agency.

Zondra has over 25 years working in a corporate environment for one of the top Fortune 500 companies in the Silicon Valley. She is a Certified Solutions Provider for One Page Planning and Performance Systems, Virtual CEO, and The Alternative Board, where she coaches CEOs and Business Owners on business strategies to improve performance.

Zondra Evans is a captivating, compelling motivational speaker on the platform, arming her audiences with current, creative, and practical ideas for increasing leadership skills and inspiring individuals to "Tap Into Their Greatness".

info@empowering-women.org

Rapid change in technology and the rise of the information age means that in the third millennium, the nature and pace of competition and the ways in which firms assess their environment will be changing. Parallel to the rapid technological change is the increased level of globalization. As companies compete in the global market, the competitive resources and positions of companies become more complex, making it risky for firms to assess their environments assuming a single theoretical framework. Instead there is a need to better align your resources and ensure that your employees are focusing on the most important initiatives to move the organization forward.

One area that is showing a great deal of change at the start of the new millennium is Human Resources Management (HRM). No longer is the human resources department a passive filter of "human capital" flowing into companies. Organizations have a need to link specific Human Resource programs to strategic organizational initiatives. Much of this strategic focus and practice has been adapted from combining models of human resource planning with strategic planning models, using both perspectives as a link between human resource management and the companies' performance. Taking Human Resource and Strategic Planning into consideration, these two perspectives are complementary and it is most important that both planning systems highlight the importance of making sure that your employees' skills, knowledge, abilities and motivation are being utilized to meet your companies overall strategic initiatives.

Organizations can use a variety of practices to improve employee skills. Your company can concentrate on improving the quality of the employees you hire by using Behavioral Interviewing Techniques to ensure that candidates have the experience to be successful in your companies unique environment. Organizations can improve the quality of current employees by supplying complete training and development programs. Most companies are absent from Employee Development Plans, which are important to meeting the companies' goals, and are a very good method to encourage an atmosphere of continuous improvement. Secondly, motivation is a key ingredient to creating a positive work environment. The effectiveness of skilled employees will be limited if they lack motivation to perform their jobs. Employee motivation levels are affected by the form and structure of an organization's Human Resource Management Systems. Organizations can use merit pay or incentive compensation programs that reward employees for meeting specific goals. Employees however, want to be treated fair and equitable. Providing high monetary rewards alone can enhance employee performance but usually only for the short term. There have been multiple studies showing that job content is a critical motivating factor for many individuals, particularly professionals. Therefore, companies cannot buy loyalty or hard work over the long term with high monetary rewards alone.

Finally, the way in which a workplace is structured may affect the performance of an organization to the extent that skilled and motivated employees are directly involved in determining what work is performed and how this work is accomplished. Employee participation systems and having every individual understand the goals and strategies of an organization and how their role contributes to the overall success of the company is paramount in the new millennium. Employees' want to feel that being engaged and committed will support the growth of the company and possibly upward or lateral mobility for them and their career. With greater latitude for employees to organize their own work there becomes a severe need to improve the method of communicating the companies' goals, strategies and plans. I promote the use of a "One Page Plan" as the means to align your resources, improve accountability and obtain the results for increased profitability. One way this is accomplished is through the use of a "360-degree goal-setting" system. This system involves an employee, the department and all of the internal and external customers. By tying performance goals and rewards to expectations set by customers, companies are more likely to meet their overall performance goals, increase employees' morale and promote an environment of self-motivation and true employee satisfaction and loyalty.



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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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