

Editorials & Comments

Blacks Lack Marketing Skills?

Too many of black business operators lack marketing skills more than they do management skills.

This lack is doing more to spell the doom of black businesses than all the racism, and failure oriented government programs in the world.

Sales is the cornerstone of the American economy, and nothing happens in this free enterprise system until the sale is made. But one of the first things you hear from black folks when you mention sales to them is: "Oh, I can't sell man. Shoot, I can make the stuff, but sell it, now. Ain't no way."

With this and several attendant attitudes, black businesses are facing some of the greatest pressures they've ever faced.

As a matter of fact, it's quite an interesting paradox, because it would seem that today would be the best day ever for blacks in business. With black Americans earning an unprecedented \$80 million annually, and spending it about as fast as we make it blacks in business should be sitting pretty.

But blacks in business seem to have overlooked one obvious fact about money; the more dollars you have, the more options you have, and the more likely you are to exercise them.

Historically, black business goes back to the time when blacks had little money, and therefore wasn't a serious economic threat to whites who wanted to be racist.

But that has changed today! Now, many whites are still racist, but they will hide it long enough to make the money.

What that means, quite frankly, is that black businesses must begin competing with the options.

That's just another way of saying that blacks in business must learn more about marketing.

Consumer's Dollar

Nationally known black economist Andrew Brimmer summed the situation up this way: "...With rising incomes, an increasing proportion of the better-paid black families are migrating out from the central-city neighborhoods (which are the principal service areas of black-owned firms) to suburban areas. Partly reflecting this trend, black firms are encountering growing competition for the black consumer's dollar. In this competition, black businessmen are barely holding on to their shares of the black community's total income. While black businesses are diversifying their activities, they are still concentrated mainly in traditional lines—such as retail trade and personal business services. Moreover, lines in which blacks are

heavily represented are projected to grow more slowly than the economy as a whole through the middle of the next decade."

Let's look at another possibility. The government allows businesses two cents off each piece of mail that a company separate and bags. Can you as a private business, separate and bag mail for businesses, charging them one cent a piece, cheaper than they can do it themselves?

These are the kinds of questions, plus careful study and analysis that leads to marketable businesses.

And that has been our biggest lack of business people. We haven't done enough homework, and often found ourselves caught between a rock and a hard place. Then we began blaming black people for not patronizing us, criticizing black workers for not working for us, when the fault is our own.

Another point, we must stop trying to be all things to ourselves. Too many of our businesses are still sole proprietorships or at best limited partnerships. We must begin thinking incorporation.

Sharing Larger Chunks

American Telephone and Telegraph is the world's largest corporation, and is probably owned by one million people. We have got to begin trusting each other with a piece of the action.

Once in business, if we've done the necessary homework, we must begin sharing larger chunks of the cake. Why try to learn the tax laws overnight, and make a mess of it, when we can contract our tax work out to a black in business to do just that? Why try to keep our own books, when we can pass that action on to a certified public accountant? Why try to master the intricacies of effective advertising programs when we can let a qualified ad agency handle our budget?

The examples could go on and on, but the bottom line simply is we must begin working better together.

If blacks in businesses are to become the leaders they should be, shouldering the responsibility of providing jobs for our people, setting examples for our young people, and generating the capital that will give us a stronger toehold in the American economy, they must strive for excellence.

We must overcome petty jealousies, petty differences, political divisions, and all the other self-imposed obstacles that prevent us from claiming our rightful place in America's mainstream.



as i see it

They Call Him "Coach Moore"

by Gerald O. Johnson
Post Columnist

You walk into the gym and two basketball teams are going through pre-game warm ups. Pacing in front of one of the team chairs is a tall, medium build man. Occasionally, this man will stop and talk to a passerby. Mostly, though, he just watches one of the teams in particular, warm up.

Warm up stops and the team in blue and gold run off the floor and cluster around this man. A few words are spoken and the words of the players take to the floor.

The other team rushes onto the floor and a hand shaking ritual takes place. A whistle blows, the ball is tossed in the air and the game is on.

The boys in blue and gold jump out to an early lead with a run and gun type offense. The play gets a little sloppy and the opposing team closes the gap. The man directing the blue and gold calmly sits in a chair watching the action. Occasionally this man will call a player over to where he sits and say a word or two. Immediately, the sloppy play stops and the team is once again under control.

The man, coach Robert Moore, and the team, the Johnson C. Smith Golden Bulls appear to be headed for great things in their quest for the CIAA crown. Coach Moore in only his second year at the helm has taken a mediocre program and turned it into a



promising program. The excitement generated by the resurgent Bulls is something to behold. His ball club has the whole town humming.

What has fascinated me, though, is this man's ability to organize, instruct, discipline, and direct 20 to 30 boys. He never publicly criticizes his players. He never stamps his foot on the floor or become overly enraged at a bad call. He never seems to get overly perturbed at his players when they become disarrayed on the floor. He is like a shepherd herding sheep into going in the same direction. For the Bulls that direction is capturing the CIAA Division crown; a direction that has alluded them here of late.

Mr. Moore appeared on the scene last year and guided the Bulls to a 14-10 record. This would appear to be a mediocre record if you didn't emphasize that 4 of the 5 starters were freshmen. Only Francis "Sonny" Proctor gained a start-

ing role as a returning letterman. Moreover, the Bulls were the most feared team in the CIAA by tournament time last year. Two of last year's starting five made the all CIAA and the All Tournament Team.

This year after losing all CIAA freshman Donald "Mr." Tibbs because of knee surgery, the Bulls have come out the gate smoking. They look very impressive and indeed could take the crown this year. Replacing all CIAA Mr. Tibbs is a freshman, Roosevelt McGruder, who is destined to become an all CIAA player.

The highly touted Francis Proctor last year finally became the basketball player everybody said he was. Another credit I will give to coach Moore's tutelage. He will be all CIAA again this year barring any unforeseen circumstances.

I've watched Mr. Moore for the last four years, prior to coming to JCSU, guide Virginia Union through impressive seasons. It was a Coach Moore recruited and coached team that won the CIAA championship last year, even though he was not at the controls last year.

Truly this man is one of the finest coaches in the CIAA and we should be proud that Virginia Union's loss was JCSU's gain. I still can't figure out how Smith got him, though. It is not true to their form.

How can I say that! I once worked there!

From Capitol Hill

Charlie Calls It Good - Shirley Calls It Bad



Alfreda L. Madison

good.

Representative Shirley Chisholm, from the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of New York City says that 37 percent of her constituents are unemployed and she calls that bad. So she has endorsed Senator Kennedy. In her press statement Mrs. Chisholm said that many Democrats across the country and in congress have expressed dissatisfaction about the country's state of affairs for the last two years. The basic principles of the Democratic

Party have been eroded. In that same tone, just after President Carter's State of the Union message and a few days thereafter sending his partial budget to congress, Mr. Rangel said the President seems to have forgotten to what party he belongs.

Mrs. Chisholm stated that during the Carter administration human needs programs have eroded. She said the Carter Presidency, in 1976 held out hope for the hopeless, offered an agenda of promises which have been unfulfilled for the little folk, the poor, minorities, farmers and disenfranchised. She stated that with malice towards none and charity towards all, she was endorsing Edward Kennedy for President.

Senator Kennedy said that Mrs. Chisholm will serve as senior advisor to him; that he will not recommend gutting job programs, there must be special needs programs for the youth of this country. He spoke of the present education loan programs as hav-

ing the same offerings for the rich as for the disadvantaged. The Senator also spoke of a better housing and health care programs.

In response to a question of being labelled as a "big spender", Kennedy says he has been criticized for working for the elimination of discriminatory practices in the government's economic policy for the needy, minorities and disenfranchised. Senator Kennedy has been criticized for saying that the Shah conducted one of the most vicious regimes of all times. When asked about this the senator did not back away from that statement, but strongly emphasized that Iran should turn over the hostages. He said the decision to bring the Shah to the country should have been discussed so the people could have had some part in the decision making. He feels that before granting permanent asylum to the Shah, again the full case should be laid out before the people, allowing them an opportunity to express

their views.

When asked about the statement of some leading educators, that the press and leaders have failed to enlighten the citizens on all of the ramifications of the Iranian case; the Shah's repressive regime and his greater concern for Ameri-

can-European interest than for his own people and their constant requests to President Carter not to let him into this country for fear of what it would cause at home, even probable hostage-taking, Mr. Kennedy said the people will learn all of that later.

FmHA Stresses Energy Conservation

Rural homeowners in Mecklenburg County who need to upgrade their homes may be eligible for financing for the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA).

Robert V. Shaver, FmHA County Supervisor, said that in addition to financing the purchase of homes, the Agency also has funds available to families who already own homes that need insulation and or weatherization improvements.

FmHA will offer loans for energy conservation improvements to all rural families of low or moderate incomes who cannot obtain adequate commercial credit and are otherwise eligible for FmHA loan assis-

tance. Mr. Shaver said that this is not a new loan program, but a part of the total program FmHA has had for a number of years. However, the Agency is stressing the need to conserve energy and help families combat today's higher cost of home energy.

More information may be obtained at the FmHA County Office located at 1501 I-85 North, Room 106, Charlotte.



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**TO
BE
EQUAL**

Politics Of Affirmative Action

National political campaigns generally shed more heat than light on key issues. This one will probably be no exception.

There are indications that affirmative action is going to be injected into the campaign. That can only oversimplify the issue, generate misunderstandings about what affirmative action is, and impact negatively on race relations.

One candidate has already staked out an anti-affirmative action position, using code words like "reverse discrimination" and saying the programs are "divisive." But what is divisive is the constant misrepresentation of affirmative action.

The courts have consistently ruled that most affirmative action programs are constitutional and conform to both law and common sense. Further, many of the most widely attacked programs have been ordered by the courts themselves.

Not that the courts have enthusiastically leaped into the fray. Rather, they have reluctantly ordered strict programs as legal remedies for blatant discriminatory practices against blacks and other minorities.

In some cases, notably involving local police and fire forces, the courts faced overwhelming evidence of persistent refusal to hire blacks. Their response has sometimes been to order that specific numbers of blacks be hired over a period of time.

That's about as close to "quotas" as any affirmative action program comes, and even those are temporary - limited to remedying illegal acts of discrimination.

But most public and private affirmative action programs never go that far. Most - if they are to be effective - include numerical goals that may or may not be met, depending on the circumstances.

That makes sense. Business never mounts a sales campaign without specific targets and guidelines on how to meet those targets. Why not use targets and guidelines to meet minority hiring goals? Without them such programs are bound to fail.

In the WEBER case, the Supreme Court backed some sensible guidelines on affirmative action programs. It stressed their temporary, catch-up nature, protection for majority workers, and the necessity of their use as remedies for discriminatory practices that locked blacks out of jobs.

At a time when most blacks are poor or near-poor, when black unemployment rates are double those for whites, and when black family income is little more than half of white income, "reverse discrimination" is a bad joke.

Check any desirable occupation or profession, and you find only a small percentage of positions are held by blacks. That's a clear result of persistent discrimination.

And it's not enough just to say "we won't discriminate any more." The nature of hiring systems, the escalating demands for non-employment-related "qualifications," and the informal job-finding network in which employed people recommend their friends, all work against equal opportunities.