

Knox Bridges Gaps Between Companies, Consumers

By Russell Clark
Post Staff Writer

Bridging the gap between consumers and companies is what Derrick Knox aims to do with his new D & A Computer And Financial Service. The service is designed to make consumers aware of the products they need without thumbing through the phone book while also offering them a 15 percent discount at stores affiliated with D & A.

"It's the information service of the future," says Knox, a 1986 graduate of Wingate College. "We're going to help consumers find the products they want at the right prices while bringing more business to small businesses. For example-if you wanted to buy a pair of Reebok sneakers and you wanted information on the stores that carry them, all you have to do is call us and we could give you a list of stores, their location, prices and you also get a 15 percent discount," explains the energetic businessman.

Does this sound like something you could be interested in? This is how it works. First, D & A compiles a list of all stores that agree to offer the 15 percent off to consumers who pay for the service. As a customer, all you have to do is present your D & A identification card when paying for items to receive the discount.

"D & A is in business to help people-both consumers and businesses," stresses Knox. "We want the consumers to have all the information they need right at their fingertips without having to look through the yellow pages. All they have to do is call us up and we can search for the stores that carry the products they need in seconds through our program that is titled 'Company Cares.'"

The promising young business will also offer data-base



Derrick Knox
...Aspiring entrepreneur

Photo By Calvin Ferguson

management, information search, information classification, tax preparation, book-keeping, computerized accounting and financial counseling to assist you in business dealings.

The aspiring entrepreneur has extensive training and experience in computers and is currently pursuing his MBA degree at UNC-Charlotte. At Wingate, the profit-conscious businessman learned computer theory (PASCAL) for business he gained experience in COBOL and the higher level of FORTRAN. He earned his B.S. degree in business administration with emphasis in management while gaining a minor in economics. He is a 1981 graduate of Garinger High School where he stood out in basketball averaging 22 points and six rebounds per game his senior year.

"I chose to attend Wingate because of its high academic standards," remembers the self-motivated Knox. In college, he was active in the Black Awareness Club, Christian Student Union, Activity Program Board, The W Club, while earning All-NAIA District-26 honors an awards in basketball.

Born to Willie and Annie Knox of Char-

lotte, he comes from a business-oriented family. His father was the first black engineer to work for Southern Railroad while his mother operates and owns the Knox Beauty and Barber Styling establishment on Tom Hunter Road. He has two sisters, Alfreida Mangum, 29 who works for First Union and Veronica Grier who is employed by Barclays America.

How can a recent college graduate start his own business? Well Derrick explains how he got started. "I was flipping through the yellow pages one day looking for a place to get a gift for my mother. I got frustrated after I couldn't find out how much the item was going to cost and what kind of service the company offered. So I began to talk to some of my professors about my idea to start my own information service," he recalls. "Next, I went to companies and retail stores to see what they thought about it and they said it sounded good but that I just needed to get a positive response from the public. Afterwards my sister and I did some telemarketing to see if people would like the service and we got good responses."

How will a consumer know what kind

of service they will get after they purchase an item? "We research all companies by using the Better Business Bureau to see what kind of

grade they have on service. We relay this information on to members of the "Company Cares" Program," Knox explains.

How does D & A profit? "The only money we make is from the members who pay a small fee for the use of the program and from other services that we offer," he enlightens.

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