

BUSINESS THIS WEEK

MBA's Told To Perfect Their Skills

NEW YORK - George Lewis, vice president and treasurer, Philip Morris Companies Inc., advocated "integrity" and "creativity" as vital attributes for a career in business. He told a recent meeting of black MBA students, also, to perfect their communications skills while preparing to work with cultural diversity in an increasingly international marketplace.

Lewis was the keynote speaker for the 9th Annual MBA Conference at the Columbia University Graduate School of Business in New York.

In addressing his topic, "Career Positioning For Global Success," Lewis said, "you cannot assume that your boss will be an American."

Lewis told the group to learn to speak foreign languages, to get an understanding of foreign currencies as well as the geographies and cultures of foreign lands.

"A new corporate buzz term is 'managing diversity,'" Lewis added. "There are cultural differences. You have to deal with that. The good news is, so will members of all the other cultures."

Most people, Lewis said, are most comfortable among people like themselves.

"But you have to be prepared to develop relationships," he said. "You can learn amazing things about what's really going on the company by playing golf or racquetball, or just being sociable after work."

More than 300 black business students and guests attended the two-day session on "The Black Professional: Positioning Ourselves For Global Success In The 1990's."

To demonstrate the growth of international business, Lewis told the students that when he joined Philip Morris in 1967, the company had operations in 11 foreign countries.

Lewis said: "We now have operations all over the world, and they're generating roughly 31 percent of our total revenues and they are the fastest growing parts of our business."

Lewis complimented the students for their successes, noting, "you had to be good to get this far. You are people who can make a difference."

He also cautioned them to remember that "you owe people. Not those who went before you, like me. You owe your brothers and sisters who'll be following you. It's not enough to achieve success - you have to leverage it for those behind you."

Urban League Holds Job Expo

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scheduled to be at the expo, including corporate giants IBM, Bell South Advertising and and First Union.

Donald Bowen, Vice President of Programs for the Urban League, said this year's expo will be basically the same as last year's, except for a change in timing.

"Last year, we had the first one in May, and it wasn't as useful for college seniors as we would've liked it to have been," he said.

Last year's expo was a success, Bowen said, with about 2,000 job-seekers attending. "The afternoon and evening sessions were quite good, which even exceeded our expectations," Bowen said, adding that 3,000 people are anticipated to come this year.

Unemployment is low in Mecklenburg County, Bowen said, but many workers are underemployed with jobs that don't take advantage of an individual's education or experience.

"I would think it would be fair to say there are people looking to upgrade rather than looking for that first job," Bowen said.

Competition between companies for available workers is spirited because of the low unemployment rate, which makes the expo a useful recruiting tool, Bowen said.

"There is a competition for the available labor," he said. "There are others who are having a difficult time finding people for jobs."



Coca-Cola was one of the many contributors to the 7th annual BEEP (Black Executive Exchange Program) held recently at Johnson C. Smith University. Pictured with the door prizes donated by the company are: (l-r) Veronica McGill, Cheryl Buchanan-Martin, Jodi Douglas and Terry Peterson, a Coca-Cola rep.

Transport Dept. Seeks To Assist Entrepreneurs

RALEIGH - The N.C. Department of Transportation is giving a helping hand to disadvantaged business enterprises through its entrepreneurial development program.

The program, which was begun in January 1984, is coordinated through NCDOT's Civil Rights Office and is geared toward helping disadvantaged business enterprises develop the skills to seek and perform highway construction contracts.

Covering such subjects as management styles, business law, construction bidding, scheduling and cost analysis, the program is offered once a year and is divided into primary and advanced phases, each of which lasts a week.

For the past three years, the development program has been offered at N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro.

Persons interested in learning more about the program should contact Brown at 919-733-2300.

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