

BUSINESS

Media excellent in promoting, building business

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Q: Dear Regina: My company, a fast-growing personal training enterprise that coaches many corporate executives, young professionals and athletes, was recently featured in a major national healthcare magazine. My secretary is mailing this piece to my current client base. Any suggestions for how to use it to build business?

A: In many cases, copies or reprints of actual press clips beat a brochure, or any sales tool that you could mail to a client base — if the story captured the message that sells your services and the true essence of your company. Why restrict your mailing to your current client base? This is an excellent marketing tool to mail to potential clients, to insert in your company's media kits, or as a handout at conventions, trade shows, and conferences. A media endorsement always outshines you tooting your own horn.

Q: Dear Regina: How might we market a business development firm? My buddy and I, both business administration majors, with corporate and entrepreneurial experience under our belts, would like to direct newly-emerging companies to graphics



Regina's
Q & A

By Regina Lynch-Hudson

people, public relations professionals, lawyers, and all the right experts to take their businesses to the next level. What marketing angle should we come from?

A: Are you aiming to start a referral service or a viable business that offers services that budding businesses can really sink their teeth into? Come from an angle of offering more than just lip service. Every year thousands of entrepreneurs get free informed advice — and they don't have to comb through colossal haystacks to find it. Over 400 Service Corps of Retired Executives

(SCORE) offices nationwide and online (serving more than 290,000 small-business clients per year), and state entrepreneurial centers make feasible anything from focus groups to funding proposals to fiscal fitness — for free.

Today, sources such as The Small Business Administration, Internet news groups, churches, and industry, professional, and trade associations offer expert advice — at no charge. Sure, practical advice can be marketed as consulting. However, to be effective and you must profitable provide valuable tangible services as well, or consultations targeted to the client's industry, filled with information that isn't readily available elsewhere. Develop a client-centered view of the services you provide. In what ways will your services improve, enhance, develop, restructure, or resolve conditions or issues for the client? If you're selling intangible ideas, what tangible results will your ideas produce?

Send marketing and public relations questions to: Regina Lynch-Hudson, The Write Publicist, c/o Regina's PRemedies, 6129 Queen Anne Court, Norcross, GA 30093. Or call (770) 717-7020. Lynchhu@accessatlanta.com.

NAACP grades hotels, urges boycott of three franchises

Special to Sentinel-Voice

BALTIMORE — The NAACP is urging people to boycott three national hotel chains that the civil rights group says have poor track records in minority hiring and business development.

In a survey released recently, the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People ranked Best Western International Inc., Adam's Mark Hotels and Omni Hotels Corp. at the bottom of a 14-chain list, earning grades of D+, D and D-, respectively.

"Hotels that receive a D will not receive NAACP business dollars," said Kweisi Mfume,

president of the Baltimore-based organization. "And we will take every opportunity to inform consumers of our decision and urge them to make similar choices."

The NAACP ranked hotel chains in five areas: the percentage of black employees, franchise owners and vendors, the percentage of advertising dollars going to minority media, and the percentage of donations going to black charities.

The rankings were based on information the chains themselves supplied.

In each case, the percentage needed to get an "A" was 14 percent. Ten to 13.9 percent rated a "B," 6 to 9.9 percent was a "C" and anything less than 6 percent was a "D." Failure to report rated an "F." Blacks make up 13 percent of the U.S. population.

Cendant Corp., the parent company of Days Inn, Howard Johnson and Travellodge, was at the top of the list with a B rating, followed by Promus Hotel Corp., the parent company of Doubletree, Embassy and Hampton, with a B.

Marriott International Inc., Westin and Choice received grades of C+; Holiday Inn, Wyndham, Radisson and Hilton earned Cs; and Hyatt and ITT Sheraton were given C-s.

Best Western, which has 3,400 hotels in 77 countries, said it was unfairly penalized because it was unable to provide all the information the NAACP had requested.

"We have never had a disagreement with the NAACP or its objectives and goals. But our problem is, we feel the survey is comparing apples and oranges," said Skip Boyer, a spokesman for Best Western.

Best Western is an association of independently owned hotels, and its headquarters doesn't have access to information about individual properties and their operations, Boyer said.

Michelle Bennett, a spokeswoman for Omni, said the 42-hotel chain didn't provide all the information the NAACP had asked for because Omni is privately held and some of the requested information was proprietary.

Both companies received failing grades on the NAACP report card last year, but they were minimally affected by a boycott, Boyer and Bennett said.

The lodging industry takes in about \$80 billion a year, with blacks contributing an estimated \$4.6 billion, said NAACP spokeswoman Jeanne Hitchcock.

Reparations: Blacks' mad money

Some think we are "mad" to seek it

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Are you one of those people who's been brain-washed into believing that blacks don't deserve reparations? Bet you think

Business Exchange

By William Reed,
publisher of Who's Who in
Black Corporate America.



fact that racial discrimination and inequality are still pervasive in American society. Black unemployment is typically twice that of whites, black incarcerations are ten times

that African-Americans who advocate reparations for 400 years of racial bondage are "mad." Have you explored the subject enough to know that there's ample evidence that blacks deserve reparations compensation that could tally at least \$40,000 for each of us? Are you a black who just wants to maintain the status quo?

When you take a close look at the subject, ignoring blacks who go along just to get along, you'll discover millions of black people "mad" about discrimination that still exists in America demanding just payment for wrongs that continue being done to them. The Japanese, Native Americans and others have been compensated for wrongs done to them. These African-Americans are asking "When will the U.S. pay what we are morally and financially owed?"

For the record, Black Reparations are: 1) the debt owed to blacks for the centuries of unpaid slave labor that built America's early economy and 2) debt owed from discriminatory wage and employment patterns blacks have been subjected to since emancipation. People who just want to go along accept white people's story that slavery ended three generations ago and they "didn't have anything to do with it." Some blacks say "we should get over" the idea of being owed for slavery and work toward a modern "colorblind" society. These people ignore the

that of whites, black education and schools are funded and staffed less than white schools, and economic parity between blacks and whites is in decline — from a high of 75 cents for blacks to each dollar earned by whites in the 1980s down to 70 cents now. Affirmative Action and Minority Set-Aside programs, established in the 1970s to redress past discrimination, have been turned into terms like "racial preferences," as we are being told "all things are equal now."

For those who think reparations proponents are "mad," note to this definition of insanity: "doing the same thing in the same way and expecting a different outcome." Blacks keep trying to assimilate into a "colorblind" America that doesn't exist for them. Isn't it time we tried something new? Isn't it time we pursued something new, and for which we have an undeniable claim? Reparations is an issue loaded and ready for us. Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D. Mich.) has introduced legislation to study reparations, Bill H.R. 40, every year in Congress since 1989. Conyers' bill forces the U.S. to acknowledge, after 130 years of silence, the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery. It requires an official inquiry be made into the lingering negative effects of slavery on living African-Americans. A commission will examine slavery and study the impact and

(See Reparations, Page 7)



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