

BUSINESS



Discovering value in creative concepts beneficial

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Q. Dear Regina: I have a start up company that specializes in selling an ethnic food product, and we need marketing ideas about how to extend our product line.

My partner and I are also interested in developing slogans, advertising, and publicity. We were referred to a top PR person who wants to charge \$250 an hour to help come up with ideas to take our company to another level. How do we gage the return on investment for services that are not tangible?

A: It is the "idea," which comes from the theater of the mind, which makes or breaks a company. Right now your company lacks a concept — which can make the difference between it gaining national attention or sitting dormant. It's ideas, not products that motivate consumers.

In 1916, the great copywriter, Claude Hopkins, came up with an idea for SunKist. Through consumer research, Hopkins found that people loved oranges but didn't eat many because they were messy and drippy. He squeezed a few and found that they made a great drink.

He reasoned that oranges would be used more often if the drink were advertised versus the fruit.

How much do you think this idea was worth? This example is the perfect illustration of the power of an idea and its incalculable value.

To excel in business you need to discover the value of creative talent. It can bring more measurable results to your business than tangible items like a new computer system, a cellular phone, or travel expenses to a seminar. Sometimes the seemingly intangible items make the most visible impact.

Q. Dear Regina: Along with a trio of co-workers from a Fortune 500 company, I am considering a business partnership when we all opt for early retirement. Three managers, two Black and one Hispanic, plan to start a seminar business marketed to firms such as our current employer. The seminars will deal with diversity issues and crisis management as it relates to discrimination and minorities. Before we get started, how might we market the seminar series for sponsorship to offset out of pocket costs?

A: Conceptualizing a strong seminar name and creating catchy packaging and a powerful proposal are initial steps.

In your proposals it is important to show companies the benefit of attaching their name to your seminar series. Companies realize that sponsorships are a unique way to market products and services, as well as population segments.

Contact the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, an agency that reviews corporate foundations and ranks companies that commonly make charitable contributions to racial and ethnic populations. Because the seminar series focuses on discrimination and minorities you may want to seek companies that commonly hire minorities.

Fortune Magazine lists "The 50 Best Companies for Asians, Blacks and Hispanics" at www.Fortune.com. In 1997 there were 29.7 million Hispanic Americans and 34.2 million Blacks. Census bureau demographers say immigration and relatively high birthrates will push the number of Hispanic residents to more than 36 million by 2005, compared to 35.5 million African Americans.

Q. Dear Regina: I am an up-and-coming fashion designer with clothing that sells nationwide via a few boutiques and specialty mail-order catalogs. I've begun to send out illustrated flyers and introduction letters on a monthly basis to what's supposed to be a prime mailing list. I've had little response from the list, while a top competitor says that she gets many inquiries from the same list. How can I jazz up what I'm sending out?

A: You may not need to jazz up your flyers and letters but trash them completely and send out different materials altogether.

A "fat" envelope bursting with letters, brochures, flyers, (See Regina, Page 20)

Advisory group making homeownership a reality

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It's true, after 20 years of neglect, we can now say new homes are being built in historic "Old West Las Vegas."

The Westside New Pioneers Community Development Corporation, a non-profit group dedicated to helping families in West Las Vegas become homeowners, hosted a "Housewarming Celebration" on Monday, August 9, in honor of "Van Buren Homes Phase I Project," the first four of what will eventually be 13 new homes for sale to first-time homebuyers in West Las Vegas.

Westside New Pioneers' President, Michael S. Jackson welcomed new families into their homes and to their community. Mr. Jackson told

Real Estate Perspective

*By Loretta Arrington
Licensed Real Estate Broker*



the crowd that "together, we will work with our public and private partners to bring back the pride and viability of West Las Vegas through new housing and community development opportunities."

Each of the four homes consists of three bedrooms and two bathrooms, other amenities include a two-car garage and large front and back yards, featuring fully landscaped front lawns. Homebuyers were able to

utilize flexible, low down payment home mortgages to realize the dream of homeownership.

The Van Buren Housing Development Project was made possible through a partnership launched several years ago between the Westside New Pioneers Community Development Corporation, City of Las Vegas, area corporations and foundations and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the

country's leading community development support organization. Since its creation 20 years ago, LISC has raised and invested more than \$3 billion from some 1,800 corporations and foundations to help local nonprofit developers create more than 93,000 affordable homes and apartments and 11.2 million square feet of commercial, industrial and retail space.

I attended this momentous occasion and extend a personal message of congratulations and a job well done to everyone involved in the success of this worthwhile project.

You are truly keeping hope alive for many residents of West Las Vegas. On behalf of the community, thank you!

Census: How color is counted in America

E. Louis Overstreet

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Since 1492, color has counted in America. Initially the colors were Red (Native Americans), White (Europeans) and the color of any medium of exchange used in commerce.

In the 1600's, Black (Africans) was added to the "color chart" of America. Later Yellow (Asians), and Brown (Hispanics) were added to the color spectrum.

When folding money became the dominant medium of exchange, the color green became the primary color in America.

Since then, all decision making in America, whether it deals with commerce, politics, religion or race is based on how green money is counted.

The struggles of the late 1950's resulted in the removal of legal support for segregating Black and White. However, during the thirty plus years in between, everything has been integrated, but the green money.

This failure has placed us at a severe economic disadvantage. Thus, the question becomes what is and what will likely be the

consequences of counting color in America? The answer to this question is particularly grave for Blacks.

Statistics (summarized counts by a specific category) dramatize the fact that today in our capitalistic society, ten percent of the people control 90 percent of the wealth. We as Blacks are 11.6 percent of the population, yet control only 3 percent of the wealth; mostly single family homes. We do not control any appreciable wealth in stocks, financial investments, trusts or commercial properties.

Further, America is spending thirty billion dollars

a year to lock up 500,000 Black prisoners, yet we are only spending fifteen billion dollars a year to educate 1.4 million Black college students. This is what is happening today.

Now we are faced with the question: what will likely be the consequences in the future? Given the facts that we don't control any wealth and our country is spending twice as much money to lock up Black men, of child producing age, as to educate leaders for the 21st Century, the answer scares me too!

Louis is a licensed professional engineer.

The option secret: Limited risks, unlimited rewards

James Hart

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Basically, there are two kinds of options: calls and puts. A call or put option gives you the right — without the obligation — to purchase the underlying item (e.g., a stock) at a specified price (e.g., the strike price), any time before the expiration date.

The price of the option is called a premium. Your risks are limited to what you pay for the premium, yet the amount of money you can earn is unlimited. Therefore, whenever you believe a stock price is going higher, you may opt to buy a call option. Conversely, if you think the price is headed lower, buy a put option, it's that simple.

A Case Study

Although ABC stock is currently trading at \$45 a share, you have reason to believe it will soon trade at

\$50 — and so you purchase 100 shares for \$4,500. Three days later, the stock soars to \$50. You immediately sell all 100 shares for a \$500 profit. You did good! But, you can do even better. Here's how:

Again, let's say that ABC stock is trading at \$45 a share. Nevertheless, this time you pick-up a call option at 2-1/2 points (points are the measurements used in securing options and are valued at \$100 each), costing you \$250.

After some thought, you decide to purchase 10 options for \$2,500. Now you own the right, without the obligation, to buy 1,000 shares of ABC stock for \$45, anytime before the expiration date.

When ABC stock goes from \$45 to \$50 a share (which can range from 2-1/2 points to 5 points depending

on market volatility and time left on the option), you may promptly arch one eyebrow and sell all 10 options for a cool \$500 a piece and bank a \$2,500 cash deposit. You can continuously make money like this in minutes, hours, days, or a few weeks. Take a

look at a few recent trades: Intel calls made a 79.3 percent profit in eight days. Oex calls soared 89.2 percent in 11 days. Wal-Mart calls realized a serious, 195 percent profit in only 29 days. Pfizer calls earned a 201 percent (See Options, Page 20)

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