

At&T offers useful resource information to new businesses

Minorities thinking about starting their own businesses should take heart: according to recent federal government statistics, 75 percent of all start-up ventures in the U.S. survive to their second anniversary.

Minority-owned businesses in particular are changing the face of America's economy, increasing 46 percent in the five-year period from 1987 to 1992, according to U.S. Bureau of the Census data issued in 1996. As of 1992, there were 620,912 businesses operated by minority, generating total revenue of \$32.2 billion. The majority of minority-owned businesses are concentrated in service industries, retail trade and finance, insurance and real estate. Health, business and personal services account for 61 percent of the service industry revenue.

California has the most minority-owned firms, at 68,968, with revenues of \$5.5 billion. New York is second, with 51,312 and \$2.2 billion in revenues. The 10 largest cities with businesses owned by minorities are New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Washington, D.C., Detroit, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Dallas and Atlanta.

The success of minority-owned companies may well stem from creating and implementing business plans and choosing appropriate strategic suppliers, two chief ingredients for entrepreneurial success, according to academic journals and research.

The Journal of Small Business Management recently reported the results of a study based on Dun & Bradstreet's definition of failure and discontinuance for young, small businesses. The finding: "Successful firms made greater use of professional advice and develop more specific business plans."

However, a study conducted by AT&T revealed that less than half of all small businesses had formal business plan.

"Many of the experts shown our

findings were quick to point out that small businesses usually fail due to poor planning, rather than adverse business conditions," says Cliff Holtz, AT&T vice president, Small Business Markets.

According to research at McMaster University in Canada, the tendency to underrate marketing/business plans also is connected to the failure rates of new products. The main reasons for failed product launches, the study found, were a lack of customer focus and inadequate market research.

Fortunately, it's getting easier to get needed market information. At start-up and during the growth phase, new companies can quickly and inexpensively tap into business information from the nation's most popular on-line services. A couple of dollars can buy business plan information on potential customers and competitors from databases accessible on CompuServe, Prodigy or America Online. Other information can be obtained at no cost over the Internet, such as corporate filings from the Securities Exchange Commission.

Minority businesses also can get business success information and a more inclusive new business development program based on the research by AT&T. According to Holtz, after its initial finding, AT&T conducted direct interviews with small business owners across the country in order to identify exactly what in-

formation, expert assistance and services new businesses need in order to plan for success.

AT&T's research formed the basis for a program called "AT&T Resources For New Business," which is the entrepreneur's "complete one-stop source for savings on consultation, services and supplies important to small businesses started by African-Americans or others," Holtz says.

For an annual fee of \$99, program members can access from their touch-tone phones a library of management and marketing reports, information on specific industries and how-to documents, as well as participate in teleconferences led by small-business subject matter experts. The kit itself contains a wealth of information on how to write business and marketing plans (including sample plans), obtain financing, hire employees and use technology to maximize productivity. Members also receive discounts on office equipment, software, and print and direct mail advertising, along with price breaks of up to 80 percent on major business publications. Some of the most widely used program elements include access to business consultants and the members-only online business card directory.

For more information on AT&T Resources for New Business, call 1-800-STARTER or visit the resource guide's web site at <http://www.att.com/rmb/>.

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Booklet offers alcohol-free holiday choices

Holiday danger--The holiday season is a time for celebrating, unfortunately, for some this means overindulging in alcohol, then getting behind the wheel of a vehicle. This behavior endangers the lives of everyone on the road.

The incidence of alcohol-related crashes is alarming. About 2 in every 5 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives whether they drink or not. On the average nationwide, alcohol involved crashes injure one person every two minutes. In Oregon, nearly half of the fatal and serious-injury crashes last year were alcohol-related.

Encouraging responsible choices--In an effort to make the holidays safer this year, six organizations joined forces to create the Sober Solutions booklet. This free publication has more than 40 festive non-alcoholic beverage recipes for party goers, hosts and motorists.

The 27-page booklet includes favorite, sophisticated recipes of well known restaurants and lounges in Oregon.

There are also safe driving tips, plus guidelines for entertaining at home or out of town. The goal of Sober Solutions is to make it easy to choose to act responsibly.

Sponsors--The Sober Solutions sponsors believe all of us can do our part by encouraging responsible behavior and offering choices to our guests.

The Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, AAA Oregon/Idaho, the Daily Journal of Commerce, Gerber Advertising, the Oregon Lodging Association and the Oregon Restaurant Association are sponsors of the Sober Solutions booklet.

A special thanks goes to the Daily Journal of Commerce in Portland for contributing the printing and paper for this project.

Getting a copy of Sober Solutions--Free copies of the Sober Solutions booklet are available through several of the sponsors, including members of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, all AAA Oregon/Idaho offices, participating members of the Oregon Lodging Association, and participating members of Oregon Restaurant Association.

1997 Best Business Awards applications

The fifth annual Best Business Awards will be unveiled during Earth Week in April. Applications are being accepted now. To be considered, local businesses must apply by February 20, 1997. The Best Business Awards are issued annually to Portland area businesses with notable energy and environmental accomplishments.

Best stands for Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow, an assistance program offered by the City of Portland. Best services are provided through the Energy Office, Environmental Services, Traffic Management, and the Water Bureau. Best is a no-cost service for Portland area businesses that want to use energy efficiently, conserve water, reduce (and recycle) waste, and use efficient transportation options.

To recognize local readers, Best

Business Awards have been issued annually since 1993.

Since then, Best Awards have gone to the following businesses: Blue Cross & Blue Shield, Marco's Cafe, the Mill End Store, Red Lion Hotels, the Port of Portland building, and the Portland Art Museum (for energy efficiency); Elf Atochem, Fred Meyer's Gateway Store, Hercules Incorporated, the Red Lion Hotel central laundry facility, the Riverside Golf Course, and Tektronix, Inc. (for water conservation); Chown Hardware, Continental Brass, Davis Wright Tremaine, Kaiser Permanente, Legacy Hospitals, Mentor Graphics Corp, Nike, Inc., Oregon Arena Corporation, Oregon Soil Corporation, and Oregon Steel Mills (for waste reduction); Bank of America, Mickey Finn's Brew Pub, Nike Town, United States Bakery (Franz), and US Bancorp (for efficient trans-

portation); and the Washington Park Zoo earned the first ever "Best Success" award earlier this year for their accomplishments in all four categories.

As a result of their actions, these 27 companies have reduced their operating costs by more than \$4.7 million per year. As just one example, their annual energy savings add up to 14 million kilowatt-hours and 99,000 therms. This is enough energy to power nearly 200 typical Portland homes for an entire year.

The Best Awards are co-sponsored by the Association for Portland Progress (APP), the Environmental Federation of Oregon (EFO), and The Business Journal. Both small and large businesses are encouraged to apply. Applications are available from the Portland Energy Office. For an application or more details call 823-7222.

Vessels Open House launches holidays

Vessels, "Tableware With Meaning," kicks off the holiday season with a "Holiday Open House" on Saturday, December 7, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Sunday, December 8, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

You can dress your dining area in elegant cultural attire with an extensive array of decorative items with an ethnic influence. And, the selection extends to the holidays

with hand-painted platters, wine glasses and bowls decorated in the rich colors of the season.

Vessels is extending its schedule to be open on Sundays in December from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Shoppers can do their holiday buying in a festive atmosphere as they enjoy the jam session next door at Steen's CoffeeHouse every Sunday afternoon from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.,

featuring drummer Ron Steen & Friends.

Vessels, "Tableware With Meaning," specializes in cultural items for the dining room, bath and kitchen. Located at the corner of MLK JR Boulevard and Russell, Vessels is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Call 249-1952 for more information.



This is the woman
who gave the hour
to read the story
that made him laugh
and opened his eyes
to see the world
in a whole new
way.

AT&T
CARES

Last week, Ann Meredith traded her job at AT&T for a day to help children in her neighborhood. Ann was one of thousands of AT&T people who served their communities, from cooking in soup kitchens to cleaning up parks. Over the next year, all AT&T people can take a paid workday to support their favorite non-profit organizations. It could add up to over a million hours of help for our communities. And at least one person will see the world in a new way.