

# Minority Business Week

## World Village Boutique & Gifts

World Village Boutique is a clothing, accessory and gift shop located in NE Portland originally selling only African goods and has expanded its wares to be more multi-cultural.

### How did your business get started?

My business got started when I lived at home in Texas. I worked my business there for a number of years. I left a job as a Training and Development Coordinator for the government. I left there to be with my children more because I travelled a lot and I decided to be at home. And while I was at home, I tried to come up with another business.

Then I moved to Oregon 4 1/2 years ago. When I got here, I saw a void in the market for the kind of business I had in Texas and decided to open up a storefront with the products I had.

**What were some of the challenges you had faced that were unique to being a minority-owned business?**

When I first started to run a business, there were mostly men in the market. Things have changed over the last few years. It was a challenge getting started. Doors were closed to you simply because you are a woman.

I believe its 40% of businesses that are starting are owned by women. 40% or more



Diane McKnight, an African American business owner of World Village Boutique and Gifts

succeed. So, we are doing something right.

### What were your company's growth challenges?

Money for advertising. It's really different when you're working with a very low budget. I believe that most businesses face that challenge of how to allocate money for advertising.

I've experienced the accounting problems as well. Trying to upgrade my accounting systems, learning new software. That has been a tremendous impact on me as a business owner. You don't have time to do all these things

"wearing so many hats."

Also designing a real marketing strategy. We are adjusting with our clientele. When we first started, we were an African market strictly. We started out as the "African Village" and that's been part of our expansion. We've become multi-cultural with our inventory. It has made us reach a broader market.

*Steven Beresford, Diana's Marketing Consultant: Diana is not simply selling clothes. She's selling her expertise as a fashion expert. When people come in here, they're not just buying a*

gift or buying a dress. They're buying an image, something that really increases their self-esteem. This is the way we've been building value into the store.

### What could you have done differently to expand your business?

I started with very low capital. I would have started with much more money.

The other thing I did later in life was write a business plan. I would not recommend that. When you write it, you have to come up with your marketing strategy, your long term plans.

### Any advice to other minority-owned businesses?

Believe in what you've started. Hold on to it. It's difficult when you run out of money or resources, but do everything possible - do all your homework in the beginning before you even start a business. If you're already in business, continue to do your homework. Look for other avenues to strengthen your business and always be in a learning process.

*Steve Beresford, Diana's Marketing Consultant: A good marketing program is really essential. A lot of stores just open shop and expect people to come in. It is really important to have real active community outreach so people get to know who you really are and what you're all about.*

## World Village Boutique & Gifts

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(503) 249-3790

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## The Astra Society

The Astra Society is an organization of women-owned businesses and women executives that wishes to increase economic opportunities for the community by enhancing the visibility and image of women in business.

The Astra Society will support existing women-owned businesses and women executives as well as encourage and assist the development of new businesses or advancement within a business. This will be accomplished through:

- \* Providing opportunities for women to grow their existing business, develop a new business or advance within their current business.

- \* Developing role models/mentors for women in business.

- \* Strengthening business and communication skills through various training programs.

- \* Educating the community through speakers' bureaus, writing articles and public outreach programs.

- \* Building collaborative relationships with

other entrepreneurial organizations i.e. The Foundation for Women Owned Businesses & Oregon Entrepreneur Forum.

**Mission:** To increase economic opportunities for women in business, thereby enhancing the productivity and wealth for Oregon's future.

**Vision:** To set standards for excellence to promote competence and create resources for opportunities, leadership and education while developing a community of peers.

**Value Statements:** Create an unlimited

atmosphere of encouragement and cooperation to go beyond individual expectations.

Celebrate achievement through community recognition and group accomplishments. Believe so that the world in which we live will be a better place because of our contributions. Share resources openly and fairly in a cooperative and safe environment by demonstrating the practical value of challenging/examining existing belief systems. Develop relationships and trust through sharing information in a safe harbor environment.



Portland Parks And Recreation Is Pleased To Participate In This Special Edition Of The Portland Observer. Even Though This Is A Special Relationship With The Observer. Portland Parks And Recreation Receives A Very High Approval Rating From The Citizens Of Portland, Your Coverage Of Our Plans And Events Is An Important Contributor. Thanks For The Support And The Great Work That You Do...



Charles Jordan

## A Salute to Minority Businesses (from one of Portland's oldest)



**The URBAN LEAGUE**  
of Portland

Established 1945

- \* A supporter of minority and women-owned businesses

- \* Home of the North/Northeast One Stop Career Center

*Working for Economic Power, the Next Civil Rights Frontier, and Leveling The Playing Field*

This year, we salute:

**James Winters**, Urban League board member and president of United Energy, Oregon's largest minority-owned company

**Paul Knauls**, Urban League board member, community leader and co-owner of Geneva's Shear Perfection

**Dorian Boyland**, winner of our 1998 Equal Opportunity Award and owner of Gresham Dodge, one of America's Top 100 African American-owned companies