

AFRICAN AMERICAN SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION WINNER

Accounting has given Rick Harris the opportunity to exercise leadership. Rick likes accounting because it allows him to use his analytical and communication skills. However, he also feels that it is important to have a good sense of humor. Having a good sense of humor helps him to relate well to his employees and clients and to keep his business and personal life in balance. Rick believes in working closely with clients in order to pinpoint management problems and develop feasible solutions. Consequently, his employees keep in touch with client throughout the year. Since the formation of his company in 1987, Rick's firm has experienced steady growth. This growth is the result of his dedication to providing quality services and personalized attention to each client. His firm provides a wide range of professional services in auditing, accounting, management, business and individual taxes. Quality and personalized attention to clients has made his firm successful.

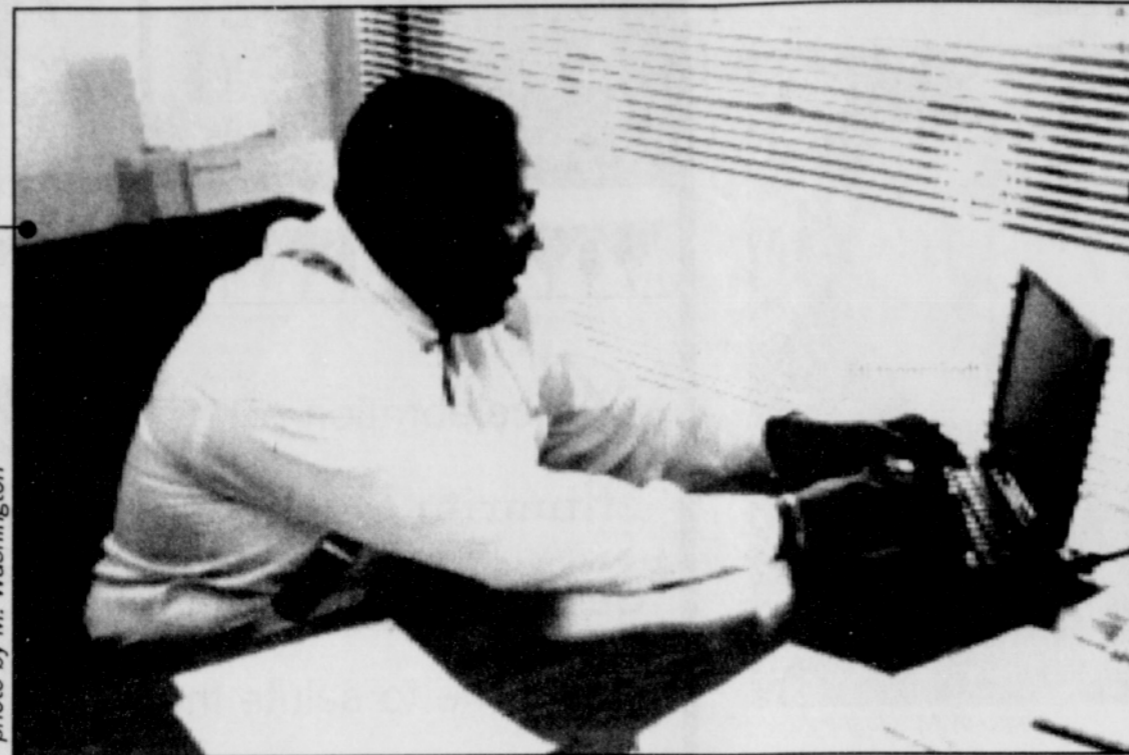


photo by M. Washington

practice. Without them, there's no way this could be successful.

GETTING ON THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY

"We are in the process of developing a website. Our site will advertise most of our services and where clients can go onto it and get some basic answers to task questions without having to call us up on those things. We'll have some monthly updates and newsletter items. I will be doing this as a courtesy and for the exchange of information."

GETTING GOODSUPPORT

"When I first started out in Port-

land, Sam Brooks of OAME (Oregon Association of Minority Enterprises) gave me a chance with his group. When I was just starting out, I didn't believe it was going to go anywhere. I was hungry for work. I have done jobs for OAME and they have referred other people to me also. If it wasn't for Sam Brooks, I wouldn't be in business right now."

TAKE IT FROM ME

"You have to be persistent. Sometimes people will tell you that you can't do it - that you're too small to do this or that. Your business may knock you down some days, but you have to be

resilient to start all over again.

You have to have enough capital to survive the bad times. We started out with zero clients and I had a limited amount of capital. It was tough upfront.

I talk with CPA's and told them that I want to start a business. When my Dad died in August of 1987, I was downstairs at the mortuary and I was just thinking that I may be around for years saying the same thing and may die before ever doing it. Eventually, like me you just have to do it!

As minorities, we are more comfortable with just having jobs. You just have to go out there and have faith in yourself."

The Sheltered Market Program

Under the Fair Contracting and Employment Strategy the City of Portland has developed and adopted the Sheltered Market Program (SMP). The program is designed to provide a vehicle for ready, willing and able minority, women, and emerging small businesses opportunities to compete against like firms to obtain valuable prime contracting experience.

In addition to contracting opportunities, participants receive pre and post award technical assistance from Pinnell-Busch, a construction management consulting firm, covering a wide range of technical and financial referral needs.

Pinnell-Busch provide Sheltered Market Program clients with:

- Construction consulting (pre/post award)
- Strategic planning
- Job cost accounting systems improvement
- Total Quality Management training
- Assistance with proposals on negotiated contracts
- Cost estimating
- Project estimating software training
- Critical path scheduling
- Computer systems and software support
- Job cost control
- M/W/ESB subcontractor training and support
- Program management consulting
- Capital improvement program management

Pinnell-Busch is also responsible for assisting SMP partici-

pants to secure bonding and locate necessary funds for cash flow and equipment upgrade. The resources provided by Pinnell-Busch have proven invaluable to those firms that have taken advantage of these opportunities.

OUTREACH

In addition to the technical assistance provided Pinnell-Busch Services, Bureau of Purchases staff have taken extraordinary strides to inform SMP firms of bid opportunities. Additionally, CDD staff conduct informal meetings with SMP participants to alert them of forthcoming bid opportunities.

PROJECT MONITORING

Once a project is awarded to an SMP participant, concerns regarding subcontractor payments and utilization are no different from those on a project of larger proportion. The City now conducts on-site progress visits on all Sheltered Market projects regardless of project size or amount.

All firms participating in the Sheltered Market Program are required to provide a commercially useful function. To satisfy this requirement, SMP contractors are generally required to perform and execute at least 50% of the work and have prime responsibility to manage and supervise all workers and subcontractors involved.

For more information on The Sheltered Market Program, call Commissioner Dan Saltzman at 503/823-4151.

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