

The Blueprint for Success: Kenneth R. Banks



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Many opinions arise when the question is asked, "What does it take to be successful in business?" A complex question for some, for others it's a simple formula - attitude. Possessing the talent, charisma and know-how to start a business are the first crucial steps toward an entrepreneurial lifestyle.

Kenneth R. Banks, a Maryland contractor and developer, possessed the critical skills and is now one of the leading minority contractors in Maryland. Banks grew up in the housing projects of Yonkers, N.Y. and was bombarded with disadvantages and hardships as a youngster. However, he maintained a positive outlook and a hunger for success, even while coping with his father's alcoholism.

"My father was my greatest teacher. I can't say that he

had a positive influence on me, but he had a profound influence on me," said Banks. "I never wanted to be like him. I wanted to be totally different. So, the things I saw in him I made sure in my life, I did not become."

A gifted athlete and student, Banks earned both academic and athletic scholarships. He attended Adelphi University in Long Island, N.Y., while running track and becoming a founding member of the Alpha Phi Alpha chapter on campus.

Also at Adelphi, Banks experienced his first entrepreneurial experiences as a concert and event promoter. "I don't mind working. I will certainly do whatever I have to do to support myself and family. It doesn't matter. I don't mind going out there and getting my hands dirty," said Banks.

After graduating from college in 1974, Banks went on to work for an insurance company and although he was successful, he left to find something more fulfilling and ambitious. Following a brief time of self-exploration, Banks landed a job with a construction company where he advanced quickly. This would eventually lead him to start his own company in 1980.

Like all businesses in the early stages, Banks struggled with start-up money. Taking baby steps towards his dream, his company initially specialized in painting.

However, his plan expanded much further.

In time, Banks Construction and Development grew into a multi-million dollar company and positioned Banks to be one of the leading minority contractors in the state of Maryland, all acquired through smart investing, responsible spending and quality customer service. Banks said.

"If we keep the image and the vision in our minds about where we want to be in a certain period of time then, it happens," said Banks.

Currently, Banks is a member of the Executive Committee of the **Greater Baltimore Committee**, the United Way of Central Maryland board and a member of the board on the Chesapeake Crescent Commission, which is chaired by Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley. Recently, he was selected to be the first African-American chair of the American Heart Association's 2009 Heart Ball in Baltimore. Not taking anything for granted, Banks understands what it took for him to become successful and he remains hopeful and supportive of the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Said Banks, "I want to look back on my life and I want to say that I've done the best that I can to pave the way for people coming behind me."

