



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT POWER

### **1) What does the POWER acronym mean?**

It stands for Partnering Organizations With Essential Resources, which represents our mission to strengthen growing businesses by connecting them with community resources.

### **2) What is POWER?**

It is a strategic collaboration led by the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, designed to assist minority businesses and entrepreneurs in reaching the next level of growth and success. POWER was created to promote economic independence and wealth in minority communities. POWER's objective is to enhance the business and economic development of minority businesses through the formation of successful business relationships, while providing resources, training and collaborative support in areas such as financial management, marketing, and communications. POWER works because of its four core components:

#### **I. Herman A. Johnson Business Mentorship:**

Goals for the Business Mentorship include increased revenues, profitability, and employment for minority-owned businesses. The business identifies a measurable and critical issue hindering growth; a mentor is identified who can specifically address the critical issue; and commitments are made and progress is measured in a system of accountability. As a result, thirteen businesses have graduated and achieved increased revenues of 40% and employee growth of 55%.

#### **II. Education and training:**

POWER Briefing Sessions - Educational and training seminars, open to all interested businesses, are held on a monthly basis to assess the "immediate" needs of owners of growing businesses. Past topics have included cash-flow and investment management, income/property tax preparation, and clarification of the certification processes. Sessions are evaluated to determine the effectiveness of delivery and information presented. To meet the needs of the busy business owner, sessions are held at different venues throughout the metropolitan area.

#### **III. Community involvement:**

POWER has established more than (30) thirty partnerships throughout the metropolitan area to disseminate information and provide support to businesses. Our partners include academic institutions, business service providers, civic organizations, and governmental entities represented at the federal, city, and state levels.



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Additional partnerships such as the Minority Enterprise Development Week, Inc. (MED Week), helps to inform and educate minority businesses about procurement, business resources, and information. MED Week has been ranked as one of the best and most productive events of its kind in the Midwest with more than 1,500 attendees.

We also co-sponsor opportunities for networking. The U.S. Department of General Services Administration (GSA), convenes a monthly breakfast with more than 100 diverse businesses, governmental agencies and others to learn about business events and available resources.

#### **IV. WWW.MBEWBECONNECTION.COM:**

POWER created a way to connect buyers interested in working with diverse companies from throughout the Greater Kansas City region. It's our minority-owned business and women-owned business online directory. MBEWBECConnection.com provides a central location for women- and minority-owned businesses to register their products and services. The directory also offers easy access to buyers interested in finding government certified minority and women suppliers.

This online directory allows you to search by company name, city, state, zip, certification, industry, Chamber membership; or, use a combination of any (or all) search criteria. The directory also identifies potential supplier matches from multiple sources. Certifying government agencies represented on MBEWBECConnection.com are:

*City of Kansas City, Missouri*

*State of Kansas-Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing*

*State of Missouri-Office of Equality and Opportunity*

*U.S. Small Business Administration*

*Kansas Department of Transportation-Office of Engineering Support*

*Missouri Department of Transportation*



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MENTORSHIP

### **1) What makes the Herman A. Johnson business Mentorship unique?**

The mentorship is unique because it is a concentrated endeavor that increases knowledge of the challenges of each cultural and ethnicity group's experience when growing a business. In the past, the mentorship has concentrated on one specific minority business community. We began with the African-American business community in 2001, in 2002 the Hispanic/Latino business community was added, in 2003 the Asian-American business community became a part of the mentorship program, and in 2005 we were joined with the American Indian business community.

Because we seek measurable outcomes for businesses selected to participate in the mentorship, business owners must adhere to the following throughout their three-year commitment:

Be receptive to coaching

Attend quarterly meetings

Attend training sessions

Mutually agree with mentor on the frequency and type of communications or meetings

Achieve set goals and objectives, as outlined by the mentor and mentee

Complete written quarterly review evaluations

Complete a Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Participate in at least one community project per year

Commit unwaveringly to the signing of the confidentiality statement

### **2) How are businesses selected for the mentorship?**

Businesses are selected because they have demonstrated a significant level of proficiency and skill, continuous progress and achievement in their industry. Participants' successes or improvements are monitored on a quarterly basis. Both the mentor and mentee complete quarterly evaluations during their participation.

### **3) What happens when an interested minority business owner submits an application?**

Businesses are encouraged to attend POWER Briefing Sessions prior to making formal application. Specific POWER Sessions have been targeted to ethnically diverse business communities. Participants of the concentrated ethnicity are encouraged to complete an application for the three-year commitment. Once an application is submitted during open enrollment, the business owner makes a presentation of their products and services to an interview committee. The interview is comprised of our MBA partner representatives and business mentorship graduates. Applicants are rated on five key business management areas, which include: present business state, time management, growth potential, business operations, customer reference and receptiveness to coaching. Selected businesses are then matched with a business consultant that will act as their mentor.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MENTORSHIP

### **4) Who are the business consultants (mentors)?**

Business consultants are leaders from a variety of companies and organizations throughout the area, majority of them are Chamber members. The business consultants volunteer 4-8 hours per month and contribute knowledge of valuable resources to make the Herman A. Johnson Business Mentorship successful.

### **5) How are the business consultants selected?**

We recruit mentors through The Chamber's communication vehicles, mostly newsletters and Web site, [www.kcchamber.com](http://www.kcchamber.com). Interested business representatives are asked to submit their biography or resume for review. They must have at least five years of business development experience, experience working with diverse populations, sincere interest in assisting business growth, be willing to sign confidentiality agreements, and to provide written and verbal quarterly reports. We encourage consultants to attend quarterly meetings, and commit to one year within the program (with the option to renew).

### **6) How long is the mentorship commitment?**

The Herman A. Johnson Mentorship is a three-year intensive program that targets ethnic minority business owners. Mentees commit to three years' participation; business consultants commit to one year with an option to continue in the program. A majority of the consultants enjoy the Mentorship's structure and have decided to follow through to the completion of the three-year commitment with the business owner.

### **Mentoring companies have included:**

Aquila  
Axcet HR Solutions  
Burtin's & Associates  
Carter Broadcast Group  
Custom Engineering  
Gates Bar-B-Q  
Henry Wurst  
John Deere  
Kansas City Convention & Visitors' Association  
Mazuma Credit Union  
Smith Barney  
Stinson Morrison Hecker  
UPS