



THE HISTORY OF POWER

1997

Rhonda Holman, through her MBA thesis “Kansas City Minority Business Ownership,” showed low numbers of minority-owned businesses in the Greater Kansas City area.

1998

E. Wynn Presson, chairman of The Chamber’s Board of Directors, introduced a new Chamber initiative, The Workforce Investment Initiative.

1999

Peter Lemke, chairman of The Chamber Board of Directors, focused on small business, minority business development, and racism.

2000

Terry Dunn, chairman of The Chamber’s GRO-KC Workforce Development committee, incorporated the Diversity Development program. Bill Lucas, Chamber Chair, appointed Marcus Jackson vice chair of GRO-KC and Chair of Diversity Development, and the Minority Business Alliance Committee was formed. Mr. Jackson charged the committee with two distinct goals:

- 1) To develop a networking program representing minority businesses
- 2) Develop a mentoring program with two distinct populations
 - a) First time entrepreneurial ventures
 - b) First generation minority businesses in the metro area

2001

POWER (Partnering Organizations With Essential Resources), is implemented to match comprehensive area resources to the needs of minority businesses in Greater Kansas City. African-American businesses are introduced to the Herman A. Johnson Business Mentorship.

2002

The Chamber’s POWER program celebrates 34 months of free education and training services. POWER Briefing Sessions are offered at locations throughout the metropolitan area. Hispanic/Latino businesses are introduced to the Mentorship.

2003

The Chamber names Leo Morton as vice chair of POWER, Minority Business. Asian American businesses are introduced to the Mentorship.

2004

Four African-American businesses graduate from POWER’s three-year program. American Indian businesses are introduced to the Mentorship.

2005

Five Hispanic/Latino businesses graduate from the three-year program. More than 70 sessions have been completed.

2006

Four Asian American businesses graduate from the program; totaling 35 participants since 2001. Fifteen new businesses are accepted into the Herman A. Johnson Business Mentorship.

2007

The Chamber names Ed Honesty as vice chair of POWER, Minority Business. POWER graduates report a 42 percent increase in company revenues and a 73 percent increase in number of employees since graduating from the program.