

Business

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Company helps agencies that benefit public obtain funding

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09:28 AM PST on Wednesday, January 6, 2010

By JACK KATZANEK
The Press-Enterprise



Video: CEO Profile: Luvina Beckley

Luvina Beckley knows more than a little about how to compete.

She was a college basketball standout, playing on a team that won an NCAA Division III national champion at North Central (Illinois) College in 1983.

That is among the accomplishments she feels helped develop a skill set she uses every day. Beckley is chief executive officer and president of M.H.M and Associates Enterprises Inc., a Riverside-based grant-writing and development firm, where she helps agencies that benefit the public seek out and secure funding for the projects most important to them.

The art of getting a grant is just as competitive and brings just as much pressure as making a last-second shot with thousands of people watching. Many applicants seek a share of a finite supply of funds from agencies and foundations. There is little margin of error when submitting a grant proposal.

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Beckley, who grew up in Joliet, Ill., said she recognizes the connection between success in the athletic arena and in the business world.

M.H.M. specializes in funding in the criminal justice, health and human services, economic development and arts and culture fields, among others. The long list of agencies Beckley and her staff have successfully secured grants from includes the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Head Start program and the California Consumer Protection Foundation.

Story continues below



Stan Lim / The Press-Enterprise

"Vicariously I get to experience the success of others ... It's a rewarding profession. Sometimes I work seven days a week, and it doesn't even seem like work," says Luvina Beckley, president and CEO of M.H.M. & Associates.

To this date, M.H.M. has generated some \$27 million in funding for local nonprofits and community partnerships.

Q: What prepared you for this kind of work?

A: It was my parents and my family. I grew up in a family with eight of us, and we all pursued our passions. We had to make sure we all had what we needed, and to do that, we had to support one another. Now I try to be there for the agencies we work with and make sure they have what they need to expand their programs.

Q: What are the biggest rewards that come with your job?

A: Vicariously I get to experience the success of others. I don't work in foster care or do prison work, but I love that I had a hand in it when something succeeds. It's a rewarding profession. Sometimes I work seven days a week, and it doesn't even seem like work.

Q: What inspires you to keep going?

A: I am sure we haven't accomplished all we set out to accomplish yet. There is so much out there, and so much assistance that needs to be given out. We know what the successful grants are, we do our research, and we know that these things can be made available. People think there are no resources out there. Actually, there's tons. Getting people aware of that is the reason I keep going.

Q: What's the hardest part, or the biggest challenge, about running a business such as yours?

A: I'd have to say it's getting our clients to have a program design that's fundable. Typically people know how to do a fund-raiser and they know how to get money from a trust, but they're kept from getting a grant because they don't have an effective design. Helping people develop that takes them leaps and bounds in front of the others, and that truly keeps me going.

Q: How do you find and keep good staff?

A: We try to create a pretty good environment, but the key is to hire good people first and people with high skills sets second. I can teach a skill, and I can teach process and procedure, but I can't teach character.

I've been asked, what's more important in grant writing: creativity or precision? You have to be definitive enough to get your point across, but you also have to hold the reader's interest. I look for the writer who can do both. It's a knack.

Reach Jack Katzanek at 951 368-9553 or at jkatzanek@PE.com

Luvina Beckley

Title: President and CEO

Company: M.H.M. and Associates

Location: Riverside

Years in business: 16

Education: B.A. in business finance, University of Nevada Reno;
M.S. in Health Services Administration, Cal State San Bernardino

Employees: 8

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RBrown10 3 weeks ago wrote:



Interesting article, although I do have a few questions. Does anyone know the average on which grants are rewarded, is the success rate or low? I know people who write grants, for people, on their own. But I assume going through a company like this would increase one's chances of being rewarded.

- Thanks



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