

Black corporate role model

Written by William Reed, Business Exchange
Tuesday, 13 November 2012 09:42

Black Americans need to know and respect our heritage. Know the contributions of your ancestors, and you will learn who you are. One of America's greatest strengths today is "diversity." An African American who blazed the trail toward diversity, innovation, and marketing creativity across corridors in corporate America while concurrently opening doors previously closed to Blacks is corporate pioneer of note, Houston native Henry Hartford Brown.

The career of Brown should be of highlighted because he is one of a select few Blacks hired by corporate American companies in upper-level sales positions to target and develop the African-American consumer market. Brown should be remembered for the successes he had in the development and implementation of effective community relations over the three decades he practiced his trade with Anheuser-Busch. As corporate liaison to its "special markets" Brown indelibly etched Anheuser-Busch and Budweiser's name among Black leaders and their communities.

As part of a groundbreaking group of African-American market developers that evolved from the 1950s, Brown is a role model in multicultural public relations. Brown's business and social talents enabled him to generate corporate market share and profits as he at the same time introduced diversity theories, techniques and implementation platforms that revolutionized strategies of niche marketing. Brown helped corporate heads and decision influencers to see and identify Blacks as an important customer segment. The "Black Market" Brown helped his company identify and "tap" is expected to reach a population of 42.6 million by 2016. Black's current \$957 billion annual spending expects to climb to \$1.3 trillion by 2015. Black consumers spend \$2.8 billion annually on alcoholic beverages.

Brown's innovativeness toward Black markets is epic. In 1975, he developed the legendary Budweiser's Great Kings and Queens of Africa by commissioning a series of portraits among African-American-artists. These 29 portraits became Budweiser's Great Kings and Queens of Africa exhibits, an educational program and one of history's most influential collections of art honoring African-American culture. Budweiser's Great Kings and Queens of Africa have touched the lives of millions of people and etched in the minds of millions of Blacks a point of racial pride and identification.

Those who attended the Congressional Black Caucus' Annual Legislative Conferences [ALC] over the years know Brown and that Budweiser's booths anchored ALCs' Exhibit Halls for over 33 years. For four decades, Black Market specialists from tobacco, petroleum, food and beverage companies, such as Anheuser-Busch, provided the ALCs' financial underpinnings. Black corporate executives were the impetus for forums promoting subjects of importance to the Black community. In his career, Brown worked to do what's right by Blacks and their communities. He worked with civil rights leaders and politicians and was an original sponsor of the MLK Memorial project. Overall, Brown's been a catalyst for positive and progressive changes among African Americans. His impact on Anheuser-Busch has permanency. The company says, "It's important to be in the community and of the community" and supports community-based organizations' efforts to inform, advance and support the African Americans.

Anheuser-Busch, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Anheuser-Busch In Bev, the United States' largest brewing company. Anheuser-Busch operates 12 breweries in the U.S. and nearly 20 in

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other countries. In 1994, Brown retired from Anheuser-Busch after launching major initiatives including: Budweiser's Living Legends and The Lou Rawls/UNCF Parade of Stars.

Brown served as an adjunct professor at Howard University and in 1959 started as a wholesaler representative for Anheuser-Busch, Inc. In 1980, Brown was named vice president of Marketing Development and made responsible for community outreach and a corporate liaison to the various ethnic communities. He currently lives in Houston and has received several honors and awards throughout his distinguished career, including the Presidential Award from the National Conference of African-American Mayors in 1994; and the Alpha Psi Alpha Fraternity Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004.

Budweiser's Great Kings of Africa Mirrored Signs are available on e-Bay for \$119.90.

(William Reed is publisher of "Who's Who in Black Corporate America" and available for projects via the BaileyGroup.org)