

African-American Business Directory Case Study

The Black Dollar Days Task Force's business directory was a volunteer effort that was a labor of love, which required long hours with inconsistent results. Many members of the African American community believed that the directory was a valuable resource that provided small minority-owned businesses an opportunity to promote their products and services. With limited success over the years, the directory had been struggling to be published on an annual basis.

It was at this point that the Board of Black Dollar Days asked Lottie Cross, a local community leader, if she would take up the challenge of developing and creating a world class directory to be published on an annual basis. She couldn't say no. One of her first tasks was to locate a publisher that would help guide her through the multiple steps required for publishing on an annual basis.

It was at this time that Lottie approached Seattle Publishing (SP) to help with the directory. We accepted her challenge, and welcomed the opportunity to assist in establishing an annual directory. Our first challenge was to leverage the directory's strengths while providing cost-effective services. SP's solution was to develop a database that the Task Force's volunteers could use for gathering and inputting the content. SP would then have access to this content for editing, grammar, and consistency. Through the division of strengths, the first challenge of collecting and modifying data was simplified.

Our next step was to establish the design and publication print specifications for the directory that would prepare the database for publication production. With our experienced design staff, all covers, page templates, and layouts were created for use of the database,

and then presented for Lottie's approval. This allowed Lottie to focus on key decisions such as color, images, and messages, while we took care of the technical details. The result has been eye-catching covers with easy-to-navigate directory pages.

The final step was the production of the publication. With over 500 listings and 100 display print ads, Lottie knew she could rely on Seattle Publishing to put the directory together without becoming overwhelmed by the details. And with our network of vendors, we were able to source out the printing and provide the publishing solutions that kept the publication on budget and on time.

Today, we are in our 12th year of publishing the directory, and the database that we built is called the Gutenberg Publishing System®. The directory is published in the fall of each year, and Lottie can rely on Seattle Publishing for all her print and online publishing needs.