

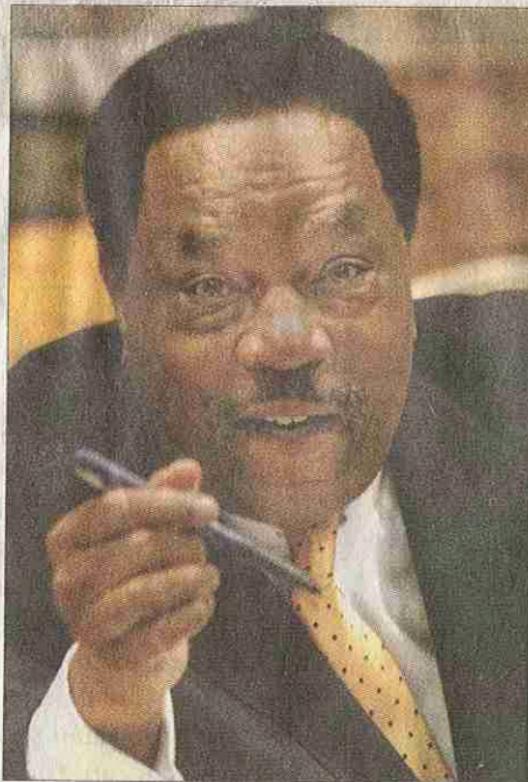
# Advice from a Pro: Market Yourself First

## Roy Jay gives advice to start-ups

BY CHARITY PRATER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Some may not recognize his name but may have ridden in one of his company's many limousines. Many wouldn't identify his face as someone famous but most likely have parked in one of his Smart Park garages. And most people definitely don't know that every time they swipe their debit or credit card they are using a technology born partially from Roy Jay's brilliant ingenuity.

Jay's story starts 59 years ago where he was raised in the north Portland housing projects. He admits that al-



Roy Jay

though his family was poor, he grew up in a very decent environment. His father worked out of state during the week leaving his mother to tend to him and his three brothers. During that time, Jay's father couldn't find work in town due to his ethnicity and returned on weekends to see his family.

At eight years old, Jay couldn't wait to start playing baseball. But when his parents couldn't afford a mitt, he didn't grow sad or give up on his dream, he mowed lawns and collected bottles to earn the money he needed. He took his earnings of \$3.50 and went to Goodwill to buy a mitt.

"It had no padding but I didn't care," Roy says, "It felt so good because I worked for it."

For a man who bought his first base-

ball mitt with bottles and mowing money, Roy Jay has developed the skills to magnify his earnings potential a million of times over.

Jay is the president and founder of the Oregon Alliance of Minority Chambers of Commerce, the president of the African-American Convention and Tourism Company, the owner of several local companies, and also a local educator on small business success.

He offers a simple set of rules for others to follow in the business game.

"The first and most important part of starting your own company is to market yourself," Jay said, "advertising will only go so far."

He also suggests finding a mentor,

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*Portland business leader Roy Jay conducts a court room orientation for people attending Project Clean Slate, the effort he organized with staff from the district attorney's office, Department of Motor Vehicles and Child Support Enforcement for people looking to clean up their past troubles with the law and gain meaningful employment.*

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like the Service Corps for Retired Executives (SCORE), for example, which offers expert business counseling by retired executives. Jay encourages the use of technology to get your products on the Internet.

He said promoting a diverse customer base in a global market is important because no large company is going to work with you if you don't offer services

to every type of person.

Having talent is only one aspect to starting a business. The best companies know how to keep an open mind and service a wide range of people.

Other pointers include the hiring of employees that become assets to your company not liabilities. Start-up entrepreneurs should be ready to accept failures and rejection along the way.

Jay's ultimate secret to running a company is his ability to

juggle.

"Being your own businessman is not a 9-5 job," Jay says, "You have to be available at all hours and dedicate a large amount of time to your business."

Even for Jay, every day is a continuous struggle in an effort to keep up with changing technologies, growing and failing companies, and even making time to parent his new champion Cocker Spaniel