Entrepreneurship is a Leap of Faith

By Arita Nicholas
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Faith is the power of prayer, and the belief that God didn’t bring us here to fail. This is the foundation upon which Nicholas Earth Printing was created 4 years ago.

The vision was to build a strong client base of Fortune 500 Companies, a goal that only a few minority commercial printers have been able to achieve because of the demands of “supply chain management.” Today’s business climate demands the ability to compete on quality, capacity and price due to the global competition U.S. companies face for good and services. These same companies require vendors who can keep pace with the demand for growth. Minority owned companies are no exception.

I am a former airline administrator by profession. My husband was a former TV news anchor. We saw and opportunity to invest in an industry where there are few minority owners and managers. I was in my forties. My husband was approaching 60 years of age, but we didn’t allow the age factor to discourage us. We simply saw a dream and went after it. My husband continued working in broadcasting while I was running the business.

The beginning was not easy. We struggled to meet payroll while trying to gain the confidence of potential clients. I hired people with experience and a reputation for the quality of their work. We put our entire life savings into the business, including our retirement accounts. Some of our workers believed in our vision, and even took pay cuts as their contribution to the dream. It all came crashing down after the 911 attacks in New York. Major corporations, including our clients, suffered heavy losses. They reduced spending to stop the hemorrhaging from the financial fallout. We, on the other hand, were forced into bankruptcy. Even then, we still wouldn’t believe that God brought us this far to fail.

One of our toughest days was when one of our four daughters had to pay our electric and water bills to them turned back on at home. By then, my husband had resigned from a successful broadcast career to assist me. We were out of money, no job and facing foreclosure.

Just when we though it was all over, an investment group took an interest in us to take 51% control of a print company in Dallas. With borrowed money from friends, we drove to Dallas to tour the facility with the feeling that God had heard our prayers and turned our desperate situation around. My husband and I broke out in tears of joy with expectations of moving to Dallas. But God had a better idea!

The very next day, we got a call from another investor in New York, who is now our business partner. His name is Robert Kashan. Robert simply said to us, “You guys
had a great reputation for quality. I heard you simply ran out of money, closed your doors and had to file your company in bankruptcy. I can help your family go forward.”

Robert understood our vision and saw great potential in our ability to see it through. He’s not longer just a partner, but a “brother of another mother!” That’s what we affectionately call each other. His company invested in us and invested in 49% of Nicholas Earth, putting us on our feet with our own operation in Houston. I am the CEO and controlling partner.

Robert’s investment made me realize that we were doomed to failure from the beginning. A successful business demands cash flow to keep pace with growth. We were under-funded from the beginning. The investment also taught us the value of having a partner with financial means and a true partnership with God.

Global competition has forced a number of Fortune 500 companies to seek partners for the same reason, but on a larger scale. This is why “partnering” is an essential element for minority owned companies if they intend to survive and meet the demands for growth, capacity and financial stability. 51% ownership of a new company with growth is far more attractive than 100% ownership of a company that died because of lack of funding. The power of prayer will seal the deal by putting the right partner in your path!

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