



Sulaiman Rahman is bringing his creativity to the African-American Chamber.
Metro: Rikard Larma

Helping get black businesses back on track

PHILADELPHIA. After jumping into the dot-com waters 10 years ago as an entrepreneur, Sulaiman Rahman is now trying to help steer small businesses to big opportunities as chairman of the African-American Chamber of Commerce of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

Q: What is the single-greatest piece of advice you've received?

A: One of the thing that was really big is you've got to work more on yourself than you do on your business. A lot of times people find themselves in a day-to-day operation of their business, but never kind of work on themselves, and also [they] don't work on their business but work in their business, so I've always taken personal development to the heart.

Q: What is the key to surviving as a small business during the economic downturn?

A: Creativity is very important and being able to do just as much or more with less. Being unique to the marketplace, offering value, being an attractive person, [and] being a good relationship builder are very important.

Q: Are minority-owned businesses in the city taking full advantage of opportunities for local, state and federal contracts?

A: [In some cases, businesses are] not taking advantage or knowing about the opportunities, not being properly educated on the process of how to get certified and the relationship building opportunities may not have been there. Also, it comes down to outreach on the city, state and federal level, as well as private companies, that have diversity initiatives and making sure the information gets into the hands of those who can take advantage of the opportunities.