



BLACK ENTREPRENEURS GET A DOSE OF REALITY: Andrew Morrison's new internet TV show challenges business owners to next level.

By Keysha Whitaker
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*How many weeks does it take to take an entrepreneur to turn their idea into a profitable business? Sixteen, according to international business coach and motivational speaker Andrew Morrison, and his new internet television reality show - The 16 Week Challenge - aims to prove it.

"I've worked with thousands of people from Hawaii to West Africa. The one thing I've discovered is that we all have ideas but very few of us are taking the necessary steps to put these ideas into action," said Morrison. "This show will inspire others to start manifesting their dreams despite the lack of money, knowledge or connections."

The show - which is actually "a reality show about trying to make a reality show" - will follow 12 entrepreneurs, mostly minorities, as they subject themselves to Morrison's tutelage, and the coaching of his 150 member volunteer team of business professionals worldwide - a team he calls the "Brain Trust."

Contestant entrepreneurs vary from a couple that sells antioxidant supplements for pets to a cousin duo with aspirations for a new fashion line that "accentuates the beauty of a woman". The contestants will be carrying their own camera to document their progress in addition to participating in filmed sessions.

Anthony McCann, the owner of Funky Fork Silver, is a self-proclaimed "forkologist." He designs and creates jewelry from antique silverware. He currently street vends and sells his creations at flea markets and shows across the country with pieces priced anywhere from \$20 - \$500.

His challenge: "I want to build up my name recognition and my brand to where I can get rid of more of [my designs]," said McCann.

McCann says the varying business styles of the contestants will make The 16 Week Challenge an interesting show.

"We are vendors; we are flexible," said McCann. "For us, every day is different."

Contestant Crystal Fields-Sam is starting from scratch with her company Parallel Prints, which will sell promotional and marketing items. "I want to start something that provides a service to the community," said Fields-Sam.

Her challenge: "I will be starting a business from scratch so navigating the fields of paperwork and licenses will be a challenge," said Fields-Sam.

But the contestants aren't the only ones who are being challenged by Morrison. Viewers will be invited to submit their own video that documents their personal 16 week challenge for a chance to win a \$10,000 prize. Web cam conference calls and chats will also pull in the online audience.

Unlike his big network counterparts, Morrison's reality show is starting with few sponsors, in fact only one: Pinnacle Systems, Inc. which makes the video capture device and editing software that will produce the show.

Morrison said the lack of sponsors and paid advertising is deliberate.

"I want to show you how to get started with nothing," said Morrison, who has also challenged himself to make \$100,000 by the end of the show.

Clarence Treadwell of Escalator Cleaning Company in Brooklyn, New York, attests to the potency of Morrison's Tutelage. Treadwell's company is the only one in the nation that can clean escalators without removing them off the track; cutting down on out of service time significantly for its customers.

"He is a great asset to minority business owners who want to step into the next level," said Treadwell, who recently became the majority shareholder in his company after Morrison's guidance.

Audrey Bell-Kearney, president of Sister Inc., "a media network that shines the spotlight on women in business" is a member of the Brain Trust.

"It will be most challenging for the contestants to stay focused and maintain time management," said Bell-Kearney. "They're going to need tough skin."

The new weekly 60 minute program premieres on Tuesday, April 22 at 10 p.m. EST at www.16weekchallenge.com.

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