

A much overused, but well intentioned expression in the Bahamas states that “perseverance and hard work pays off.” I am pleased to tell you that not only do I believe in this saying, but I am a living proof of its truth and wisdom.

It was on a bright Saturday morning approximately five year ago, that my uncle solicited my assistance on a parking lot project on which he was working I entered his backyard on that day, and came face to face with an un-intimidating, but rather odd looking machine which today has become one of my best friends, and greatest ally. Many questions later, and after figuring out what the old looking machine was used for, I was given a life changing, albeit limited, introduction to road striping.

At the end of the first day, my uncle quietly slipped me five hundred dollars and informed me that was my wage for that day; he also said jokingly make sure you don't spend it all in one place. I thought to myself five hundred in one day

I must know more about this road striping business and that is how the concept of Bahamas Striping was conceived in my mind.

Sometime later, I relocated to New Providence, and with the financial assistance and support of the Ministry of Youth's Self-starter Program, my brainchild-Bahamas Striping was birthed. The self-starter program is a program of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture which is designed to encourage and assist with the birthing of entrepreneurial ideas in young Bahamians. I proudly inform you that the grant that I received from the Ministry did not just assist me in getting my business started, but it also impacted my life in more intangible and profound ways.

At this time I would like to acknowledge and thank two very special individuals who helped to make my dream become a reality. Mr. Ricardo Deveaux and Mrs. Cynthia Brice, both members of the Self-starter Program, who

facilitated my application process, and offered priceless advice; their contribution to the development of my business is invaluable.

After receiving the grant from the Self-starter program, Bahamas Striping was able to sustain itself, and as our confidence grew, we began to aggressively pursue high profile projects, and we can proudly, but humbly boast having worked on such projects as: New Providence development; RND Thompson Blvd; Wendy's-Cable Beach; Mosco's Realty; Charlotte House parking lot; Supervalu in Winton Estates, Blue Hill Road, Nassau Street, and East Street; and last but by no means least, Phase I of the Lynden Pindling International Airport.

Although a young company, we at Bahamas Striping are strong proponents of empowering Bahamians through

training and apprenticeship. Our goal is to impact, empower and inspire young Bahamians for a newer and more modern Bahamas that provides opportunities for all who are willing to work hard and embrace their dreams. Our times are not ordinary as economies around the world are struggling and here at home we are facing social disintegration with increased violent crimes that threatens our peaceful way of live. It is my view as a young entrepreneur that our approach to meeting the new challenges of our day, must come through the empowerment of a people that will restore hope and opportunity and create new frontiers for a productive Bahamas going forward.

From my observation I am aware that there are several foreign-based striping company who have been contracted to carry out works here in The Bahamas, one in particular for approximately the past ten years. However, there

appears to have been no substantive training of Bahamians, or significant transfer of skills in this area thereby empowering Bahamians to participate in this sector of our economy. I Atario Mitchell and Bahamas Striping will change that as we impact, empower and inspire other young Bahamians, men in particular, to follow their dreams! Bahamas Striping will lead! Bahamas Striping will become the Bahamas' industry leader. Ladies and gentlemen, my inspiration must not be mine and mine alone; my desire is to inspire that young man from, Pinewood, that young woman from Bain Town or that the individual from one of our family of islands. I believe that I am representative of many others out there who deserve similar opportunity to empower themselves and to empower others. My desire is not just to be a businessman but to develop Bahamas Striping as a corporate citizen that all Bahamians can be proud. At

present, we have in our employ, seven Bahamians who have decided to make road striping their career, and are being trained and prepared by Bahamas Striping to do just that. I have no doubt in my mind, that in approximately five to ten years, at least one, if not all of these seven employees will advance to form companies of their own and thereby contribute to the stimulation and development of this growing industry. I wish to make special note of two employees currently on my staff. One of them is a twenty-four year old male (who incidentally happens to be the same age as I am) who was recently released from Her Majesty's Prisons after serving time for a drug offence. As I was interviewing this young man, he suddenly became overtaken with emotion, and tearfully asked: "how can I get my life together, and stay out of prison when no one wants to give me a second chance because of my past mistake?" He then went on to promise that if I were to give him a

chance, he would become my best worker. Well, I am proud to report that not only is he one of my most productive workers, but he diligently exemplifies the qualities of loyalty and punctuality.

The second employee that I wish to make mention of is a Bahamian of Haitian descent, who graduated from one of the schools here in New Providence with honors. This employee is a truly remarkable individual with a great personality, an awesome sense of humor and strong work ethics. However, before coming to work at Bahamas Striping, he was the victim of a very tragic illness called “prejudice”. He would recount to me stories of how he was often denied employment because of his heritage even though he met, and in some instances, even exceeded the job requirements. Once more, I am pleased to report that not only is he performing at an impressive standard, but he

continues to amaze me with his level of professionalism and productivity.

I wish to share with you a little about the personal mission and vision that we have adopted here at Bahamas Striping. When I first started the company, my initial vision was to become financially secure so that I could provide for my family, while remaining free of debt and other financially impeding obligations. One year later, while this is still my desire, I have now expanded my vision and mission to include the youth of this nation. We at Bahamas Striping strongly believe in the empowerment, development, and investment in our young people. With the hope that they too will go on to become trail blazers, pace setters, and entrepreneurs. We also believe that the empowerment of the youth should become a priority of all political groups here in the Bahamas because they are the future of this



great nation. Our young people are the keepers of our legacy and all of our leaders must adjust to face this new era and meet the new challenges of our young men and women.

As a fast growing company, we are indebted to the Honorable Brent Symonette and the Honorable Charles Maynard for their encouragement and motivation. I can vividly remember the first time I sat with Mr. Symonette. After introducing myself as the President of Bahamas Striping, He replied “Oh I see, so you are the big man in charge so I don’t need to be talking to your two associates.” Little did he know he was influencing me in the way I viewed myself at that time. He challenged me to conduct myself in accordance with the title that I hold; that as the company’s President. I went on to meet with Mr. Symonette many times following our initial meeting, and I therefore take this opportunity to publicly thank him for his advice

and continuous support. I not only look forward to developing a business relationship with him, but I also anticipate and count on his eagerness to push and steer this, and other indigenous companies into areas where they can contribute to the social and infrastructural development of the Bahamas in a greater way.

I also wish to publicly thank the Honorable Charles Maynard for his openness, encouragement, and his sound, practical business advice. I've had many opportunities to meet with Mr. Maynard in the past, and it pleases me greatly to report that he does not fit the mold that is held of so many politicians today-and that is that they make promises that they very rarely keep. If it was not for Minister Maynard and the Self-starter program within his ministry, I would not be standing here before you tonight launching my company, Bahamas Striping.

I stand proudly before you all, pleased to report that we have now acquired all of the machines needed to effectively and professionally strip all roads and parking lots. This now eliminates the need for the Government to outsource road striping projects to foreign based companies, and thereby invest in the development of its human resource here in The Bahamas. Ladies and gentlemen, Bahamas Striping is here as an entrepreneurial force and an example of what can be achieved when a government invest in its young people. Bahamas Striping has already started to make its mark in our country as a professional pavement marking company. I look forward to the day when my story of empowerment and inspiration will become your story; I look forward to the day when our collective stories will become their story. That no matter where we come from it will not determine our achievement! Our stories must

become the story of hundreds as we impact, empower and inspire and create a new Bahamas, for Bahamians.

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Bahamas Striping!

(have your employees and stand)