

The background of the entire page features a large, detailed clock face with Roman numerals. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of three business professionals: a woman on the left, a man in the center, and another woman on the right. They appear to be in motion, possibly walking or talking. The overall color palette is a mix of dark blues and greys for the silhouettes, and a warm, golden-yellow for the background.

MINORITIES &

SUCCESS

Delegation and Empowerment

Is it time to Remodel Your Business?

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In this Edition:

Delegation and Empowerment.....Page 4

**Is It Time to Remodel
Your Business?.....Page 8**

**Success With Mavericks and
Risk Takers.....Page 17**

**Are You Leading a
Multicultural Classroom?.....Page 20**

**Choosing College Is Choosing
a Different Kind of
Present and Future Work.....Page 22**

Hope for Discouraged Students.....Page 26

**How Business Grants
for Minorities Offer
Economic Succor to Them.....Page 28**

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Delegation and Empowerment

By Helen Wilkie

Communication is Key

Effective Delegation Requires Clear Communication

When you decide to delegate a task to someone, that person may see it as a welcome responsibility that shows your trust in him or her, or just another job to be added to an already burdensome workload. Which it is can depend largely on how well you communicate with the person during the actual delegation conversation.

Three aspects must be communicated and agreed upon right from the start in order to set up the delegated task for success:

o **WHAT** the task is. Define the task clearly. While you may decide to leave the process open to their discretion, you must make clear precisely what you want the end result to be.

o **WHY** you are delegating it to them. You should choose the person who will do the task based on their current competency or their ability to quickly attain the necessary competency. Explain this reasoning in the initial discussion.

o **WHERE** the task fits in the 'big picture' of your department or the company as a whole. People resent feeling they are just being given meaningless, unimportant jobs, but even a seemingly small task CAN have impact

on a larger desired result — it's your job to help them see that.

o **WHEN** it must be completed. Be clear not only about the final deadline date, but any interim stage points that must be reached by specific dates. These can be tied in with interim reporting to monitor the project in progress.

o **WHAT** resources are available. If expenditures will be necessary, tell them what the budget is and how they can access the money. If people are available for help or support, make sure all parties are aware of this. If training is needed, explain how it can be obtained.

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The first step in the delegation process is to think it through clearly yourself to be sure you have all this information at your fingertips before you meet with the person. Next, explain each of the above points clearly. Finally, through discussion, ensure that the other person has the same understanding of the process as you do.

Delegation has benefits for both parties. When managers pass on tasks they have been doing themselves, they save time. When subordinates are entrusted with meaningful tasks and responsibilities, they are empowered.

Levels of Freedom

When you delegate tasks or processes, you transfer a certain level of freedom in how the tasks are to be handled. These levels range from simply giving instructions to be followed right through to handing over a complete project that then becomes part of the person's job description.

But how do you decide? Here are three measures you can use:

1. The level of experience of the person to whom you are delegating. How much experience does this person have with the company? With the department? How familiar are they with the work involved? Have they had a chance to see you, or someone else, carry the task through so that they have some idea of what will be involved? Someone who is totally inexperienced in the area may still be able to do it, but they will need more supervision and the level of delegation will be at the lower end of the scale.

2. Proven reliability. Some people always come through. If they promise something by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, you can set your watch by its arrival. This is a very desirable trait in an employee, and one you should encourage and develop. With this person, you will still follow the delegation process including timelines and benchmark reporting dates, but you'll have more confidence in them being met.

3. How critical is the task? If a lot is riding on the success of the task, you should weigh the first two points carefully because your choice of person may well be the difference between success and failure. Test people with less critical tasks at first, and as they prove themselves worthy of your trust, move them up the delegation levels.

One of the great benefits of effective delegation is the empowerment of employees, but success or failure can depend on handing over just the right amount of freedom with the task. Use these three guidelines to help you delegate each task at the most appropriate level.

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Is It Time to “Remodel” Your Business?

By Lisa Montanaro

I’m hearing a lot these days about business reinvention. And it certainly seems like a great idea. But I think that a complete business overhaul is not only unjustified much of the time, but can be a risky move.

So instead, I’d like to propose the idea of a business “remodel”, which is more along the lines of a home remodel. When you remodel your home, you generally keep the existing structure and foundation. The changes are distinct for sure, but do not involve knocking down your entire home. Rather, the remodel may involve adding an addition,

repainting a room, finishing a basement, etc.

Likewise, you can remodel your business in distinct and powerful ways that cause a huge shift in your delivery of services, income stream, target market, or visibility as an expert. But a business remodel needs to be justified, strategic, and executed in such a way that the remodel doesn’t cause too much turmoil in your business. When you remodel a home, for example, it needs to be done in a way that causes the least disruption to your living environment. Yes, you are willing to suffer some inconvenience in the short run knowing you will wind up with a beautiful newly remodeled home. But

you wouldn’t plan a remodel that forces you to live in absolute chaos unless you can move out during the construction and find another place to live. Easier said than done!

With your business, you can’t necessarily find a new business “home” while conducting a business remodel because you still need cash flow. Sure, there are exceptions for those business owners that saved a ton of money to fund a remodel, but even in that case, it would mean dropping out of the business for a temporary period, which is not going to leave you top of mind with your target market.

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So what is the best way to approach a business remodel and what might it include? Here are some tips and guidance.

- **Take Stock** - Approach your business remodel in a strategic manner by taking stock of where you are in your business at present, and where you'd like the business to be in the future. Assess what you love about your business, what is working, and what brings you and your clients success and results. Also, pay serious attention to what is no longer working, what you have outgrown, and what your clients don't seem to need or want anymore. Only when you have done this business assessment will you be in the right frame of mind to determine what shape your business remodel will take.

- **Blueprint the Remodel** - Just like you would with a home remodel, you need to draft a blueprint for your business remodel. Add what the remodel will include, how long you expect it take, what players need to be involved, how much money you need to finance the remodel, etc. Consider getting assistance from a trusted advisor during this stage. Approach the blueprint like you would a business plan so that it can serve as the framework for the remodel during the weeks/months/years of the remodel.

- **Add On** - One way to remodel your business that is safe and smart is to actually add onto it. This can be in the form of an additional income stream like a new service offering, product, or program. It can also be achieved by partnering with another

business owner to engage in a joint venture together. It can take the form of offering or joining an affiliate program. The list is as long as your imagination, and what is the best fit for your business.

- **Take Away** - A business remodel can also include taking something away from your business that you know is not working, is draining your energy or your bank account, is not a big seller, or you just plain don't love offering anymore. In business, we often keep saying yes and piling up things. But a smart business remodel can be about saying no and streamlining or micro-focusing on what truly works, and brings you and your clients great results.

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- **Thing Big, but Start Small** - Once you get the idea of a business remodel in your head, it is hard not to get excited and maybe a little carried away. It is great to be excited and have passion around your business remodel. In fact, go ahead and think big! But then come back down to reality, and start small. Take the remodel one step at a time. Don't bite off more than you can chew or your remodel will crash and burn.
- **Mind Your Existing Business** - Another common problem with a business remodel is that while you are in the process of remodeling, you neglect your overall business. Make sure that you are still "minding the store" while remodeling. It is easy to get caught up in the remodel, as it is very exciting and usually evidence of where your future lies. But unless you have unlimited funds and a celebrity status, your clients most likely still want to buy from the business you have now. If you absolutely want to be free of the business you have now, then realize that you are not just remodeling, you are reinventing your business! And that is a horse of a different color. If that is what is truly happening, then you will be following a different path. You may need to close shop altogether, sell your business, completely revamp or rebrand it, or get employees or independent contractors to run it for you.
- **Roll Out Your Remodel**- At some point, your remodel will either be complete, or at least far enough along, that you want to officially roll it out and shout it from the rooftops. But consider that you may want to go public with your remodel even sooner than that. Getting people involved in your remodel can be a great strategic decision. In fact, you can engage your clients in the remodel by asking them to assist in some way. For example, let's say the remodel is to add a service offering. You can survey your clients (and warm prospects) well in advance to see what service offering is missing from your business that they desperately want and need. There are many other ways to get others involved in your remodel, but make sure you do so wisely so you don't scare your clients into mistakenly thinking that you may be jumping ship or abandoning them.
- **Enjoy the Remodel Results** - If you approach your remodel wisely and execute it strategically, you will be able to enjoy the results - and so will your clients!

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Success With Mavericks and Risk Takers

By Rick Johnson

Creating the right attitude is paramount to structuring an environment of success. Getting your employees to work with you and join in the search for better ideas, new methodology and higher profitability will transform your company from passive individualists to intelligent action takers and change agents.

You need "Risk Takers." You need "Mavericks." Identify every employee in that category and empower him or her to go out and get the job done. So what if they bend the rules sometimes. As long as they don't break the law, violate corporate core values or embarrass the

company, "Turn Them Loose." You have everything to gain and nothing to lose. The employees will see this as a demonstration of trust and empowerment. Word will travel fast. Promote that concept. Send a monthly memo to everyone praising individuality that result in improvements.

Title your memo, "OFF the CUFF" for it's informal straight talking honest feedback from the top. Reward and recognize the risk takers. Commend the change agents. Then align both management and the employees behind the new vision. Support this new environment by sharing the new vision, departmental goals and strategic initiatives. Publish

the minutes of every executive meeting that is held. Hold nothing back short of personal issues. Be proud and announce the fact that there will no longer be secrets held under close cover behind the doors of the executive staff.

Educate

Educate your managers and supervisors for their new role in this new environment. Do not tolerate deception or deviation from attitude or your new structure. Teach them to be coaches, mentors and transmitters of directions. Educate line employees to

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make them know they are part of the plan, part of the new way. Teach them new skills for self-management, planning, team building, goal setting, risk taking, conflict resolution and negotiating. Show them you care. That's all part of structuring an environment.

Create a mental picture of what the company is all about; where you want to go and how you are going to get there. This is the vision for the company. It does not reflect the personal idiosyncrasy of the CEO. It has a broad base of support and buy-in from the employees.

Micro Management Demotivates Mavericks and Risk Takers

The easiest way to suppress discretionary energy, the energy given willingly - no matter what it takes, is a style of micro management that scrutinizes every decision an

employee makes. It can kill their spirit. It destroys trust. If any of your employees even joke about you being a micro manager - back off. Where there is smoke there is usually fire. Micro managing may make you feel in control but in reality you are only hurting yourself and the company. It only limits an employee's ability to be innovative and creative. This can cost the company thousands of dollars because it is the creativity and innovation of your employees that maximize the profitability of your company.

Micro Management is a Symptom

Micro Management is often just a symptom of ineffective planning, too much compassion and the inability to judge performance and develop bench strength. Developing a strategic plan for your company is a very effective way to

address any or all of these challenges. I often tell my clients that the most valuable part of a strategic plan is the development process itself. Running a company with a shoot from the hip mentality often encourages micro management and does not allow employees to develop their skills and maximize their potential. One of the many warning signs is a high turnover rate. The reason is simple;

good employees just won't tolerate micro management and they will leave to find employment that will challenge them and help them grow.

It's about Leadership

Simply put, effective leaders don't micro manage. In fact, they cringe at the thought of it. Why? Because they recognize that one of their primary responsibilities is the development of future leaders for the organization. You just can't develop future leaders by micro managing.

Consistency and Fairness

To create the proper attitude and structure an environment conducive to survival, growth and success, you must treat employees the way you would want to be treated. You must be a proponent of openness. You must be sensitive to their needs. You must understand the initial shock and the healing that must take place in the organization as a result of contingency planning/restructuring.

A cosmic truth states that you must give before you receive. Mandating new rules, stipulations, threats and unreasonable demands does not promote unity or trust. It is destructive to the kind of attitude required to succeed. Employee consideration and input is absolutely essential to structuring a new environment. You need employee support, trust and respect. But, you must give before you get. As a leader, you must know when to lead and when to listen before acting. Empowering employees allows them to use their own initiative, their own creativity and figure out things you would never imagine they could accomplish.

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Are You Leading a Multicultural Classroom?

By Gabriela Gotay

The following reflection on education is inspired by the work of Paulo Freire, an educator I greatly admire, as a fellow pedagogue and human rights advocate.

This Brazilian educator postulated a different kind of learning experience would be a key factor to liberate the oppressed rural masses from the control of the oppressor's education system. He viewed this system as perpetuating their servile and subservient condition.

According to Freire, the simple truth was that the education of the "oppressed" and the education of the "oppressor" should not be the

same, as their experiences of everyday life were not rooted in the same tangible reality.

He believed, as I do, that Education must reflect the reality of the learner, if not, it won't come from a place of significance, it won't be a source of empowerment, and belonging.

In his book, *La Pedagogia del Oprimido*, (the pedagogy of the oppressed) Freire talks about literacy as the path for people to find their own humanity and be able to write their own life.

So, we must stop and ask ourselves, are our children being empowered to write their own stories? Are we giving them

the tools and encouraging them to define their own humanity?

These are questions that should be asked now, as our children are first exposed to school and formal education, an education that is still very much designed to develop a single path and a single mindset. Where does this leave the child trying to come up with an identity of his own?

The Strategy: Developing multicultural classrooms where diversity is encouraged and identity is respected.

-Multicultural classrooms have educators willing to expand beyond their frame of reference.

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A teacher doesn't have to be bilingual to connect and bond with children. A teacher has to be open to coaching and able to create an atmosphere of inclusion. This inclusion will benefit all students, not just those from other cultural backgrounds.

Teachers in multicultural classrooms should be given the resources and mentoring to develop a deeper understanding of the places where their students and their families come from. The point of all this goes back to Freire, and the importance of teaching children by referencing images, words and actions they are familiar with, as examples from their own culture, to explain and give new significance to the material being taught in the classroom.

-Multicultural classrooms should display engaging diversity.

Once again, to develop diverse classrooms should be the goal of all teachers in all schools. We live in a diverse world, and as soon as all children familiarize themselves with the concept of diversity and feel pride and joy in leaning about other cultures and other languages, while sharing their own, the stronger their identities will form, and the greater chance they will have to protect themselves against prejudice and stereotypes.

Education is not a "once size fits all" experience, because each child-learner is unique. Belonging is a difficult process all in itself without the added element of acculturation and language acquisition, without having to fight back prejudices and stereotypes. Especially when you are a child who may not fully understand why you are being signaled out as different. When we start with the needs of these children and those of their families, we should be prepared to better address their concerns, guide them through the transition process and be a support system.

In his book, Freire talks about freeing the rural masses from an education that is setting them up, not only for failure, but for a life of submission to the dominant elite.

The concept, in a less radical way, should be applied though to the way we teach each learner from the start of their formative school years. They should be given the opportunities to approach literacy from the foundations of what their experiences are, not from intangible concepts and a reality they are not familiar with. More so, they should be made to feel included, and their parents and families as well.

There is no doubt in my mind that an educational experience that is community-oriented, child-centered and supportive of diversity and identity will exert a great deal of influence on the perceptions that both students and teachers have of school and life as a whole.

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Choosing College Is Choosing A Different Kind Of Present And Future Work

By Megan Wilson

High School graduation requirements should be worked out at the school level by faculty and approved by parents and supervising boards, accepted by students who come to the school (who - one hopes! - have some choice in what school they attend), and which lay out the knowledge which a young person needs to be considered an effective adult. These requirements will not consist only of long-ago earned Carnegie units and/or test scores, but will be based on a system of promotion by performance and by portfolio during the junior high school and high school years.

Although most students will complete the faculty's expectations by the time they are about eighteen, others will move through the program more or less quickly. The "fixed" will be the basic proficiency standards; the "variables" will be the time it takes to achieve them, and the ways in which these aptitudes are displayed. Breadth in the curriculum will also vary according to the student. Senior year will be dominated by a rigorous senior seminar, which will include a substantial senior project, possibly including an internship, and which will lead to a Graduation Exhibition which can be described and

explained to all interested parties.

A new kind of transcript will need to be developed to describe the student's progress throughout high school, especially during the senior year. If we are going to ask potential employers and college admissions officers to take high school transcripts seriously, we will have to make sure we are writing in a language which we both understand.

College and work entry requirements should be made clearer. In the case of college, they should be worked out by college faculties and accepted by

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supervisory boards and clients of the institution (students, their parents, and others who help to pay the costs of college) which lay out the knowledge which a young person needs to be able to do the entry-level work in that institution.

A second transcript (or a second part of the transcript) will need to be developed collaboratively by college and high school teachers, to make it possible for some high school graduates to go right on to college. College entry will not be an “automatic admit” for those who have completed high school. Those who are deemed not ready to do entry-level work in the college they wish to attend will need to be told relatively early exactly what their deficiencies are and will need to be given help, including new kinds of teaching, to enable them to achieve the desired results. If this help is offered and taken advantage of during the senior

year in high school, it will surely remove the “permission to coast” which so many seniors have assumed.

When a student is told that, at the moment, he/she cannot do entry-level work in either college or a specific part of the workplace, there need to be several forms of “remediation” available. When the problem is low ability, extensive work with counselors should help the student decide what the areas are in which he/ she has more proficiency and promise, and what kind of training would be most appropriate to pursue that future. When the problem is poor prior training, it can be made up, but adequate time must be set aside to do so. Other plans for the student’s time - other courses, work, sports - must be given up, at least if the student plans to keep to a specific timetable. This is not a trivial problem and cannot be handled by a short course.

When the problem is motivation, it should be identified, accepted and tackled by a combination of counselors and teachers. (It is not necessarily a teacher’s “fault” that a student doesn’t work in his class. At the same time, the teacher needs to appreciate the reasons why a student may not be motivated if a real connection is to be made.) When the problem is maturity, it should be dealt with by keeping college preparation programs open for older ages, perhaps in the high school at night.

In many individuals, all four of these factors are what cause the need for remediation. This is why there is no single, efficient - and certainly no cheap - solution. The best job of helping such students will be done by an ongoing policy of promotion by performance that has led to at least some self-knowledge all along, and by self-respecting teachers in schools that have kept their teachers’ load low

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enough so that they can really know their students. These teachers are most likely to be able to work with students to analyze the problem and determine what the best course of action will be.

College graduation requirements should be publicized to demonstrate the further knowledge that a person needs to achieve beyond the entry-level. These should stress readiness to do sustained, complex and difficult work, so that the student considering the college will know what attitudes as well as knowledge will need to be acquired and then enlarged upon in college. Emphasis should be on the fact that choosing college is fundamentally choosing a different kind of present and future work. Too often, college is seen as a kind of moratorium, which clearly affects both it and the high school senior year.

It is perhaps naive to insist that every eighteen year old is ready, emotionally or intellectually, to do sustained, complex and difficult work. Some can; some can't - yet. However, high school seniors need to see beyond the minimum entry requirements of college, to be able to imagine the hurdles ahead, both in the upper levels of college and in the workplace. These hurdles are largely ones of integrity, persistence and a sense of personal responsibility. Ways of measuring these qualities have not been developed with any kind of scientific precision, and perhaps that's good, since so many students improve in these respects during their early adulthood.

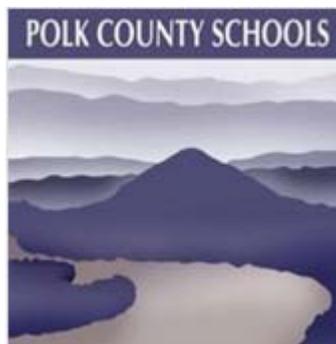
Still, high school teachers who have been able to get to know their students have hunches about these qualities. Progress reports written by teachers and counselors all through high school can increasingly refer to these qualities as they develop, so that students and parents are reminded of their importance. During senior year, those who write recommendations for college and the workplace are frequently asked about their impression of the students as potential workers and citizens; they may also be encouraged to cite the evidence behind these impressions, in order to draw a more compelling portrait of the candidate. These recommendations are already part of our communication process, but they need to be taken more seriously by both sides.

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Hope for Discouraged Students

By Raymond Gerson

Are you a discouraged student?

Do you think that teachers or other students perceive you as dumb and a failure? What others say or think about you is not as important as how you feel about yourself. Don't let others define you. Find your own limits and discover from experience what you are capable of accomplishing. Discover your own abilities.

There are many different types of intelligence. Everyone has their own special talents and types of intelligence. For example, some have a gift for music, teaching, counseling, writing, sports, comedy, etc. These require different types of intelligence.

Also, our intelligence is not fixed at birth. We can continue to increase our intelligence throughout our lives in spite of obstacles.

Read the biographies of great men and women and you will see that many of them were once labeled by others as unintelligent or mediocre. Winston Churchill failed the sixth grade and he had teachers who thought that he was not smart. Helen Keller was born deaf and blind. She was unable to speak until she was taught to do so by Anne Sullivan. Most people had no faith in her ability to accomplish anything of significance. As an adult, Helen Keller gave inspirational talks to audiences all over the world. It is not the hand that we

are dealt that determines whether we win the game but it is how we play the game that counts. Helen Keller was born with a difficult hand but came out a winner. Some people are born with a good hand and lose the game by wasting their lives.

There are many other examples of intelligent people who were considered "dumb" by others. Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison's parents were told when their children were in elementary school that they were "dumb." Abraham Lincoln was demoted from being an officer in the military to the rank of private because he was considered incompetent. Even though some people considered Churchill, Keller, Einstein, Edison, and Lincoln to be unintelligent,

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they proved to be intelligent and made significant contributions to others.

It is difficult to predict what others will accomplish in their lives. Who can predict what you are capable of achieving if you work hard in school and are determined to succeed? Success in school depends more on skill and will than it does on brilliance. Good study skills, combined with the motivation to succeed, can take you a long way in school and life. Will or motivation must come primarily from within you. Study skills can be developed and courses are usually offered at community colleges and universities. Many of these courses contain success strategies which can be used to achieve your goals not only in school, but in your life, and they are also available to high school students through college early start programs. I could have used courses such as these when I was in school to build self-confidence and to learn how to study.

In middle school and during my early years of high school I experienced self-doubts, insecurity, and a lack of self-confidence. Like you, I also felt discouraged. When I compared myself to others they seemed smarter, more popular, and superior in many ways. I had no goals and I did not understand how my classes were relevant to my life and future. Needless to say, my grades were poor to average. IQ tests indicated that I was of average intelligence and this is how I perceived myself.

My parents were concerned about my poor performance in school and they spoke to a high school counselor about me. He told them not to encourage me to go to college. He said that I was not capable of succeeding in college and that I would probably perform at a mediocre level at anything I did throughout my life. Fortunately, my parents did not tell me this story at that time which I probably would have used as an excuse to quit school. I did not

find out what this counselor said about me until I graduated with a master's degree and an A average.

I thought about quitting school many times when I was a teenager. I am so thankful that I continued my education in spite of obstacles and periods of discouragement.

Over time and through my life experience, I discovered that I had talents and I began to develop my strengths. I discovered that I was capable of making a positive contribution to others through inspirational writing, public speaking, coaching, counseling, and teaching. I love my work and it gives me fulfillment and a deep sense of purpose.

Don't give up on yourself. You were born for a purpose. Search within yourself and discover your own special abilities and how you want to use them to make a positive difference.

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How Business Grants for Minorities Offer Economic Succor to Them

By Kelly Hunter

Whether a person was born in the United States or becomes a U.S citizen through naturalization, this person is entitled to benefits which everyone else who is American gets. One of these types of benefits is the option they have to receive grants for the U.S government. Grants are about funding from the state or federal government that is either not repaid or repayable with no interest. Different types of grants exist for different situations and scenarios. For people who belong to certain categories of people called minorities they can benefit from grants for minorities. Minorities may belong to different racial classifications and

these classifications may include people from African, Hispanic and Native American backgrounds, newer kinds of minorities also exist and if in doubt people can check government websites to see if they fall into the categories of these minorities. By giving grants to people in minority classifications, the government gives them access to a wide range of amenities among other things. Sometimes these funds may not be given directly but rather to an institution that intends to carry out projects in a minority area. Amenities these people may benefit from include healthcare as well as a better education. Some categories of grants called business grants are usually given to

people who come from minority backgrounds so that they can grow their businesses. By growing their businesses they benefit from a source of income and may also benefit other people who are resident in their community too. Some categories of business grants for minorities differ as well, these business grants for minorities apply to people who may not come from any of these minority backgrounds but people who want to develop businesses that will benefit the minority community. You can find these sorts of grants cutting across various industries and establishments. Some of these establishments which benefit from government grants and

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any related efforts include property construction, businesses located in the midst of the community and self-help projects. People who have no income or employment may also benefit from these grants as well. By using these grants they can counteract the effects of unemployment by getting employed in an establishment that was created with a community grant. Other means of them helping themselves through these grants is by setting up their own businesses or self-help efforts which may benefit them in the long run. You can visit <http://www.grants-for-minorities-help.com> to find more information on grants for minorities.

Most popularly the sorts of business grants for minorities that seem to be on offer are business grants that get offered to people who fall into the category of entrepreneurs. Most entrepreneurs in minority communities aim to create large scale efforts that tend to benefit people who opt into these funds. By creating large scale efforts these people empower other people in minority communities and engender development within most of these disadvantaged minorities. Other business grants tend to exist for other categories of people and which may be specific to particular minority groups. It is left for the individuals in these minority groups to determine which of these grants suit their purposes and identity best.

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