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## The Star-Ledger

### Directory offers link to minority firms

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**BY JOSEPH R. PERONE**  
Star-Ledger Staff

Gregory Newson runs a Yellow Pages for minorities.

The Minority Business Directory lists thousands of companies owned by African-, Asian- and Hispanic-Americans. How does his company do it with just five employees?

"Very little sleep," said Newson, who is publisher and chief executive. "I work from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week."

His Newark company lists about 13,000 African-American-, Asian- and Latino-owned businesses, including 4,000 from New Jersey. The rest are from New York, where the 58-year-old Newson started the venture five years ago with just \$7,000.

He moved to Newark a year and a half ago, cutting his \$3,000-a-month rent in half. Newson said his company is profitable this year, although he declined to be specific. The company will have about \$325,000 in sales this year.

The directory, printed in New York and Pennsylvania by outside vendors, relies on freelance contractors in the United States and India to help compile the list. It has become popular with corporate procurement officers who want to hire minority contractors, according to Newson.

But the yellow book isn't the only way to reach minority businesses. Multicultural Marketing ([www.multicultural.com](http://www.multicultural.com)) in New York, and Newark-based Diversity Inc., ([www.diversityinc.com](http://www.diversityinc.com)), a magazine and Web site for human resource directors, also are used by companies to recruit minority partners.

"Corporations looking to bring in more diverse vendors historically find them via networking organizations or personal recommendations from existing vendors, partners and search firms," said Andrea Hoffman, chief executive of Diversity Affluence, a minority market consulting firm based in Hamburg.

Newson holds networking events for customers at the Cotton Club in Harlem, where he was raised. He also publishes a glossy 12-page magazine called Global New York -- which he describes as the "Crain's New York" for minorities. Published six times a year, the magazine might feature stories on everything from racism in radio to overseas investing and the spiraling cost of health insurance.

Global New York is distributed free to some of the company's advertisers. Newson plans to eventually publish a magazine for New Jersey.

Clients are charged a \$150 fee for a lifetime listing in the minority directory and on the company's Web site, [www.minoritybusinessdirectoryonline.com](http://www.minoritybusinessdirectoryonline.com). Phone numbers are checked by a virtual dialer to make sure they are still working.

Newson said he makes money by selling display ads, marketing services and bartering with the listed companies.

"It's the cross-selling that pays my rent," Newson said.

A former children's book illustrator and art director, Newson is a Web designer who once worked for Viking Press. He started the New York-New Jersey directory after helping to design the "Black Pages"

-- a minority directory in Jacksonville, Fla.

Newson said he moved to New Jersey because he saw a need for such a product here.

"I received calls from people who asked me, 'When are you going to do a version for New Jersey?'" Newson said. "So, I wanted to be near my new market."

Eventually, he hopes to split off the New Jersey listings into a separate directory. He is also looking for a financial partner to pump added capital into the company so he can concentrate on the creative design of the publication.

"I'm more of an artist and dreamer of concepts, and I need someone who has money and innovative ways to sell," he said.

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