



WORK SAMPLES
ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN
ME A MAGAZINE –
2012/2013

2013 Began As a Very Successful Year
for America's Women Business Owners

MEA

Minority Enterprise Advocate

March - April 2013
USA \$5.95 CAN \$7.25

*Power Player:
Claudine Adams,
Leadership in the
Right Direction*

Creativity and Success in Management Services
– Angela Y. Moody, President and CEO of EDJ Associates



Navigating the Shoals of U.S. Export Controls

MEA
Minority Enterprise Advocate

July - August 2012
USA \$5.95 CAN \$7.25

**Subcontracting and
Teaming: Procurement
Strategies Proving
Success for Minority
Business Owners**

**Living Well . . . Achieving Success:
A Profile of Desiree Watson**
– President & CEO of Wellness Interactive



Sequestration:
A Roadblock or an Opportunity?

MEA
Minority Enterprise Advocate

May - June 2013
USA \$5.95 CAN \$7.25

*Cracking the
Sales Code by
Honing Your
Generational
Radar*

Achieving the American Dream
– Manny Rivera, CEO of RiVidium, Inc.



Cover Story

LIVING WELL... ACHIEVING SUCCESS: A Profile of Desiree Watson

by Angelique Westerfield



Desiree Watson
President & CEO, Wellness Interactive®.

Desiree's Journey:

Desiree Watson, president and CEO of Wellness Interactive, Inc.® has been involved in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and the wellness lifestyle industry for more than 30 years. She has traveled globally, studying numerous approaches to health and complementary medicine.

Desiree's decision to venture into the wellness industry was sparked by the mother of a dear friend who was stricken with cancer. For a period of several months, **she agreed to try Reflexology (an alternative form of medicine) to alleviate pain due to her illness.** Supplements to her traditional treatment were also added to her routine. Upon observing that her pain subsided, she immediately suggested that Desiree explore the development of a business model for integrated health therapies.

However, while on this exploratory path Desiree endured a life-altering event that ignited her passion all the more to pursue a career in the wellness industry -- the birth of her first child. While pregnant, Desiree discovered that she had a tumor, which grew to be eight pounds and became a life-threatening situation for her baby. Not pleased with the advice she received from several physicians of traditional medicine, she turned to her OBGYN (a practitioner of both traditional and alternative therapies), who decided to use a form of CAM therapy to manage the growth of the tumor. This therapy caused the fibroid to recede and she eventually delivered a healthy baby girl. The experience was a bit traumatic, but it motivated Desiree to re-evaluate her career path. She furthered her studies in alternative forms of health and healing, finally receiving the education needed to progress moving forward with the educational platform for complementary and alternative medicine. Her goal was simple – just to make people feel good.

Desiree's venture began on a small scale with a brunch in her home attended by fifteen of her close friends. Along with workshops on Reflexology, Desiree invited other practitioners engaged in integrated health and alternative

therapies to instruct on topics that included the benefits of raw and green foods and ancient therapies such as Ear Candling and Acupuncture. While she had expected 15 guests, they were so curious to learn and share more information about this intriguing wellness model that they brought other friends and family members along. Fifteen guests quickly turned into 60. She then realized it was time to "get down to business."

Using her strategic marketing and advertising skills that she had honed from having held positions in the corporate arena, Desiree began to build her brand as an alternative health education professional. In 1993, she formed an educational and consulting firm, ALAYSHER, Inc, derived from the names of her two daughters, Alayah and Sheridan, and was geared toward organizations and corporations interested in promoting wellness initiatives for their employees. She traveled throughout the country giving lectures and hosting workshops for various churches, women's organizations and companies eager to pursue the development of wellness programs to educate their constituencies on integrated health therapies.

Desiree's travels allowed her to develop significant relationships with other health and alternative care professionals, and in 1997, she hosted her very first integrated health and wellness brunch on Mother's Day at the Grand Hyatt New York. The event, officially named "A Woman's Day of Enlightenment" attracted both men and women desiring to learn more about unique ways to achieve emotional, physical and spiritual balance. Letters she received from attendees and other feedback confirmed that people were seeking a comfortable and soothing environment in which to discuss health and wellness issues.

All Things Wellness:

As the company expanded, Desiree eventually began incorporating other lines of business and in 2000, the company's name became Wellness Interactive, Inc.®, reflecting

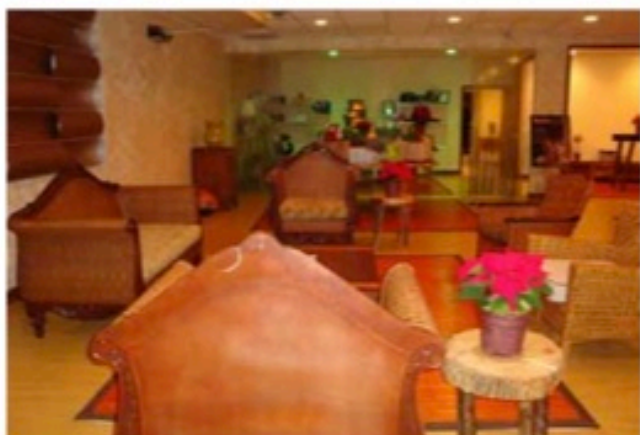
the interactive nature of its services. Initially, she focused on education consulting for corporations, foundations and organizations who wanted to assimilate the Wellness Interactive, Inc.[®] model within their existing business structure. A recent Wellness Interactive, Inc.[®] consulting management program focused on childhood obesity and spirituality. Operating through its Step Further[®] educational model, Wellness Interactive, Inc.[®] successfully implemented this 12-week health and nutrition program for families in partnership with a prominent pediatric physician and psychologist as well as other integrated health professionals.

Desiree expanded the business model of integrating "the old with the new" through technology with www.wellnessinteractive.com. This interactive website provides a platform for users to access information on complementary and alternative medicine, news and other wellness resources throughout the world. The website also provides a link to the Wellness LoungeR which expands the platform for users to retrieve programming information, both locally and nationally, as well as a link for them to create their own wellness website.

VideoWellnessR and Wellness Interactive RadioR are premium features that allow users to access wellness-related media footage and radio interviews of various industry professionals, including an NBA Hall of Famer, *Dancing with the Stars* professionals, physicians who practice some form of CAM and other health professionals who engage in alternative therapies. Desiree believes that visitors should be incorporated into the online wellness experience; thus, they can create their own wellness site and submit their choice of wellness video and/or audio clips.

Wellness Interactive, Inc.[®] has developed the wellness business model into a

multitude of services and products throughout its 12-year existence. **Today, the company offers** a wide group of brands covering retail, multimedia, publishing, consulting and educational services, including its premier brand, the Wellness Lounge[®]. In addition, Wellness Interactive, Inc.[®] has brought health and wellness programming to a variety of organizations and their constituents through the construction of "pop-up"



wellness lounges including AARP, Kaiser Permanente, PGA/Glow Media, Releve Entertainment's Merge Summit, the NBA Wives Association and the Steve and Marjorie Harvey Foundation. Wellness Interactive, Inc.[®] has also worked with faith-based organizations to implement wellness initiatives for its members.

Although Wellness Interactive, Inc.[®] designs and manages the Wellness LoungeR for various organizations on a national level, incorporating venues in Atlanta, St. Louis, Los Angeles, New York City and Dallas, the company has expanded the wellness platform to local and surrounding communities and added a "green" environmental focus to the Wellness Interactive, Inc.[®] model. The result was the launching of the flagship Wellness Lounge in November 2011, featuring Something HealthyR line of products made from natural and renewable energy sources.

Located in South Orange, New Jersey, the Wellness LoungeR is an oasis where people can relax and feel inspired to learn new ways to improve their health and overall well-being. The lounge offers interactive lifestyle classes and workshops focused on stress

management, personal development and environmental education – which is an important component for addressing well-being. The Wellness LoungeR also offers hands-on alternative therapeutic treatments (Ear candling, Reflexology, Tai Massage, Pranik Healing, etc.), a retail bookstore and relaxation rooms. The Something HealthyR store is complete with household plant-based products and a variety of eco-friendly items made from recycled and natural materials, including durable fleece, handbags and backpacks made from water bottles and recycled paper, school supplies (wheat straw rulers, corn plastic pens), notepads made from stone, recycled plastic dog bowls, mugs made from corn plastic and golf balls with core of recycled tires. Wellness Interactive, Inc.[®] is a supplier and distributor of green and sustainable products, and is also a PGA certified supplier. Most products are available for private label.

Desiree states that customers have taken keen interest in the products as well as the services offered. "Anyone walking out of their front door who is experiencing stress and can't get away for a week-end or get away for two weeks..... they should be able to find a Wellness Lounge. It's a one-stop retreat." Existing customer response to the Wellness Lounge has been extremely positive. Desiree is particularly pleased with the diversity of the clientele. The Wellness Lounge has certainly proven to have universal appeal for a mixture of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, baby boomers, and the metrosexual male to name a few.

Much of this appeal is attributable to creative wellness programming and a business model that provides ample resources for clients to be and remain engaged in promoting a lifestyle that promotes their well-being as well as the larger community. Desiree says that it is a one stop oasis for all to enjoy, shop green, learn and relax. The goal is to attempt to have customers become closer to wellness in a meaningful, holistic way that will enrich their quality of life.

Long term, Desiree expects to expand into a franchise model with wellness

lounges throughout the country. In the meantime, Wellness Interactive, Inc.® is building upon current programming at its South Orange location and taking the Wellness LoungeR on the road to other venues. Wellness Interactive, Inc.® recently constructed and managed a Wellness LoungeR for the Steve and Marjorie Harvey Foundation (SMHF) retreat in Texas for its Youth Mentoring Program and is scheduled to present the Wellness LoungeR in Los Angeles for Releve Entertainment's Merge Summit in August.

Inspiration for Professional Success:

When asked who has inspired her professional success, Desiree Watson didn't hesitate to respond, "My Mom!" She adds, "She was always encouraging and pushing you forward because in my family, my parents raised 16 biological children. Thirteen out of 16 [siblings] are college graduates, and we all have children. I have over 30 nephews and all attended college; most of them are married to women who now hold graduate degrees. Desiree also says that her husband of 26 years, for whom she is very grateful, is another person who inspires her professional success.

The Joy of Giving Back:

Desiree's parents instilled in her a strong value of giving back to the community. With 16 offspring – 12 girls and four boys – sharing was a very common practice growing up. Desiree states, "I'm motivated [to give

back to others] from my upbringing in Niagara Falls, New York. My mother gave so much to our community. I couldn't help but understand that this is what you had to grow up doing. *All Things Well* represents Wellness Interactive®." Some of her community engagement activities include service in the following capacities:



Above: Congressman Towns, D. Watson and Congresswoman Velazquez



Left: Ann Nicol/Executive Director of UNANY (United Nation Association of New York) at UN celebration

- Executive Vice-President of the UN Association of New York
- Member of the Advisory Board of the UN Association of New York
- Chair of the 60th Anniversary Celebration of the United Nations
- Member of the Advisory Board, Merge Summit (Releve Entertainment)
- Member of the Advisory Board, Llewellyn Park (home of Thomas Edison and first gated community in the country)

- Member, Junior League
- Member, Jack and Jill of America, Inc.
- Member, Rotary Club International

It is also important that WI employees value and understand the concept of giving back. Desiree incorporates this philosophy into her business model, making sure that all of her employees have a background of community service and charitable engagement.

Awards/Honors:

Desiree has been recognized for both business excellence and her dedication to community service. Her most significant honors include:

- National Action Network's "Woman of Excellence Award"
- "50 Women of Power in Business Award" (MEA magazine)
- "Top 25 Leading Women Entrepreneur Award" (New Jersey Monthly Magazine)
- Cambridge's "Who's Who" Professional of the Year Representing Health and Wellness
- Worldwide "Who's Who" Top Female Executives

Advice to Emerging Entrepreneurs:

Desiree gives firm advice to budding entrepreneurs, "Once you find out what your passion is..... you should stay with it. If you are an entrepreneur, you have to stay with it." She also believes that you have to surround yourself with people who have similar passions and are serious about effectively and efficiently running a business. Desiree adds, "You have to surround yourself with people who are intelligent visionaries. There may be many who may not share your vision or passion; you cannot stop, or you will not succeed." ■



Angela Y. Moody, *President/CEO*,
EDJ Associates

Creativity and Success in Management Services

by Angelique Westerfield

Growing up in Laurel, Mississippi, Angela Moody always followed a path of creative expression. Her initial journey was a thespian of the theater. These artistic instincts led to a major in Communications and Theater at Grambling State University, Grambling, LA. Although she never pursued theater professionally, the art form was a valuable tool for learning interpersonal skills. Knowing how to interact with people was key as Moody found her career niche. In 1989, Moody joined Professional and Scientific Associates (PSA) as an employee working in conference, event, and peer review and grant management. Moody says, "I was inspired to get into event management because it allowed me to express my creative side. I love the attention to detail and the process of creating memorable moments. It is a very satisfying feeling to be part of an event or meeting people found enjoyable or meaningful."

By 1997, Moody was promoted to Director of Operations & Support Services. She was very instrumental in the growth of the company; observing its development from four employees at the start of her tenure to over one hundred employees in her last year. With firsthand knowledge of how to cultivate and sustain a business, visions of becoming an entrepreneur began to take shape. In 1999, Angela Moody debuted EDJ Associates, Inc. a minority woman-owned small business offering a range of management consulting and technical services. Moody states, "my initial plan was to use this as an opportunity to rest, recharge and figure out my purpose in life or what I would do professionally. I was burned out from my prior company where management allowed me to enjoy a great deal of autonomy over a decade. The idea of going to work for someone else just didn't appeal to me." EDJ Associates' core services were similar to Moody's work at PSA. In fact, Moody entered into a Small Business Administration Mentor/Protégé agreement for support with conference, peer review and grant management services.

Moody adds, "Initially my work was limited to PSA and a handful of small businesses that utilized my expertise in peer review and conference management to address work fluctuations on their contracts." She also admits not having a long-term vision for the company during its first year of business. By the second

year, Moody organized and established long-term goals. The first contract that required more staff than just Moody was with Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care, in Tuskegee, AL. While the typical event planning services EDJ Associates provides were required, the event seemed impossible to complete in the time given. Moody set a goal to ensure customer satisfaction by completing work tasks not outlined in the original contract. "When your client tells you they think what they're asking is unreasonable and can't be done because there simply isn't enough time, it either fills you with doom or energizes you. This project definitely energized me. I convinced the client that EDJ really could make this happen in a quality manner and prevent them from having to cancel a very important event. I saw the Tuskegee contract as an opportunity to launch EDJ to the next level and really garner attention for our expertise," says Moody. In ten days, EDJ Associates was able to coordinate all aspects for a meeting on Capitol Hill that included three hundred attendees. Moody notes, "Hotel rooms and airfare had to be booked, a theme designed and agenda and meeting materials coordinated as well as catering options selected. That was a very sleepless period in my life but what a great sense of accomplishment once we pulled it off." It was at this stage of business development that EDJ Associates began a series of expansion. The company's reputation for 'getting things done' had been etched in stone. EDJ Associates core value system was firmly rooted: Flexibility, Openness, Responsiveness, Collaboration, and Excellence equals the EDJ FORCE!

With a solid infrastructure in place, the next goal was to establish meaningful partnerships with government agencies. EDJ Associates partnered with PSA to contract with the National Cancer Institute for clinical trials work and the National Science Foundation for Peer and Grant Review Management as well as Conference and Event Management. Moody emphasizes, "We have been working with both organizations for more than a decade. We've done Presidential Awards events in coordination with both the Bush and Obama administrations.

continued on page 27

continued on page 12

And really collaboration has been key to our growth and expansion. We believe in meaningful partnerships."

EDJ Associates is responsible for ensuring the distribution of investigational clinical drug agents to support clinical sites for patients who participate in National Cancer Institute Blinded and Open Label Clinical Trials. Moody notes that she is particularly proud of the commitment and hard work by the staff of EDJ Associates during critical times. EDJ staff received commendations for their work during Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy for making certain of no disruptions in clinical drug distribution to patients during these natural disasters. Moody adds, "The efficient process of drug distribution to patients in a time of crisis means a lot to me not just from a humanitarian perspective. My father passed away from cancer. Participating in these clinical trials for some patients is not only their best hope, it is their only hope. My father never participated in a clinical trial, but I always remind the staff to imagine if it were your loved one waiting for that much needed new drug."

Angela Moody's father not only had an impact on the way in which she conducts business, but also in the realm of civil rights and education. In fact, both of her parents - who were born during The Depression era - were strong advocates for education and civil rights. Although it was a long ten-year battle, her mother received a college degree and became a teacher in the local school district. Moody's father received his Masters degree and was elected Election Commissioner of Laurel, Mississippi. He was also

a strong civil rights activist appealing for the right of African Americans to vote. Angela Moody sees her current role as Board Chair of the Northern Virginia Urban League (NOVAUL) as a testament to her parent's hard and passionate work as it relates to the right to vote and education. NOVAUL is an affiliate of The National Urban League, which is the nation's oldest and largest community-based organization devoted to empowering African Americans to enter the economic and social mainstream. Moody notes that Marc Morial (President and CEO of the National Urban League) introduced and developed a stronger strategic direction of the organization with a 'Five Point Empowerment Agenda'. It focuses on closing the equality gaps that exist for African Americans and other emerging ethnic communities in education, economic empowerment, health and quality of life, civic engagement, and civil rights and racial justice. NOVAUL adapts this agenda to enable individuals and families of the Northern Virginia area through its program and advocacy services. Moody adds, "Here at the NOVAUL, we reach out to hundreds of individuals and families with financial literacy workshops, foreclosure prevention counseling, mentoring initiatives, youth academics and life skills programs, and constituent advocacy. Over the next couple of years we are planning a strong push to close the gap in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and increasing health awareness and prevention programs within the communities we serve."

Angela Moody's parents were certainly key role models in shaping her humanity. She also states that her first boss in

government contracting, Lily Richardson helped mold her professional value system in that one should never give up searching for a solution and tenacity in business is essential. Two other individuals who have been instrumental in Moody's professional life are Lavern Chatman Brown (former CEO of the Northern Virginia Urban League) and Earl Stafford, Sr. (President of The Wentworth Group). Moody says, "[Lavern Chatman Brown] taught me a great deal about formulating 'win-win' partnerships, which is an important lesson in not only business but personal relationships as well. And Earl Stafford, Sr. is an outstanding example of how to run your business in alignment with your Christian faith. He taught me the importance of humility and service at all times but especially as your success grows."

As she reflects on her professional career and development, Angela Moody offers the following advice to burgeoning entrepreneurs. "The first piece of advice I would give is to begin with a long range plan right from the start. Even if you don't think it's perfect. I assure you it won't be. You can always change it and that act alone will help to keep you focused and to keep your vision of what you want to accomplish. The second piece of advice is to get an accountant from the start. Managing your own books can lead to problems later. Third, invest in your infrastructure even while you're small. It will make the growth leaps more manageable. Fourth, stay connected to your core values and trust your instincts. You know more than you think you do. And lastly, give back, to organizations within your community, to your staff, and by helping other small businesses. It will enrich your life in ways you cannot imagine."

Achieving the American Dream

by Angelique Westerfield



Manny Rivera, CEO, RiVidium, Inc.

Manny Rivera was born in the Dominican Republic; he immigrated to New York in 1973 when he was a toddler. He never really had a relationship with his father, who stayed in his native country, and his mother died of cancer when he was nine years old. After that, his extended family raised him and his brothers and sisters in Long Island, New York, where most of his aunts and uncles worked factory jobs.

Rivera's story illustrates the importance of the immigrant labor force and businesses to the United States' economy. As he's achieved success in business, he's contributed to the country's economic health. Bringing together the immigration debate and the problem of establishing solid economic growth in the United States, his story suggests how close these discussions should be.

Although Rivera was an honors student in high school, his path to the American dream started off small with a short-term factory position upon his high school graduation. He describes his role models as hardworking, but not particularly concerned with educational attainment. However, Rivera had a strong desire to travel the world and obtain a higher education. Joining the Army seemed to offer both.

Rivera enlisted in the Army at the age of 18, after scoring well enough on the *Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery* entrance exam to receive a \$20,000 enlistment bonus. He joined the field artillery branch as a Private E1 in the early 80s. Rivera served initially in Augsburg, Germany, for four years and later transferred to Fort Carson, Colorado. After serving his first tour, Rivera re-enlisted as a military policeman and realized his dream of continuing his education.

Rivera initially focused on art and design classes at Virginia State University, but found computer science very compelling and selected it as his major; while he describes art as his first love and natural inclination, he knew that computer science would provide a satisfying career. When he received a Bachelor's degree in Information Technology,

he became the first person in his family to graduate from college. He enrolled in Officer Candidacy School with a specialty in military police. Rivera soon became a 2nd Lieutenant and served his Platoon Leader and jump master time at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He served his company command time at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

Advancing in his education and career became a high priority for Rivera, and he knew he could get them in the Army. His entrepreneurial spirit provided opportunity too; while at Fort Bragg, returning to that first love of art, he started a business selling series of limited edition prints he designed himself in 1992. Three years later, Rivera and two fellow officers opened an art gallery business to distribute his work and others', a business they maintained until the Army relocated Rivera to Hampton, Virginia in 2000.

Rivera entered the Army Acquisition Corps, in a position that let him focus on program management, contracting, and testing and evaluation of systems. Rivera moved to the Washington, D.C., area as an Acquisitions Officer and continued his education at George Washington University, which awarded him a Master's degree in computer science in one year.

With this new degree, Rivera began work at the Pentagon in the role of architect for the Army Architecture Integration Cell in the office of the Chief Information Officer. In this position Rivera developed valuable relationships and strong insight in contracting and building information systems which would later prove useful.

With 24 years in the Army, Rivera retired from service in 2007. He and his wife, Xiomara, had a 14-year-old son,

Xavier, and a 10-year-old daughter, Cheyenne, by this time, and they welcomed the stability and increased family time of civilian life. He became Vice President of Cape Fox Professional Services, which provides advanced technology and safety training solutions to Federal clients. Within a year he had assisted the company in winning two large-scale government contracts.

Yet Rivera continued to dream bigger; he wanted his own company, and he knew it needed a competitive edge. He conceived the name RiVidium as an echo of the chemical element Iridium, combining the exotic and euphonious sound of "idium" with the first three letters of his own last name.

Rivera established RiVidium, Inc., in 2008. The company provides solutions to government and commercial clients in the areas of enterprise architecture development, portfolio

management, systems engineering, program management, security and biometrics, software development, research and development, systems integration, and enterprise data strategy. It's a leading provider of IT integrations and cyber security. Rivera gave his new business the tag line "The Missing Element in Technology."

Drawing on Rivera's military background, RiVidium's focuses on veteran employment and business and has a designation as a veteran-owned business that lets it compete for government contracts specifically set aside for veteran businesses. The company has maintained contracts with the Department of Defense, Veterans Administration, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. As a proud veteran, Rivera gives priority to other veterans in hiring, a decision he believes has been key to RiVidium's success.

Rivera is now looking to expand the companies' services in the area of cyber security. RiVidium has a patent application pending for a cyber-security protocol that will fundamentally change security of the internet. Rivera has been working on the protocol for several years; he says that it's a powerful defense against cyber attacks and cloud infrastructures.

Rivera's commitment to cyber-security extends his dedication to national security that always drove his military service. His intimate knowledge of military systems leads his understanding of how deeply national security depends on cyber security.

Manny Rivera's always been dedicated to the United States. His personal and professional story mirrors that of so many people who have immigrated to the United States, whose work ethic and talent contribute so much to making our nation, now their nation, too, soar.

Subscribe to **MEA Magazine**



www.meamagazine.com