

Inspiring Success

CYH talks with
Gloria M. Banks Shining Star of Mary Kay Cosmetics.

Imagine being in place where your dreams are your reality and your realities include being your own boss, a successful career independence and an unlimited earning potential, work at your own pace without pressure from a boss, spending time with loved ones without reprisal.

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Imagine being a woman. Will these realities still be possible in a world where you are often reminded about the limits of your abilities? Are there companies in America where a woman can work at her own pace and still have an awesome earning potential?

There are millions of women around the world whose only freedom is a "dream." Gloria Mayfield Banks, a top National Sales Director for Mary Kay, Inc says, "Mary Kay Inc, gives women from all backgrounds a stage where they can shine." Wow! Shine? Well! Mary Kay Inc, one of the largest direct sellers of skin care and color cosmetics in the world, achieved another year of record results in 2003, reaching nearly \$1.8 billion in wholesale sales. The Company's independent sales force exceeds 1.1 million Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultants in more than 30markets worldwide.

Many women say it has provided them with unprecedented flexibility, career growth, financial independence and above all, the advantage of owning their own business.

Fortune Magazine recognized the Company as one of The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America, and also named Mary Kay Inc one of the 10 best companies for women.

I talked with Gloria so that she could provide some insight to the lure of Mary



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Kay and also clarify the word "shine."

Ene: So Gloria, walk us through what you mean by "shine" and what is the allure of Mary Kay.

Gloria: It is so amazing to find an opportunity that continues to fit me as I have grown over the last 16 years. I went from being a business professional, to being a business professional who was the mother of a one and a two-year old while going through a divorce, to being a business professional remarried and blending 2 families. I have taken this opportunity and my own entrepreneurial spirit and provided myself with an unbelievable lifestyle.



Ene: Ok! Let's Start from Harvard. You were the Assistant Director of Admissions at Harvard Business School, a prestigious position that many people would die for. You left it to join Mary Kay, Why?

Gloria: I truly enjoyed my position as Assistant Director of Admissions and I made an impact on many who were making choices about higher education. It was just that I loved my Mary Kay business more. The chance for big success was greater. My educational goals were built on my desire for big success and I clearly saw the Mary Kay opportunity affording me the success I had worked and dreamed about for many years.

Ene: You earned the use of your first car in five months and became an Independent Sales Director ten months later. How did you do it and is this level of success typical in the Company?

Gloria: The marketing plan in Mary Kay is very clear. The company lays out a career path that when followed allows success to match efforts. When you have powerful mentorship compiled with an inner drive for success, the sky really is the limit (or the possibilities are endless). I was willing to invest the time and learn the necessary skills to excel. There are no quotas in Mary Kay. A strong innovative recognition program propels self-motivated people to produce results that many have not imagined before.

Ene: While I was preparing for this interview, I saw many photos of you. In each photo, I saw a woman who seemed content. Where does your inspiration come from

and how do you strike a balance to be so content with life.

Gloria: I have always been a positive person with a great outlook. I had a happy, safe childhood with healthy relationships between my parents, myself and 3 sisters. I was encouraged to go after the things that were important to me. I can not think of working for anyone better than myself. I am a highly paid executive working woman for myself from my home. Balance...Because I am a hard worker I balance myself with lots of vacation and travel. You will often hear me say, "I work hard to play hard." My inspiration comes from talking with and watching other successful women. I appreciate my mentors in Mary Kay greatly.

Ene: The Golden Rule of Mary Kay. How has it manifested itself in your life especially now that she's passed-on?

Gloria: Mary Kay Ash built a strong foundation in the Golden Rule. It is a culture within the company Mary Kay that will never go away. We speak of it often with an understanding that it makes our environment special and is an incredible place to build life long work relationships with each other. Your work environment will always carry over into your daily life and the Golden Rule is a legacy I/we pass on to all we come in contact with.

Ene: In the Mary Kay world, you are considered the most phenomenal, incredible, entertaining person. What traits did you bring to your career that made it possible for you to excel.

Gloria: Those are big words to step into. I am very grateful for my energy level, my positive outlook and my ability to think big. I am very strategic and smart about my business decisions. I understand the value of studying to gain the necessary skills to thrive.

Ene: You have been referred to as "energy in motion," your enthusiasm is indeed contagious. What is your key to success?

Gloria: I believe that people are drawn to energy and also to people that are going places. I am not afraid to lead others to places I have been and beyond. I nurture my energy level with the understanding that you can not give away what you do not have. My energy grows with larger and more challenging goals. I have always been strong at setting goals and getting in the "zone" to make it happen.

Ene: You have been recognized in Black Enterprise, Glamour, Fortune, Working

Woman and other. How has your success impacted the Black Community especially the African-American women in Mary Kay

Gloria: Roles models tend to shape the visions of others. I work to be a role model that will propel others to go for what they want and become their very best self. I have overcome many obstacles in my personal life that could have stopped my success. I believe success stories of winners are very helpful in our community.

Ene: 16 years ago, your mother said to you, 'We just paid \$60,000 for you to go to Harvard and you're going to sell lipstick?'" Knowing what you know today and what you've become, what advice would you give to other women trying to take a journey in the Mary Kay world or other endeavors.

Gloria: Treat this like a business –your business – from the very beginning. No one else can live your dream. I believe that growing your passion in the same direction of your work creates larger success. Learn the business with continuous training and understand the strength that comes from Mary Kay's 40+ years in business. And by the way, my mother is a successful Independent Beauty Consultant with Mary Kay, Inc today!

Ene: The Mary Kay business model! Can you shed some light on why it has worked so well and how has Mary Kay impacted African American women.

Gloria: The Mary Kay plan makes a difference in the financial future for women and their families. African American women need the ability to greatly impact their finances in many positive ways. Combine their desire for success with the many successful African-American role models and the impact is financial and much more.

Ene: Seven years ago you and Angie Onianwa referred to as Angie O, founded Charisma Factor. What is it about and how are you able to combine both?

Gloria: Charisma Factor is an event planning company that also provides motivational speakers for meetings. The business was born out of a need for speakers and trainers of a very high caliber who were prepared to meet the needs of the marketplace. High impact training and events that are educational, motivational and fun produce undeniable results. Charisma Factors trademark is our ability to produce events that people talk about for a long time after. We handle small and large events and our speakers are few, but very strong in their fields which make all the difference. Combing Mary Kay and Charisma Factor was developed by my passion to grow people. The organizational and business expertise that my partner

Angie O. provides makes us a very powerful partnership.

Ene: Do you have role models, if so who are they.

Gloria: I have so many role models. Mary Kay Ash, of course, has directed much of my career and life. Many of the women in Mary Kay have shown me many things inside and outside of my business. Oprah is a major role model for me. I love the impact she makes on the world with her genuine desire to help others become successful in their own lives.

Ene: How do you juggle your family and faith?

Gloria: I do not consider it a juggle when it comes to family and faith. Growing my career in Mary Kay with the strong business environment of faith first, family second and career third I have been very blessed to conduct myself in a business that supports my personal choices. I believe my faith guides my family and its values.

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