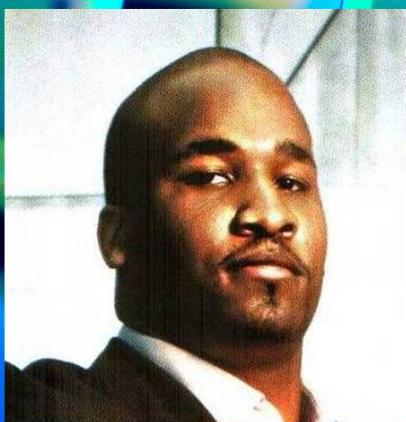


LSBDC Helps Young Entrepreneur Bridge Digital Divide

Calvin Mills, co-founder of
C & V Technologies of
Louisiana



(Baton Rouge) As a young computer science major, Calvin Mills came up with his “million dollar” idea while working in a retail computer store. A low-income family came in to buy their first computer, and Mills knew he could build a system for them a lot cheaper than they could buy in stores. That idea would eventually lead Mills to co-found C & V Technologies of Louisiana, a wholesale technology distributor with partner Valdez Gant. C & V Technologies is projected to make \$10 million dollars in sales by year 2012. This award-winning young entrepreneur has been featured in such magazines as *Entrepreneur*, *Fast Company*, and *InfoWorld*.

But it all started with a single idea and a trip to the LSBDC Technology Center at LSU. In 2003, Mills who had played as a starting full-back with Southern University at Baton Rouge returned from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Training camp ready to pursue his dream of starting his own company with best friend, Valdez Gant.

LSBDC consultants helped Mills and Gant develop a business plan and financial projections and prepare a loan package. Mills capitalized his company with only \$1,000 from the sale of his first computer system. That first year he made \$6,000. The second year, he lost \$6,000. Undeterred, Mills kept plugging

away, building his wholesale technology company, one customer at a time.

“The secret to success is to have faith in yourself and you can’t rush things. It meant so much to me that people like Tony Martinez of the LSBDC also believed in me and supported me, and helped me grow into a successful businessman,” said Mills.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Mills was in the right place at the right time. Through his connections with the Legislative Black Caucus, Mills was asked to set up a disaster call center at the State Capitol Building. LSBDC consultants helped Mills’ company become an 8(a) certified small business, and helped guide him through the government procurement process. When FEMA and other organizations were looking for minority contractors to supply computers for their field offices in New Orleans, Mills received contracts totaling \$350,000.

“That was the turning point for my company. Because of my work with FEMA, I received the Small Business Achievement Award for Outstanding Performance from the Department of Homeland Security. That award got my name out there to other government agencies and contractors, and I began receiving a lot more large contracts,” said Mills.

Mills also received the LSBDC Technology Center’s Client of the Year award in 2006. With his success, Mills plans to build a Technology Center for underprivileged students for help with math, science, and computers. This technology center is expected to open in 2008 and create 10 new jobs.