

Hello, *I'm Mona Minnie- Branson!*

"Create a solid business and growth plan, and find mentors and advisors through minority and women-focused networking events. Also, ensure that laws, policies, and practices are designed to produce equitable opportunities and outcomes for small and disadvantage businesses. Vote and stay involved politically. Poorly planned public policy can destroy businesses, jobs and stop a small business to succeed."

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LOW COUNTRY BUILDING
SOLUTIONS





Minority business owners often face operational challenges, such as making the right connections and knowing where to begin. How do you navigate this challenge? Or how did you overcome this challenge?

Minorities and Women Businesses have a difficult time penetrating mainstream business network and find themselves left out of the loop about upcoming bids and deadlines resulting in lack of access to critical information and business networks. We often face challenges in accessing resources and information that large and established business owners have access to. To overcome these challenges, it is very important to find support systems that advance racial equity and break down systemic barriers for minority small business owners and their communities. Many states and cities have local resources for minority-owned business owners. To overcome these challenges, I made it my mission to seek out organizations that help to develop mentorships and partnerships with other business owners in their area.

MONA MINNIE-BRANSON





Tell us one invaluable lesson you learned on your entrepreneurial journey.

In today's highly competitive market, many business owners find it critical to participate in training and educational opportunities. There's no shortage of seminars available to minority business owners and their employees. For instance, RCI and DBRC offers a multitude of services and tools for minority-owned and women-owned businesses to help them thrive and grow. As a cohort of their BizFit program, I have the opportunity to connect one-on-one with a business consultant, access to business opportunities and capital, and certified trainings, to name a few, all to help bridge the entrepreneurship gap and increase small business prosperity and opportunities.

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Do you have a favorite book, YouTuber, fellow entrepreneur, etc, that inspires, educates, or entertains you on your entrepreneurial journey? Tell us how this educates, inspires, or entertains you.

Presently, I am reading the book "Closing The Racial Wealth Gap: 7 Untold Rules for Black Prosperity and Legacy" by Eugene Mitchell. I am close to retirement and grooming by son to take over the business. There are not many minority businesses in the area that are 2nd or 3rd generations. This prompted my curiosity to find out why. Business ownership is a major driver of wealth for Black Americans and entrepreneurship can be foundational to building generational wealth. Black business owners have 12 times the wealth compared to non-business owning Blacks. This is the driving force for building a healthy and sustainable business model. I want to leave my son a business that will thrive for generations to come.

MONA MINNIE-BRANSON





What is the position of your business now versus before working with Riverside Center for Innovation?

RCI, Juan Garrett and the RCI staff have been a significant part of my business success. Low Country Building Solutions have made so many business relationships through RCI. We were able to build a strategic alliance with two local companies. This alliance created greater value and competitive advantage that would not be able to achieve independently. Low Country Strategic Alliance (LCSA) – offer preconstruction services, procurement, modeling, fabrication and erection of structural and miscellaneous steel.

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What is one short-term goal (12 months or less) you have for your business? Why is this goal important to you?

Our short-term goal for my company and the Alliance is to develop a thorough business plan with adequate operational details to support the Alliance efforts. We plan to create performance metrics and communication processes that can be used to benchmark the alliance. And, while networking and creating relationships are important elements to promoting the alliance successes, we plan to make all efforts to ensure they are preceded with solid sales performance and successes.

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What's been the biggest obstacle for you while starting your business, and what was it that helped you overcome that obstacle?

Launching a business takes money and resources. The biggest obstacles for new businesses are access to capital and limited access to business networks. Capital is the lifeblood of any businesses, but especially small businesses and networking is a means for small business owners to form relationships with others in related industries, potentially becoming their new customers or partners. I've learned so much during the years by participating in many of the state's and local government MBE/WBE programs and trainings. RCI, in particular, offers a robust platform for minority entrepreneurs where you can gain access to capital, new business opportunities, trainings and certifications. RCI have been a wealth of service and information geared to help minority and women-owned business to grow and thrive by removing the barriers to your success.

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If you could give an aspiring entrepreneur advice on getting started, what would it be?

My advice to an aspiring entrepreneur is to create a solid business and growth plan, and find mentors and advisors through minority and women-focused networking events. Also, ensure that laws, policies, and practices are designed to produce equitable opportunities and outcomes for small and disadvantaged businesses. Vote and stay involved politically. Poorly planned public policy can destroy businesses, jobs and stop a small business to succeed.

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What model or fellow entrepreneur do you follow and/or admire, and why?

I'm a little bias, however, I really admire my son. He left his corporate job (during covid) to work with me with plans to take over the business. We have endured some very difficult times and have been working day, nights and weekends, working on plans for growth and sustainability. His efforts of taking advantage of specialized training and mentorships, I am confident that he will successfully lead Low Country Building Solutions through future generations.

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One word that sums up entrepreneurship. Explain.

Independence! Entrepreneurship allows you to create your own wealth and flexibility. Entrepreneurship can help stimulate economic growth, create jobs and fuel innovation for others as well. It is a way to turn your innovative idea into a successful business.

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