



# **Cracking the Corporate Code: The Revealing Success Stories of 32 African-American Executives**

*Price M. Cobbs, Judith L. Turnock*

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"Over the last few decades, advances by African-Americans in the business world have been both impressive and well-documented. But even a cursory glance at the statistics -- not to mention a look around most corporations -- reveals that, despite much progress, minority executives are still relatively few and far between. Whether in the form of insensitivity, change-averse corporate cultures, socio-economic factors, or outright racism, African-Americans still face very real obstacles along the path to professional success. To many, these obstacles have seemed insurmountable, and their careers have foundered. But to thousands of others, these challenges have been an invitation to excel, and their accomplishments have been worthy of both praise and emulation. Cracking the Corporate Code delves deeply into the lives and careers of 32 such notable professionals. These are not the men and women usually cited: the high-profile government officials, the legendary civil rights pioneers, or the megastar athletes who have leveraged their on-field success into positions of leadership. The authors have chosen instead to profile individuals who have risen through the ranks of America's most noteworthy businesses, to the highest echelons of corporate power and influence. In exclusive, eye-opening interviews, these men and women recount their impressive and widely differing career trajectories, revealing what motivated and discouraged them, their sources of support and conflict, and the strategies they developed to excel in organizations like PepsiCo, GE, Merrill Lynch, Kraft, Prudential, Chrysler, and dozens more. Rather than offer these inspiring stories as individual biographies, the authors have identified their common threads, analyzing what they reveal to the reader about: \* Reconciling the ambiguities inherent for black professionals in corporate culture \* Trusting your own abilities and potential while managing the ever-present issue of race \* Overcoming isolation to establish not only your place in the organization but also a voice that will be heard and respected \* Reading the unwritten rules and developing the "sixth sense" necessary to play the game \* Cultivating and managing the relationships that will be crucial to securing more meaningful and influential positions \* Understanding what true power is, how to compete for and acquire it, and how to translate it into substantial leadership Opportunities for success abound for African-Americans. For the last 40 years, the best of the best have been stepping up to seize -- and often create -- those opportunities. The next generation of black professionals will travel the paths blazed by the pioneers profiled in this landmark book, and will be poised to achieve even greater results-while continuing the legacy of diversity for the generations yet to come. Price M. Cobbs, M.D., is co-author of *Black Rage* and *The Jesus Bag*, considered classics in the literature of African-American experience. Dr. Cobbs is also an internationally recognized expert on executive leadership, management development, and corporate diversity. He lives in San Francisco. Judith L. Turnock is an attorney, coach, and talent development expert. A lifelong advocate of racial, gender, and economic equality, she is committed to closing the communication gap between blacks and whites, both in the workplace and in the community at large. She lives in New York City. **HARDCOVER JACKET COPY-BACK COVER** General Business Cracking the Corporate Code The Revealing Success Stories of 32 African-American Executives Price M. Cobbs and Judith L. Turnock "The subtext of black executives' experiences from 1965 to today is the enormous progress corporate America has already made. At the same time, it is obvious how much work remains to be done. Cracking the Corporate Code will speed up the forward momentum, because the message is so clear and the logic so compelling. We are on a journey to a very good place, and all America will reap the rewards." -Steve Reinemund, CEO, PepsiCo, from the Foreword Corporate America holds more opportunities for minority executives than ever before. And yet, many companies whose stated missions include workforce diversity have proven less than

ideal for people of color. As these institutions struggle to apply what is preached to what is practiced, it is incumbent upon black professionals to assert their skills and place themselves in a position to succeed. Cracking the Corporate Code presents the stories of 32 executives whose stories define African-American business success. Thriving in spite of multiple obstacles, they have enjoyed extraordinary careers at (and helped build the fortunes of) organizations including Sears Roebuck, General Mills, Coors Brewing Company, Coca-Cola, Revlon, Citibank, AON, Corning, Paine Webber, and many more. In remarkably candid interviews, these exemplary professionals reveal not only the secrets of their successes, but the sources of their fears, their most difficult challenges, and their hopes for the future. Their experiences are presented according to what they reveal about the black experience in the white-centric workplace, from uncertainty to confidence, from struggle to strength, and from enjoying success to giving back in the name of those whose fortunes have yet to turn."

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