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"New" economy should leave no one out

SARAH SZURPICKI | TUESDAY, MAY 01, 2012



JOHNATHAN HOLIFIELD OF AMERICA21 PROJECT

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Johnathan Holifield describes himself as the CEO and "chief evangelist" for inclusive competitiveness through his [America21 Project](#).

Holifield's work is not providing direct services to underserved communities. Rather, his mission is about putting pressure on a system to turn it around. And according to Holifield, a region's expression of a message is the first step to creating change around that message.

According to Holifield, "Inclusive competitiveness" is about broadening existing competitiveness strategies to include a more diverse array of talent. Unfortunately, Holifield cites, African-American, Latino, and other minority Americans (who account for 29 percent of our population) are largely missing from the new economy, representing only 1 percent of venture capital investments.

A defining moment occurred for Holifield when he was appointed to the newly created position of Vice-President of New Economy Enterprise for the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce in 2000. As he looked around the field of economic development, he noticed, "There weren't many people like me." While the fields of community and neighborhood development include some diverse talent, the "broad agenda, economic development industry lacks diversity at senior levels."

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His work since that time focuses on addressing three strategic challenges. First, because of disparities in education and other opportunities, minorities disproportionately lack the skills and **competencies** to connect to innovation ecosystems and to make them attractive for investment or employment. Second, these populations lack **contacts** to the innovation network itself. And finally, minorities must not only be participants in this new economy, they must become high **performers**.

Holifield uses the acronym "TAPIM" to describe a philosophy of change. **Thought** and **Advocacy** lead to the expression of a new message. That message must be institutionalized through **Policy** -- whether legislation or community policy, such as the creation of programming at foundations or major institutions. Finally, with the implementation of that Policy, **Investment** and the **Market** will follow, because that's what investment and markets do -- they arrive on the scene when new resources are released.

Holifield's message for Detroit is simple: There is a great disparity. One-quarter of our regional population is African-American and only 2 percent of our gross regional product comes from African-American owned businesses. As a region, we've largely left African-Americans out of our plans for a competitive future -- and in an increasingly flat world, this is a colossal error. "You simply can't afford to have so many uncompetitive citizens," says Holifield.

In both Cincinnati and Cleveland, Holifield has helped develop inclusive competitiveness strategies on a regional basis. This involves taking the programs and resources that a region is putting towards its own global competitiveness and making sure that they are connected to minority groups that are usually disconnected. "This isn't so exotic and otherworldly," he says. "It simply extends out the successful practices that some parts of our community have experienced to other parts."

Johnathan is bringing his message and strategies to Detroit as a guest of Global Detroit. Please join us for a reception featuring Mr. Holifield on Thursday, May 10, at the Virgil H. Carr Cultural Center, from 5-7 p.m. The event is free, but we ask for the favor of an RSVP to sarah.szurpicki@gmail.com.

Sarah Szurpicki works at the New Solutions Group, a Detroit-based public policy consulting firm. NSG serves, as part, as the staff for [Global Detroit](#), an economic development effort centered on globalizing Detroit, partly by welcoming immigrants, funded by the New Economy Initiative for Southeast Michigan.



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Jered Dean · ★ Top Commenter · Owner at Land baron

So Holifield wants more people like him to have more power. Racist? I look around the Detroit area and prospering minority communities. The "plan" for Dearborn was never to have successful Arab business. You cannot PLAN to have businesses with owners of a particular ethnicity. It only happens when people with high end education to start a business... its 2012 people.. everyone has the resources to learn how to. This is just another champion of the racist agenda.

Reply · 1 · Like · May 1, 2012 at 8:26am



Mike Green · ★ Top Commenter · Medford, Oregon

It is apparent you have little understanding of how job growth occurs in America and the with an intent to undermine and injure, it might do well for you to conduct research on the growth entrepreneurship and risk capital investing (angels & VCs).

You might also check into SBIR, M&A data, IPO data, commercialization of R&D in universi the job growth and wealth creation agenda in America. Don't overlook the new agenda of that do not include minorities at the decision-making table. You might ask why, rather than

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Jered Dean · ★ Top Commenter · Owner at Land Baron

Mike Green , I gladly undermine and injure what I see to be bs. Perhaps you should lecture equation? I have argued with race champions, such as Ryan Mack who thinks job growth business with black owned business owners. Race is a pointless variable, especially when where it doesn't belong. If it was a health study, sure, that would make race a relevant v relevant in economic development, or is that being confused with locality? Using Arab bus been successful had it not been for the conditions of the locality? The race variable is not development nowhere.

Reply · Like · May 1, 2012 at 9:23am



Mike Green · ★ Top Commenter · Medford, Oregon

Jered Dean , the Kauffman Foundation report of 2010 declared that nearly ALL net new j and younger (fueled by risk capital). That process of risk capital-fueled companies was bo that Blacks and other minorities not only were legally prohibited from engagement in the e were shut out of competing in marketplaces. It would do well for you to engage in discuss facts. I would prefer to do that. I don't have time to provide a full lecture here on the his

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David Holifield · ★ Top Commenter

Simply put, this man OBVIOUSLY knows what he's talking about! He's a Jack of Many Trades, and a Ma

Reply · 1 Like · May 2, 2012 at 7:05am



Margaret Ekaiko-Davis

I found Mr. Holifield's presentation material most informative; keep up the outstanding work that you a

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