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Elevating expectations: Diversity of talent, skill and achievement fuels growth at Freeman Cos.

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Setting standards very high is a natural outgrowth when you've reached the pinnacle of the planet. Rohan Freeman, P.E., L.S., president of Freeman Companies, set out on a journey to reach the world's highest point in April of 2009, and by May he was on top of the world - the peak of Mount Everest. He returned from his climb as the first African-American to complete the Seven Summits, a challenge that pushed him to conquer the highest mountains on each continent. This experience made Freeman realize he could do anything - absolutely anything - that he trained his mind on accomplishing. In June of 2009, he returned to his home in Conn. with a plan to establish and build a successful engineering consulting firm. Three years later, that firm has blossomed from an idea to one of the fastest growing and most respected engineering companies in N.E.

Rohan Freeman was born and raised in Jamaica. He immigrated to the United States to attend the Univ. of Conn. and explore his interests in the field of civil engineering. Rohan performed his academic studies with alacrity and became a dually licensed professional engineer and land surveyor. Even prior to his Mount Everest experience, Rohan's innate leadership talents and project management abilities had been honed by his 25 year career in the industry working for nationally recognized engineering firms and the City of Hartford's Public Works Department. He successfully founded Freeman Cos. having earned a reputation for integrity and technical acumen in his home market - the greater Hartford region.

Freeman Cos. was conceived and born as the result of Rohan's passion-fueled dream fertilized with determined effort. The immediate success and rapid growth of the firm is an accomplishment that Freeman understands must be guarded and nurtured by hiring only great people and maintaining the drive to reach the pinnacle of the profession and then raise it higher. This culture of excellence is an attractive proposition to some of the best engineers in the market.

Freeman has grown in part by wooing top engineers to build out the firm's capabilities and win larger, more important projects. As an example, Nate Whetten, a nationally renowned geotechnical engineer, was recently recruited to head up the geotechnical division. Nate could have gone anywhere he wanted, being courted by several large firms. He chose Freeman Companies because he knew that Rohan would allow him to take the business unit as far as he wanted. Rohan understands that the most talented people come with wings. "Let people soar in your own company and they won't want to fly the coop!" he muses with a satisfied smile.

Affirmative Traction

The company is a certified Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) and Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) in Connecticut. The term "disadvantaged," however, has no standing whatsoever at Freeman Cos. On the contrary, Freeman understands that his company's success is derived through applying the principles of individual achievement and business success; integrity based

principles that deliver excellence to clients with every engagement. In the early days of Freeman Cos., a few doors were opened by contractors desiring to meet diversity goals. Doing business with a percentage of minority owned firms is a way to comply with state diversity codes. Once the wheels were set in motion, word of mouth caught fire in the market about the superior service and excellent quality of Freeman Companies' work. One man's diverse background and social minority status may have helped the company get noticed. Now it's the diversity of talents, skills, experience and business contacts that continually help drive the growth and success of Freeman Cos. forward.

High Achievement is
in the Company DNA

The internal culture of Freeman Cos. is ideal for people who set high career goals. Freeman offers its employees independence within a structured environment. Rohan's managerial philosophy offers insight into why he attracts top talent. "There is no glass ceiling. You go as high as you want here, whoever you are or wherever you came from. It's that upward mobility that the best people are after and we've been able to attract some of them to our company with this vision."

Freeman's notable and visible projects in the Hartford area include water and sewer main replacements for the Metropolitan District Commission, the Community Health Services addition and The Fitchman Eye Center on Albany Avenue in Hartford's North End. Also notable are several schools for the Capital Region Education Council (CREC), including the International Magnet School for Global Citizenship. The company's pipeline continues to fill as the Freeman team attracts new business opportunities. Continued expansion into Mass. and other neighboring states promises a bright future and even higher expectations for growth.

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