

18 WAYS TO KILL YOUR CHAMBER

The concept of establishing a Black Chamber of Commerce is relatively new and that may present errors in organizing such an entity. Through experience, trial and error, we have found the following to be pitfalls that should be avoided if one wants to ensure the successful establishment of a viable long-term Black Chamber of Commerce.

1. Overthrow and bar the founder(s).
2. Rely totally on majority corporations or government funding.
3. Operate without a written agenda.
4. Establish C-6 IRS status instead of C-3.
5. Merge or work as a subsidiary of the traditional mainstream chamber.
6. Appoint elected officials to the Board of Directors.
7. Have a Board of Directors that is comprised primarily of non-entrepreneurs.
8. Become partisan in your advocacy.
9. Have a large number of board members that also belong to other identical organizations.
10. Wish to focus exclusively on provincial issues (no chamber is an island).
11. Concentrate on particular trades and not business in general.
12. Become timid in dealing with problems that negatively affect your membership.
13. Set agenda to meet only the needs of the board members.
14. Elect not to dialogue or collaborate with the Black church establishment.
15. Be a minority chamber and not focus specifically on Black issues.
16. Do not approach the issues with a relentless fashion and conclusive strategy.
17. Do not collaborate with other chambers and become nonfinancial with the National Black Chamber of Commerce.
18. Assuming that there will be no struggle (there must be a struggle).

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and never will...Men may not get all they pay for in this world; but they must certainly pay for all they get.”

Frederick Douglass