


Succeeding Against the Odds: The Autobiography of a Great American Businessman

By John H. Johnson, Lerone Bennett Jr.



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One of America's wealthiest entrepreneurs, John H. Johnson rose from the welfare rolls of the Depression to become the most successful Black businessman in American history; the founder of *Ebony*, *Jet*, and *EM* magazines; and a member of the *Forbes 400*. Like the man himself, this autobiography is brash, inspirational, and truly unforgettable.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Black multimillionaire Johnson, assisted by Bennett, executive editor of Ebony magazine, recounts with simplicity, zest and humorous anecdotes how, as a 24-year-old from a small Mississippi River town, he parlayed a \$500 loan into a publishing, cosmetics and insurance empire. Negro Digest , the first magazine he founded, was followed by Ebony (the first national black publication) and Jet . Thanks to success brought about by his sound social, business and political instincts, Johnson now enjoys a life spent "going first class," including owning a Palm Springs mountain-top home; participating in corporate board meetings (where he is accustomed to being the only black); and hobnobbing with the likes of Michael and Jesse Jackson and Gorbachev. Credited by some with "inventing" the black consumer market, Johnson is proudest of his role in reporting and abetting the crusade of Martin Luther King Jr. And despite his successes, he contends, without bitterness, that his millions could have been billions were it not for the "live wire of race." Photos not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

According to Forbes magazine, Johnson is one of the 400 richest Americans. He is CEO of the Johnson Publishing Company, rated among the top 100 African-American-owned businesses. Born into poverty, Johnson was 15 years old when he moved from Arkansas City to Chicago. There he discovered the vast untapped potential of the black consumer marketplace, and in 1942, 24-year-old Johnson created his first magazine, Negro Digest , a phenomenal success soon followed by Ebony and Jet . By expanding into broadcasting, TV production, and cosmetics, Johnson has helped his company maintain a strong balance sheet. He has also held numerous diplomatic posts. Bennett, executive editor of Ebony, helps Johnson present his story within the broader context of post-World War II America. Highly recommended for most libraries. Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Club alternates.

- Gary D. Barber, *SUNY at Fredonia Lib.*

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Users Review

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