

## From Entrepreneurial Moms *To Delta Decisions of DC*

**“We had entrepreneurial spirits, we wanted to control the types of projects we went after, and we felt that we could make a positive impact in the small business community,” said Kim Woodson**

### **Barnette**

, one of the three co-founders and managing partners of Delta Decisions of DC, LLC. Barnette, along with her partners, Afi Davis Harrington and Shree Whitaker Taylor, had more than their entrepreneurial spirits in common. They each are also African American

women with a Ph.D. in mathematics, have experience working as analysts for the federal government, and perhaps even more significantly, they each are working mothers. “We each have two kids under 7 years old and wanted to have more control over our destiny and to lay a foundation for success to pass onto our children,” Barnette added. With those types of commonalities, perhaps it was destiny that drew all three women together and led to the founding of Delta Decisions of DC (Delta Decisions).

Delta Decisions is a woman- and minority-owned small business based in Washington, D.C., whose mission is to help clients improve operations through quantitative decision-making. “We apply methodologies involving analytics, business process reengineering, strategic planning, and performance metrics to address challenges,” Barnette explained. Each of Delta Decisions' three principals has a

Ph.D. in Operations Research or Applied Mathematics, an active government security clearance, and over 15 years' experience in helping clients develop and implement analytical solutions.

**When the company was founded in June 2006, Barnette, Harrington and Taylor were all full-time employees with CNA (Center for Naval Analyses) and conducted market research during their off hours.** By that time, the three women had been friends and colleagues for years, as they each had received their doctorate degree from North Carolina State University between 1997 and 2001, and were very familiar with each others' work. “Afi and I had considered starting a management consulting firm in 2000, but we did not feel the timing was right,” shared Barnette.



## Delta Decisions of DC

After gaining more experience as analysts and consultants for the federal agencies, “We cut the cord from gainful employment and began generating revenue as Delta Decisions of DC in September 2007,” she added. Today, the company generates annual revenues of just under \$6.5M and has a staff of 13 consultants with a customer base that is focused on federal agencies.

The three dynamic founders attribute their big success over such a short period to several factors. First, the interaction between the managing partners themselves has been a key to the growth and development of the business. “The three of us are continually communicating and working to improve our interaction, our structure and our strategy for developing our business,” said Barnette.

**Another success factor has been the focus on fostering strong relationships with**

**clients and strategic partners.** Similarly, they have fostered a collaborative relationship with their consultants. According to Barnette, “We appreciate and listen to our consultants to make sure that we make Delta Decisions the kind of company where everyone is a strong contributor, is highly valued, and takes pride in ownership of their work.” Lastly, the company’s success has come as a result of the partners continually emphasizing and remaining true to their core values, which are integrity, accountability and quality.

As Delta Decisions has become successful, it has not gone unnoticed in the small business community. In April 2008 Delta Decisions received the American Small Business Coalition’s Rookie of the Year Award. The company is very active in the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences organization, which allows them to stay abreast of groundbreaking research and methodologies in the field. The partners are also regular participants in the Infinite Possibilities Conference, where they meet and exchange stories and best practices with women of color in math, science and engineering

fields.

For others who are considering a similar type of life-changing career transition that the founders of Delta Decisions have experienced, the three partners offer three mantras that have been their guiding principles.

First, “Balance is everything.” As you strive for perfection, also strive for balance in every aspect of your life. Take time to find out what your body needs, your mind needs and your spirit needs to attain balance. Then give it to yourself! Also, keep family a priority.

Second, “Continue to develop.” As you take pride and ownership in your work, remember to always strive to find ways to improve. Third, “Never give up on your dreams!” Remember to stay focused and rely on your support network (family and friends) when you need to. If you happen to fall, immediately get up, brush yourself off and keep going.



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*-Kim Woodson Barnette*