

## MONEY COUNTS CASE STUDY:

# Harlem Lyrics



*CHAUNCEY HOLLoman COULDN'T FIND THE RIGHT CARD FOR A FRIEND'S 16TH BIRTHDAY.* Her choices were either too “adult” or too childish, too bland or too bright. So, the frustrated Holloman decided at age 15 to launch her own greeting card company.

Smart choice! Seven years later, she is chief executive officer of Harlem Lyrics. The company now has a line of 70 cards sold in 13 states. It also produces notebooks and folders, sold through Borders and Kroger, which also handles the cards. Macy's stocks clothing that Holloman created based on the four characters who appear on her cards.

How did she do? Hard work and creativity, of course. Plus, Holloman listened to her mother who told her to create a formal business plan and to establish personal and professional objective. The young entrepreneur has taken both ideas to heart.

“If you plan, research and present clear facts, you can usually accomplish your goal,” said Holloman, who now is not only running her company but also is studying business and theater at the University of Central Arkansas.

Harlem Lyrics' name is a nod to the artistry that flourished during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and a to hip-hop music, which inspired the look of its cards. Holloman has zealously guarded the imagery of the four characters found on the cards because they're patterned on her sisters. In addition, she wants the messages she uses to be positive and self-affirming. She does that by writing card copy herself. An artist does illustrations.

Not only are Holloman's sisters the inspiration for her card characters, her entire family, including her parents and grandmothers, are involved in the business. In fact, her mother played a critical part by giving Holloman her tax rebate when the teenage entrepreneur first started the company.



Holloman is not taking it easy just because she's done well. She is writing a self-help book for teens, pitching ideas for a cartoons and comic books, and trying to expand the number of stores carrying Harlem Lyrics' products.

Holloman encourages other young women to pursue their dreams by setting clear goals and by recognizing the depth of their own talents and capability to succeed.

She always delivers the same message to would-be business owners: "Never doubt your abilities."

Chauncey Holloman proves that success can come to women with a great idea and the ability to turn thoughts into action. Her story can inspire you to think about becoming an entrepreneur. If that sounds appealing, consider:

- **Seeking out a successful woman business owner in your community. Set up a meeting – either one-on-one or with your Girl Scout group – and talk to her about what she does and why she decided to run her own firm.**
- **Talking with family members or friends who own a business.**
- **Imagining what kind of business you might want to run. Think about what a business plan might look like, where you might get money and how you might make a product or deliver a service.**
- **Weighing how you might protect your business using insurance and how you might invest and/or safeguard the money you make.**