

The 100 Most Powerful Executives in Corporate America

We identify the best and brightest leaders in business and industry

by [Sonia Allevyne](#) Posted: February 25, 2010



Our nation has officially been in a recession for roughly a year—one already characterized as the most brutal in decades. At press time, 10 million Americans were out of work—6.1% of whites, 11.2% of blacks. Moreover, the financial services and automotive sectors, to name two industries, require billions in taxpayer dollars to stay afloat. Yet in this midst of this strained economy, Black Enterprise has decided to spotlight the extraordinary achievements of a cadre of top professionals—our 100 Most Powerful Executives in Corporate America.

During these times, we saw fit to identify such talent because it will be their individual and collective leadership and intellect that will help preserve, expand, and transform global business for years to come. “Delivering in good times is critical,” offers Adriane Brown, president and CEO of Honeywell Transportation Systems, “but the true test is how you lead when market conditions are changing rapidly.”

The altered landscape will undoubtedly force a new set of strategies for productivity. As author Scott McKain outlines in his new book, *The Collapse of Distinction: Creating Differentiation in a Cluttered Marketplace* (Thomas Nelson; \$24.99), the challenge won't be how to build a better mousetrap, but knowing whether you need the apparatus at all. “As companies strive for greater efficiency, they will begin eliminating roles, organizational layers, and shifting supplier relationships,” explains Joe Watson, management consultant and author of *Without Excuses: Unleash the Power of Diversity to Build Your Business* (St. Martin's Press; \$24.95). “This will translate into fewer opportunities to lead/manage within a company.” Watson says such scarcity will dramatically increase competition not only in the marketplace but the workplace as well. “The ability to manage conflict within the ‘scarcity economy’ will be the skill set that sets apart those who thrive versus those who are fighting to survive.”

With these changing dynamics—and despite the fact that some believe the Obama presidency will level the playing field—black executives will continue to contend with fierce political battles and, in some cases, deal with the same issues of racism. But Watson believes every challenge brings opportunities. “The key is to deliver the results. In a downturn as severe as our current one, the

company will not care what color or gender you are,” he says. “The sole corporate interest will be in your ability to drive results and exceed expectations.”

Indeed, managing through challenging times will shape new models for success—and the men and women on the following pages are best positioned to lead the way.

—Additional reporting by Brittany Hutson

DIVISION CHIEF EXECUTIVES

ADRIANE M. BROWN

President & CEO, Honeywell Transportation Systems
Honeywell International

Power Move: Brown believes the true test of leadership is how you lead when market conditions are rapidly changing. “We know that 2009 will continue to be challenging,” she says. Brown is focused on driving results by creating an environment where employees can thrive. She believes treating people with dignity encourages them to step outside their comfort zone. Under Brown's guidance for four years, her division has annual revenues of \$4.5 billion.