Cottrell Brothers

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serve the administrative offices.

At the start, the Cottrells purchased one finished hair product from a large manufacturer and distributed it under their own label. All the labeling and packaging was done by the manufacturer. This first product was a hair sheen.

Now Pro-Line offers a holding spray, comb-out shampoo, natural combs, balsam instant conditioner, Coca Butter skin cream, Kiddie Kit for children, Hair Food scalp preparation and the newest item, Perm Repair for hair damaged by relaxers.

Now all products are created from start to finish by the company and are manufactured, packaged and shipped from the company's own manufacturing center.

Moving To International Sales

Pro-Line Corp., has a new problem: it is outgrowing the current complex of buildings and needs more space to expand. The products can be found in all 50 states, with its biggest markets in Texas, Washington, D.C., Virginia and Maryland. They have continued their sales with military post exchanges and are now looking toward international sales revenues from Africa.

The toughest market to crack, however, was in Chicago, where several powerful black hair products and cosmetics firms were well established. In 1975, Pro-Line broke through that sales barrier.

Cottrell recalls that once his products were being sold in Chicago, numerous other companies came out with a "hair food" item. These competitive products haven't hurt Pro-Line, however, which continues to show increased profits in the Windy City.

According to Cottrell, "We probably sell more oil sheen there and around the U.S. than any other company, black or white."

Advice To Budding Businessmen

Comer Cottrell has utilized his business background and made it work spectacularly well. His advice to budding businessmen in the DAWN audience is basically this: "Be more concerned about long - range goals. Don't be concerned with just an immediate dollar gain. Success in your company automatically brings money."

At the same time, he said, "One problem facing young blacks today is that they are not being exposed to the management areas of business. They need to learn this even if it means going back to school.

Blacks, moreover, need to be willing to make the sacrifices of time and family life to learn the economics of business and bring that business back to the black community," he added.

"But most important," Cottrell warns, "don't be satisfied with just a good job and a paycheck."

And an aspect to good business not often heard from relatively new companies is Cottrell's attitude toward building and keeping employees.

"Be willing to share with one's workers," he states emphatically. Pro-Line's pay is considered to be the highest in the industry and employees get fringe benefits, life insurance, profit-sharing and in-house training for promotions, he told Dawn.

Following a long-standing commitment to train youth, young black men and women, without business experience, are trained by Pro-Line staffers in all areas of the company. Some of these young people have poor employment records and others have juvenile offender backgrounds.

But Cottrell believes that with the right amount of encouragement and support, he can bring these young people along and hopefully, one day, see them go into business for themselves.

Shares Business Know-How

Besides being active with the Black Businessmen's Association, Comer Cottrell is on the board of the Los Angeles YMCA, the advisory board to the Los Angeles District Attorney, a commissioner with the State Water Resources Board, and a director of the local Interracial Council for Business Opportunity (ICBO).

He has received numerous awards and citations from Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley and other business-related organizations. He shares his business know-how with these groups because he feels, "I offer them something and I get shared experiences back," he said.

Despite the hectic schedule that his business and outside activities create, Comer and his wife Isabell are raising a baby son, Comer Cottrell III. Cottrell also has a daughter, Rene, by a previous marriage.

For relaxation there is a 27-foot yacht at a nearby marina, trips to the Caribbean and Cottrell's love of gardening. He says of the latter, "I can get filthy working with my hands in the yard and I love it!"

Trees, flowers and vegetables abound on the Cottrell property as his green thumb applies both to financial as well as gardening successes.

Brothers Are Best Partners

"I couldn't have built up Pro-Line to the success it is today without my brother," Comer said. "We both see eye-to-eye in business and work well together," he added. But they have very different private lives and are together only at the office.

Younger brother James Cottrell supervises advertising, sales and runs annual marketing conferences in his capacity as Pro-Line vice president.

He travels extensively during the year to keep all company employees aware of what headquarters is doing. He has done his job so well

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'Blacks must make sacrifices of time and family life to learn the economics of business . . .'

The annual sales meeting for Pro-Line account executives took place recently near the Carson City, California plant. International sales plans and marketing techniques are explained by company veep James Cottrell.

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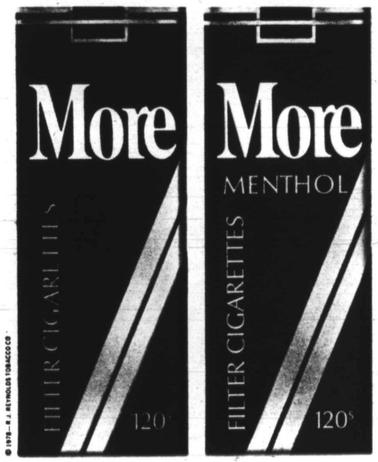

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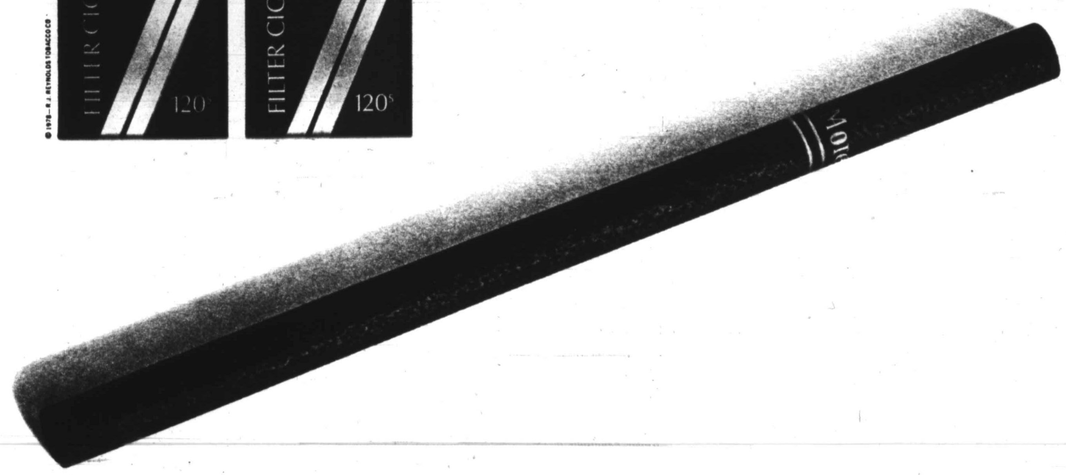

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