Forget the typical dog and pony show you hear about when most describe the stories of successful small-business leaders who are making a difference because of their numerous awards and years of experience. Spend 10 minutes talking to DeJonnette Grantham King, Ph.D., and you will realize that you have met a true patriot who has made it her duty to serve as a catalyst for nurturing global relationships to improve opportunities for small businesses and enhanced workforce preparedness. “Nurturing collaborations and opportunities between universities and corporations to prepare college graduates for success as we enter the 21st century is vital to the future of our economy,” says Dr. Grantham King.

Dr. Grantham King has successfully led her award-winning environmental firm, Advanced Environmental Consultants, Inc. (AEC), to service a wide range of referral-based clients from across the world. Her commitment to high-quality professional service and to taking the time to build relationships with her clients has helped Dr. Grantham King transform her one-woman business into a leading provider of environmental consulting and remediation services. “We have lots of jubilant clients who have helped us be successful in business for over 17 years. We treat all of our customers like family and serve them with respect. We know that a happy client is going to return, and is going to recommend us to colleagues and acquaintances,” Dr. Grantham King says.

Making a Difference

AEC provides a broad range of services. One notable project was the restoration of the homes of more than 1,000 residents along the Mississippi Gulf Coast damaged by Hurricane Katrina. “Not only did we remove and eliminate environmental contaminants and assist in restoring homes back to their original state, but we also created jobs by employing residents in the affected areas. That’s who we are. We are servants who make a difference in the lives of those we assist,” Dr. Grantham King says.

As far as Dr. DeJonnette Grantham King is concerned, there’s nothing more fascinating – or more critical to business success – than understanding how different people think and apply knowledge. “If you’re going to get the best out of your employees, if you’re going to better serve your clients and work effectively with your partners, you need to understand how they think,” she says.

A desire to make a difference in people’s lives is one of several key factors that influenced her decision to earn her Ph.D. in higher education at Jackson State University and to attend Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College. Through her dissertation, Dr. Grantham King discovered work-based higher learning, critical thinking and problem solving, development of self-managing practitioners and self-directed learners, specialized skills, effective communication, cultural fit and mentoring to be key factors in the level of workforce preparedness of recent college graduates. As a result of her findings, Dr. Grantham King utilizes her global entrepreneurial success as a platform to bridge the gap between corporations and universities in efforts to produce opportunities for a more prepared workforce and enhance the global reach of other small businesses.

“I now have a mechanism that has vindicated, validated and transformed me as an authority to form collaborations and alliances between universities and corporations, and provide the clientele that we serve the eminence of service that they so deserve,” she says.