



Business Leaders Linked to Encourage New Directions

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Amway hosts BL²END professional development event; Tuesday, March 10th, 6 p.m.

Young professionals of color impacting the greater Grand Rapids community

Grand Rapids, Michigan, March 2, 2009 – BL²END, *Business Leaders Linked to Encourage New Directions*, an emerging young professional of color organization, hosts a professional development event. **The event will take place on Tuesday, March 10th at 6 p.m. and will be hosted by Amway, in their newly renovated world headquarters located at 7575 Fulton Street East, Ada, MI 49355.**

BL²END's 2009 professional development initiative theme of "Global Leadership Opportunities," will provide timely, insightful information in understanding the impact of the global economy in today's business environment and job market. **The first of three 2009 professional development events will feature a candid dialogue with Candace Matthews, Amway Chief Marketing Officer. Matthews will share insight and perspective, under the theme "Global Leadership Experiences & Opportunities," on the role of the global economy within today's job market and business climate and the leadership opportunities available to young professionals. The event will include an insightful dialogue between Candace and event attendees. Candace will also share information about her educational, professional and community leadership journey.**

Candace Matthews is an executive with extensive corporate leadership experiences. Matthews leads Amway's global enterprise marketing strategy, and heads the Global Marketing Team focusing on Global Category Marketing, including Beauty, Nutrition and Wellness; Global Amway Brand; and Consumer and Market Research. Matthews joined Amway in December 2007, bringing an impressive background in marketing and consumer goods. She previously served as president of Soft-Sheen Carson, Consumer Products Division of L'OREAL USA, and also held positions as vice president, New Product and Package Innovation, and as managing director, Non-Cola Brands, with the Coca-Cola Company.

In addition, she has held senior marketing positions at the CIBA Vision Corporation; Bausch & Lomb, Oral Care Division; Proctor & Gamble, Cosmetics & Fragrance Division; and General Mills, where she began her marketing career. She has been featured in *Ebony*, *Essence*, *Black Enterprise*, *Glamour*, *Salon Sense*, and the *Wall Street Journal* and also received several awards including the *Ebony* Outstanding Women in Marketing and Communications Award. Matthews is a current member of the Board of Trustees at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. She also serves on the boards of the Stanford University Graduate School of Business Advisory Council, Cosmetic Executive Women, Figure Skating in Harlem, and locally on the West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology (WMCAT).

The event is free and open to the public. **RSVP required by Thursday, March 5th via email to info@grblend.org or phone to Maxine Gray, BL²END Professional Development Chair, at 616.520.7298.** For more information regarding BL²END and upcoming monthly events visit www.grblend.org.

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The mission of BL²END is to foster an environment of growth and belonging, where young professionals of color can connect with each other, develop professionally, and contribute to the local community.