

# What I Read

Howard Buford of Prime Access

By Patricia Gaines  
Special for USA TODAY



**Honored:** Howard Buford has been recognized for dedication to human rights.

Howard Buford founded Prime Access, a full-service advertising agency specializing in multicultural and digital advertising services. Today, he's president and CEO. Buford earned an MBA from Harvard Business School and has been an Ernst & Young finalist for Entrepreneur of the Year. Buford has a long history of community service. He was recognized in 2005 by the Southern Poverty Law Center for outstanding dedication and commitment to human rights and equal justice. He also has served on the executive board of GLAAD, the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

## His favorite genre

"Autobiographies written with unusual candor and insider perspective on historical events — whether politics, business or the arts — are intriguing. And reliving a life through someone else's eyes is thought-provoking. No matter how different the writer's reality seems from mine, there's always learning that I can bring to my own life."

## Books that have helped him most in his career

"The book that had the greatest influence on my career was published before I was born. I read *The Hidden Persuaders* by Vance Packard in high school on the advice of a teacher. It's about the use of sophisticated market research and advertising to persuade postwar America how to vote and what brands to buy. I found it fascinating, and it set me on the path to explore marketing as a career."

## The last book he gave as a gift

*Too Big to Fail* by Andrew Ross Sorkin. "I gave it to my brother because he's a mergers-and-acquisitions lawyer. The book is a behind-the-scenes look at meetings and decisions that led to our current financial crisis."

## The last book he received as a gift

*Stormy Weather: The Life of Lena Horne* by James Gavin. "I'm starting it next week."

## What's in his briefcase

*The Wall Street Journal*, *Advertising Age* and *The Kiplinger Letter*. "Those, along with *Hispanic Business* and *Black Enterprise*, are a combination that works well for me."

## His attraction to reading

"Advertising is everywhere you look. So when your work is creating and analyzing ad campaigns, it's hard to turn off that part of your mind and leave work behind. Books are a welcome escape. A good read about parallel universes or dark energy takes me right out of the day-to-day."

## His favorite website

"The site I read most is *Huffington Post*. Often I agree with the viewpoint of the editor and guest bloggers, though often I don't. In either case, I like the topics it covers and the tone and manner it's written in."

## When he reads

"A lot on public transportation — mostly, the subway and when I get away on the weekends."