



waist manager

LEO WILLIAMS HELPS KEEP MILLIONS OF AMERICANS FOCUSED ON A HEALTHY "AFTER" GLOW

Leo Williams insists the best part of his job is helping to save lives, but he isn't a doctor. As executive vice president of Medifast, Inc., a leading provider of portion-controlled weight-loss products, he says he gets extreme satisfaction from being a part of a 28-year-old company that has helped more than one million customers safely lose weight and improve their overall health. The corporation began in 1980 as the maker of a nutrient-rich shake mix. It has

since evolved into a full line of nearly 80 soy-based meal-replacement products ranging from soups to scrambled eggs.

Williams, a Baltimore native, is responsible for day-to-day operations, including overseeing 3,000 independent product distributors nationwide. "We call them health coaches, and they have these T-shirts made up with their 'before and after' photos," says Williams, a 60-year-old divorcee. "It feels good to see our products at work."

Williams, who also serves as the chief executive officer of Medifast subsidiaries Take Shape for Life, Inc. and Consumers Choice Systems, holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Naval Academy and an MBA from Southern Illinois University. He joined Medifast in 2004 after 25 years as marketing manager for Ford Motor Company. "One thing I'm proud of is that I was able to convince them to include more diversity in their advertisements," recalls Williams. "They weren't using any black models before."

When he's not traveling for Medifast or fulfilling his duties on six executive boards, including the Toys for Tots Foundation, the

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former Marine Corps Reserve major general tries to steal a few hours on the golf course or visit his only grandson who, like one of his two grown sons, also bears his name. An avid jazz and classic R&B fan, Williams says his eldest son Leo III keeps him up to speed by loading his iPod with tunes by Dwele, Kem and Anthony Hamilton. "I just don't understand hip-hop," quips Williams. "I literally don't understand a word that they're saying." At least his particular brand of weight-loss is music to millions of consumers' ears.

—Chandra R. Thomas