Joy Humphreys’ marketing/promotional business, CapTeeVation, has ten letters connected to its name that show it’s attained a special place in the business world. Humphreys completed “mounds of paperwork” to gain certifications from the state of Tennessee Department of Transportation as a qualified vendor, as well as Diversity Owned and Woman Owned certifications (TDOT/WBE and DBE) for her enterprise.

Walking into CapTeeVation’s downtown Johnson City office, visitors are greeted with cheerful orange, yellow and green walls (the company’s logo colors), an indoor swing that beckons one to hop on, and a friendly cat named Sugar. Humphreys is an energetic 40-something business woman whose mission is providing top-quality products and service for her customers. Humphreys purchased the business, now located on South Roan Street, in July 2003. She says that all the hard work to obtain the certifications paid off, as they are now “the gold standard” of state procurement departments. CapTeeVation provides uniforms, jackets, caps, and more to the Johnson City Transit System as well as many of the middle Tennessee Transit systems. Humphreys would like to see her transit and government customer base grow in 2012.

The state certification process is more rigorous than one might expect.

“Well, the state treats us with the same strict qualifications as someone getting a big construction contract that’s going to last ten years and take millions of dollars,” laughs Humphreys. “We go through the same rigorous process with TDOT Nashville. Their inspectors come in and take photos and notes.” Despite the tough standards Humphreys once again passed the state’s ‘white-glove’ test and gained re-certification. “Since we have acquired our certification, we have steadily added more and more government offices to our customer base. I would still like to see that number grow, as government offices are required to do five percent of their business with enterprises like mine.” Ideally Humphreys would like to see more TDOT and county transit business, as well as offices like the Department of Health and other government agencies.

Years of tending bar at Cheers and Legends prepared Humphreys to be a business owner.

“I would have bartended forever,” says Humphreys. “I really enjoyed working with so many different people and so many different personalities. I used to say, ‘I get paid to have fun’ but it was truly hard work. I think that it helped me see that if you put effort into something, you will see the benefits. I grew to have a better understanding of what makes people tick. I stayed in the business many years after graduating from ETSU with a marketing degree. I then decided to become a loan officer with Wells Fargo and apprenticed with Randy Silvers at Accurate Appraisal Company. All this experience helped me grow the skills to have a business of my own.”

Do business there and you’re supporting not-for-profits.

“I love to support our local causes, including animal rescue groups and non-profit charities,” says Humphreys. “These groups serve our community and need our help and support to continue what they are doing. Giving them price breaks on apparel and promo products helps them to meet their goals.”

Like most businesses, the holiday season is a busy time.

“We can create unique gifts with our QuickTees process for single custom printed items. We can customize tees, baby clothes, pet apparel and much more and it’s fast and easy,” says Humphreys. “We have an in-house graphic artist to help with the design creation. Our screen printing, embroidery and promotional items are the base of the business but we would like QuickTees to become a household name, especially at the holidays. With that and thousands of business promotional products available, you name it, we can provide it.”

And like all businesses, it’s all about commitment.

“It’s a lot of hard work. It’s a lot of hours. I never would have guessed I would work this many hours,” says Humphreys. “To own your own business you have to be committed. You’ve got to be willing to put in the hours. You cannot half way do it.”