

2009 Utah SBDC Strategic Plan

Vision Statement

To be the most respected and demanded resource for entrepreneurs to turn to for business guidance and education.

Mission

Strengthen Utah's economic fabric and quality of life by facilitating the success and prosperity of business endeavors. The SBDC works together with other business mentoring groups, such as the Service Corps of Retired Executives, to address a wide range of small business concerns.

Three Strategic Objectives

The ties between our client counseling and training programs and our strategic objectives are detailed below. The strategic objective is stated and then the counseling and training program is tied to the strategic objective.

1. Key Objective-To provide significant assistance to entrepreneurs that

- provides high impact to the economy resulting in revenues, profits, and jobs
- enhances long-term survivability of the business
- increases the knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs

Tie #1-Our counselors are highly qualified to provide impact training and counseling. Their business experience, their counseling skills and tools, and their "get it done attitudes", are a true assets for small business owners.

Tie #2-All counselors will be certified by the year end. They will have completed our counselor certification program assessing their existing skill base and giving them additional knowledge and tools to do their work.

Tie #3-Our specialty products are continually being revised and updated to meet client needs. These products are additional tools that counselors may use with their clients.

Tie #4-Success breeds success-clients who have had a good experience working with an SBDC counselor are much more likely to recommend these services to others.

2. Key Objective-To increase funding to the Utah SBDC program through increased

- recognition by our stakeholders as an essential resource and quality program
- opportunities for grants and program income

Tie #1-When outcomes of our counseling and training programs are measured results will improve. Higher levels of funding will be possible from our stakeholders. Strongly tying our program to a Balanced Scorecard showing economic impact strengthens our business case with GOED, SBA, hosts, and other stakeholders (banks, program income providers, etc.)

Tie #2-When grant and program income opportunities arise, and as our SBDC shows strong program results, our chances will increase at being successful at winning these grants and receiving program income funding.

Tie #3-Having a strong training and counseling product offering makes it easier to attract sponsors. Recognizing our three target markets shows that we have developed trainings that fit small business needs.

Tie #4-Clients that have been successful in business, after having worked with our high impact programs, will tell of their success and likely recommend involvement of sponsors or become sponsors themselves.

3. Key Objective-To add value to our host institutions and stakeholders

Tie #1-As we deliver quality counseling and training, our trainees, clients and the general business community, begin to recognize our host institutions as reputable places for business assistance. Often, they see the host institution as the business assistance provider before they become aware of the SBDC/host partnership. The hosts receive valuable recognition because of the SBDC programs that they provide. This contributes to the reputation and growth of the school programs.

Tie #2-Training courses attract attendees as well as respected experts in various fields. They become involved in other host programs (incubators, WBCs, etc.) that contribute to the well being of the hosts. Some may even develop into donors to the hosts' programs.

Tie #3-The SBDC training and counseling programs create host awareness of community economic development needs. The hosts, in turn, recognize these needs and build school programs (job training, etc.) to meet them.

Tie #4-The SBDCs counseling services prepare small businesses for growth and for future capital needs to be met by community capital providers. Capital providers (banks, micro lenders, private investors) benefit from the preparation that businesses receive from our SBDCs.

Tie #5- Our counseling clients become successes. Annually our network provides success stories that become winners of SBA small business awards. This meets the goals and objectives of the SBA's programs.

Tie #6-From our counseling and training programs, our SBDC network provides referrals to and works with referrals from other state and federal business development groups (PTAC, UMEP, Custom Fit Training, USTAR, SCORE, USDA, Vocational Rehabilitation).

Organizational Inventory

- Committed staff Our staff values the mission and purpose of the Center. They are knowledgeable, independent, community oriented, and eager to learn while still committed to the quality of their personal lives and personal incomes.
- Clientele We have an unending supply of clientele who are demanding and particular about the services they receive. They are likely narrow in their entrepreneurial knowledge base and skills. They need education. They may also need financial help and managerial help and they cannot usually identify the full scope of their needs.
- Product and Service We must think of our product as education. We have the ability to provide this product through counseling, training programs and through research and referral sources. Our goals need to focus on delivery of this product to create impact for our clientele and our stakeholders.
- Stakeholders We have many stakeholders, some that we are required to report to such as the SBA, GOED and our host institutions. We have other stakeholders such as lenders, economic development offices, Chambers of Commerce and many more that we must make the effort to involve in our mission.
- Financial Federal and State funding is limited and not adequate to fund sufficient staff and cover operating costs. We have limited opportunities to develop program income due to economic conditions, competition and a somewhat social nature of our organization. Our hosts can bring significant resources to the table if they buy into the mission and can give it some priority. We can enhance our outreach through partnerships without adding a financial burden. We are able to serve our clientele and operate our Center very economically.
- Operations Our Network has moved from being reactive to proactive. We have updated our processes and employed strategic planning practices throughout the Network. We have a centralized reporting system that tracks all of our client data, our counseling and training activities, and all required SBA data and forms. Most of the required forms and signatures are

now gathered and maintained in a paperless format, including the 641 form, and most required signatures. The annual Needs Assessment and the National Annual Chrisman Study have allowed us to greatly increase the consistency in our products and their delivery.

- Competitive Edge We can help the entrepreneur to recognize many aspects of business ownership, which makes us a single source for evaluation of direction. We cannot, however, provide the depth that having expertise in a specific category could provide. Our product is provided free or at low fee. We are convenient with offices close to our clientele. We are focusing our counseling efforts on existing business management rather than problem solving. This approach has resulted in an increase in existing business clients from 17% to 57% over the past three years.

Environment

- Our lead center values each Director and Center, but is not able to facilitate our development of product, delivery of service, marketing of image or building of relationships with stakeholders.
- Our host is supportive, but not integrated into our program.
- We have excellent facilities and technology.
- We have excellent support from the campus.
- We have an enjoyable work environment and enjoyable co-workers.
- We have limited public relations and marketing capabilities.
- We have dedicated employees
- We have limited time and staff resources.
- We need to have a textbook service structure.
- The Director's long-term employment with the Center strains the financial resources.
- We do not feel the support of the State.
- We feel competition with other service providers instead of camaraderie.
- We require independence within our operation while needing the structure of the network.

From the 2008 Environmental Scan:

- We have a strong community outreach and positive community relationships.
- We are good at leveraging resources.
- We have several Directors that are skilled researchers.
- We are developing our skills as facilitators.
- Our Directors and administrative assistance are good event planners.
- We have a strong and growing Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) Program.
- We are expanding our skills at using technology for instruction, training and meetings.
- We have an online BizSmart program.
- Extensive relationships with service providers and resources for small businesses.
- Easily accessible Centers statewide.
- Directors' meetings held three times a year.
- Willingness among Directors to share knowledge.
- Experienced, knowledgeable Directors offering excellent counseling for free
- Limited experience at identifying and winning successful grants

Ideal

We have a strong definition of who we are and what we do and stick to that definition. In an ideal situation, our office would have the following elements.

- Consistency in product delivery with a uniform model that also offers the flexibility required for each client.
- In depth assistance that can address the details of "successful business models."
- Research and development assistance.

- Individualized assistance.
- Mentorships and networking opportunities.
- Multiple community relationships
- Strong image
- Strong resource materials.
- Specialized staff.

Strategies and Actions

1- To provide significant assistance to entrepreneurs

Counseling

- Serve both the start-up business clientele and the in-business clientele
 - Brief/targeted counseling
 - Long-term /targeted counseling
 - Extensive/developmental counseling
- Provide organization information and counseling guidelines at initial appointment.
- Identify homework assignments.
- Make resource referrals
- Utilize outside resources such as faculty, students and volunteers for extensive/developmental clients.
- Follow up letter after appointment with questionnaire about additional assistance desired.
- Implement mentorship and networking opportunities.
- Have all of our counselors complete counselor certification.
- Train counselors on specific specialty products.
- Counseling for startups (StartSmart, FastTrac) precedes one-on-one counseling.

Training

- Introductory Programs
 - Short – two hours maximum
 - Theoretical
 - Free
 - Stimulating
- Application Programs
 - Multi-session
 - Practicum
 - Low fee
 - Applicable
- Growth Programs
 - Long-term, multi-session
 - Scientific
 - Mid fee
 - Strategic
- Advocacy
 - Revolving loan fund initiative.
 - Always refer clients to the best resource and service providers.
 - Development of a regional medical coding program that received national accolades.
 - Regional Center participation in chamber of commerce and economic development programs.
 - Regional Center newsletter demonstrating community support via training events, special activities and center highlights.

- Lead Center building online Business Continuity Planning modules with Utah Division of Homeland Security and SLCC.
- Our network regularly submits annual SBA award nominations with a high number of winners.

Research and Resource Referral

- Handouts
- Cross-resource communications
 - Guest speakers
 - Internal training
 - Meeting involvement
- Consultant and Trainer guides
- Outreach
- Each Regional Center can provide needed research to clients on a regular basis. However some Centers are more specialized than others.
- Because of the BEAR project, one Regional Center has developed the capacity to do research for the entire network. This Center may formally become the research center for the entire Network.
- Directors have been trained on using the resources of SBDCNet.
- Center Directors are knowledgeable and experienced at matching clients up with the proper resources. Some of the more often used are PTAC, UMEP, SCORE, banks, Pete Suazo Business Center, and local economic development offices.

2. To increase funding to the USBDC program

- Balanced Scorecard-is tallied monthly and distributed to the Centers, Hosts and our Partners to show our professional progress. Progress has been noted by SBA and GOED.
- Communication with legislators-communication with state legislators from the Lead Center has all been through SLCC. Regional Centers contact their state legislators as they see fit. The Lead Center has strong ties with our congressional and senate offices.
- Success Stories-at least two stories per Center are published to the SBA and to our website semi-annually.
- Client letters-are written to key people (legislators, mayors, Hosts, SBA, GOED) as needed.
- Fee based training programs-Centers are encouraged to develop and use this program to meet the needs of their clients while at the same time raise revenue for their Centers.
- Sponsorships-a sponsorship exists with the state for development of online training courses
- Scholarships- a strong scholarship program currently exists with one regional bank. Expansion of this program is underway with other banks.
- Lead center outreach-the Lead Center is active promoting opportunities for grants, program income, and funding increases from our partners, SBA and GOED.
- Networking-All Directors, Regional and Lead Center, are regularly looking for revenue enhancement opportunities and are good to share any prospects among the Network.
- Utilization of volunteers and mentors-Centers regularly use volunteers and mentors in training and learning events.

Plans

This office seeks to transition from answering the immediate need the client requests to enveloping the client within a cocoon of business education. We no longer want to help clients write a business plan, we want to help clients develop healthy businesses. We will do this through the use of tools that help us evaluate needs, provide in-depth learning experiences and maintain long-term follow through. We seek to establish a clear definition of our product and services and deliver these items with consistency no matter who, when, where or how they are delivered.

- Communicate strategic plan to staff.

- Develop measurement and counseling/training tools.
- Make assignments to be followed through by staff.
- Implement programs.
- Follow up to evaluate effectiveness.
- Counselor Certification better prepares counselors for clients needs.
- Placing an emphasis on high value clients and long term training.
- The 7 Habits for Small Business Managers program.
- The FastTrac learning courses.
- 360 Degree Survey.
- Dashboard.

Utah SBDC will continue its efforts to be proactive in cultivating strong partnerships with SBA and state partners to leverage resources and provide optimal services for our customers.

1. Existing partners include, but are not limited to: GOED, SBA, Utah Technical Procurement Assistance Center, Utah Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Business Information Center, Women’s Business Center, various Utah Association of Local Governments, USDA, SCORE, and SBDC host institutions.
2. Enhance partnerships with Utah’s financial institutions and private businesses for promotional and development opportunities.

The Utah SBDC is committed to the following:

1. Conduct three Directors’ Meetings during the year for staff development, planning and program development, and for sharing accomplishments and new ideas. In addition, regulatory and ethics training will be a regular part of regional directors meetings.
2. Complete annual development plans (IDP) by all Lead Center and SBDC personnel providing substantial counseling services.
3. Improve and standardize reporting, program management, and staff development. Meet all performance and financial reporting dates, including center work plan deadlines.
4. Conduct annual statewide and regional center Needs Assessments and long-term client evaluations annually. Needs Assessments will include program analysis, as well as feedback from current and past clients, SBA Partners Group small business owners, economic developers, and host institutions.
5. Annual site reviews will be based on Utah SBDC Policies and Procedures, adherence to the terms of the individual sub-grant and/or cooperative agreement as applicable, and the ASBDC certification standards established by the Association and financial management practices required by the SBA and the OMB.
6. Continue to adhere to accreditation standards of the ASBDC.