



SPD Gazette

Week of November 20, 2006
Issue 11

Customers

The traditional definition of the word customer is “one that buys goods or services.” In the world of Baldrige, the term “customer” refers to actual and potential users of your organization’s products or services. Customers include the end users of your products, programs, or services, as well as others who might be the immediate purchasers of your products, programs, or services. When we talk about our strategic plan and objectives in the Gazette, we’ll use the Baldrige definition of *customer*.

According to the *Client Needs* section of the ASBDC Accreditation Standards, the objective of the SBDCs is

- to identify and segment customers, markets and key stakeholders;
- to determine requirements, expectations and preferences for each;
- to build relationships; and
- to determine satisfaction of customers and stakeholders.

Who are SBDC’s customers? In 2000, the SBDC Marketing Committee identified our customers as 1) the small business and entrepreneurial community (clients), 2) host institutions (campuses that host SBDC centers), 3) politicians, 4) partners and stakeholders, and 5) the media. Do you agree with this [list](#) – or do you think it needs to be revised?

Here are some questions for discussion at your next staff meeting:

- **Key customer requirements** – how do we identify them and how do we meet them? How do we know we have met them?
- Can you think of **SBDC products and services** that were developed or modified **based on customer needs**?
- How do we know if **SBDC customers are satisfied** or less than satisfied?
- **How do we know that the products and services** SBDC designed to meet customer needs are having the impact we desire?

You may want to review [SBDC's Customer Service Principles](#) which set the standard for interactions with our clients, stakeholders, and other customers.

Do You Have a Comment About SBDC's Strategic Planning Process?

What can we change to improve your opportunity to contribute to the Strategic Planning process? Send your comments to mary.hoffman@nyssbdc.org.

What's New This Week

» Marketing

The **Westchester SBDC** hosted a breakfast meeting to dialogue with the Mercy College President and 15 area employers, representing 6,000 employees, to discuss their current and future workforce needs. Dr. Louise Feroe, Mercy College President, used the occasion to announce the results of the recent SBDC workforce survey and to prompt area businesses to further the dialogue with education and resource providers concerning

» Sponsors, Host Institutions, Partners and Alliances

The **Canton SBDC** director participated in a Chamber of Commerce committee meeting that included a discussion about how economic developers and educators can work together to improve the quality of the workforce. The committee consists of many SBDC stakeholders and agencies that were

their needs. The event garnered good media interest and much positive campus interest in the SBDC. Eleven co-sponsor agencies and providers participated in the survey and development of a resource guide which was distributed at the meeting. This overall effort has positioned the SBDC very well as a lead agency and coordinator.

The director and advisors from the **Mid-Hudson SBDC** attended the SUNY Sullivan 3rd Annual Women's Entrepreneurship Conference held at the college. One of the Mid-Hudson SBDC business advisors and the office manager were presenters at the conference which was attended by 60 participants. The Mid-Hudson SBDC also participated in a Business Showcase held within the conference with a display at a table donated by SUNY Sullivan.

A business advisor from the **York SBDC** attended the Economic Development Cluster meeting for the Brooklyn Black Convention. The sub-committee accepted the SBDC's plan of action and proposal to develop and conduct entrepreneurial training workshops.

„Program Development: Products and Services

The Director of the **Corning SBDC** developed a program for four female high school students. The students will spend half a day in the office learning about SBDC services, attend the Women Business Owners' Roundtable and meet with retailers on Market Street in Corning to discuss the reality of starting a business.

The **Corning SBDC** developed a survey for the Women Business Owners' Roundtable to

previously unaware of SBDC services. The committee believes the SBDC can be utilized to overcome many of the challenges that were identified. Participation in the committee will likely result in future clients and training events as well as new partnerships.

The Director of the **Mid-Hudson SBDC** attended a session of the Ulster County Legislature at the invitation of Chairman David Donaldson. The Director presented the economic results of the Mid-Hudson's activities in the county and thanked the legislature for their support through SUNY Ulster.

„Special Projects

The **Brockport/Rochester Center** was contacted by the SBA Disaster office to provide technical assistance to loan applicants who were victims of the October 2006 snowstorm which forced a federal disaster declaration in Erie, Niagara, Genesee and Orleans Counties. The center also was asked to participate in outreach efforts for the relief effort.

„Professional Development & Staff Retention

The experienced **York SBDC** advisors train the new advisors and interns when they start working at the center. For example, new advisors are trained on topics such as

determine how the women entrepreneurs are using technology in their business operations. The survey was e-mailed with a request to respond by e-mail. Results will be used to create an outline for a Roundtable program on "Women in Technology" scheduled for January 2007.

preparing loan applications, working with Innovative Bank and Business Loan Express and SBA's Community Express Loan Program, entering information in WebMQS, and conducting one-to-one counseling.

Technology

In October 2006, the **Research Network** obtained hardware & software that can transform paper-based resources into digital PDF file versions. The new hardware (a multifunction copier that allows documents to be scanned and e-mailed) and software (which makes the scanned document a searchable PDF file) means that the information packets can be converted into digital PDFs, and then stored on folders on the Central SBDC's servers. When an advisor requests an information packet, the librarian can transfer its contents from the network folder and place them on a dedicated area on the SBDC website. The advisor will have 14 days to download the file(s) before they are deleted. The advisor will be informed that the Research Network provides the information in compliance with current copyright law, and that the recipient will not use the downloaded information for personal gain. Obviously, this method has many benefits: it creates more space in the library, it saves on shipping costs, and shortens the time wherein a client will receive his/her requested information.

The **Brockport/Rochester Center** has opened an outreach center at the Lennox Technology Center (LTC) operated by Hi-Tech of Rochester (HTR). The LTC is a business incubator focused on the technology community. The SBDC was invited to provide services to tenants as well as to those who are not looking for incubator services. The center director also is involved in the area's annual technology business plan contest sponsored by HTR. The center reviews plan submissions and makes recommendations for finalists and also participates in critiquing/coaching of finalists. The Center participates in a 9 county wide organization known as WIRED which has received a \$15 million grant from the US DOL to develop and promote technology programs/businesses and related jobs over the next 3 years.

The **Westchester SBDC** used [Survey Monkey.com](http://SurveyMonkey.com) as a reporting mechanism for a recent business needs survey. This has provided a very cost effective (\$19.95/month) mechanism for data input and basic reporting of results, freeing staff time for more effective feedback and interaction with respondents.

About the Gazette

The SPD Gazette is a brief newsletter distributed via email and posted on the Internal Web Site. It will feature a column to be titled, *What's New This Week*, in which the network will share best practices in strategic objectives. A series of articles in the Gazette will explain the program's statewide approach to strategic objectives in six key areas:

- **Marketing**
- **Professional Development and Certification**
- **Program Development: Products and Services**
- **Special Projects**
- **Strategic Partners and Alliances**
- **Technology, Information and Communication**

For more information or answers to your questions, call Tom Morley at **914-375-2107** or email him at SPD@Mercy.edu

Send your report forms to SPD@mercy.edu

[Print This Page](#)
[Printing Tip](#)

Adobe® Reader® is required. Download Adobe® Reader® here: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Go to Issue 1	Go to Issue 2	Go to Issue 3	Go to Issue 4	Go to Issue 5	Go to Issue 6
Go to Issue 7	Go to Issue 8	Go to Issue 9	Go to Issue 10		
