



SPD Gazette

Week of December 4, 2006
Issue 13

Improved performance = improved quality = higher customer satisfaction

One of the core values of the **Baldrige system**, which the **ASBDC Accreditation Committee** follows, is **customer-driven excellence**. In New York, key measures for evaluating the performance of both centers and advisors include customer satisfaction, which is determined through client evaluations.

In previous issues of the Gazette, we discussed the importance of understanding customer needs and expectations and the fact that their priorities change. As an organization, the **SBDC must be flexible enough to adapt and change as customer requirements change**. The SBDC needs knowledgeable and experienced staff that are capable and empowered to make decisions and recommendations to improve the delivery of and quality of products and services – and by extension, improve customer satisfaction.

The **Business Advisor Certification process** is one way in which the SBDC maintains its ability to provide high quality services through knowledgeable and experienced staff. The basic certification process emphasizes continuous learning that begins when an advisor joins the program. Within his or her first few years, the advisor participates in formal and informal training and evolves into a fully competent SBDC advisor. In subsequent years, the advisor is encouraged to attend workshops and seminars to broaden and deepen his or her skills and knowledge. An **advanced certificate** is awarded to those advisors that have:

- Demonstrated a continuing desire to broaden and deepen their knowledge of **small business-related concepts**;
- Developed in-depth knowledge of a specific area or areas and expressed their knowledge in the form of an **article or book or CD or media event**;
- Assisted clients in the **investment of financial resources** and the **creation of jobs**, as evidenced by positive client feedback;
- Demonstrated their dedication to the program by **participating in special projects** beyond the scope of their daily or weekly tasks; and
- Demonstrated their commitment to small business and their community by participating in **community organizations and events**.

An **advanced certificate** is awarded to advisors that have accepted the challenge to increase their knowledge, skills and self-confidence to enable them to provide the best advisement possible to entrepreneurs and small business owners in New York State.

The fact that the NYS SBDC program still provides excellent small business advisement more than 22 years after its establishment is evidence that the program has been successful in hiring, developing, and empowering dedicated business professionals.

What can you do to improve your performance in delivering high quality SBDC products and services to ensure that SBDC customers are fully satisfied?

What's New This Week

» Marketing

New York 1 TV (channel 1), a popular channel in NYC, featured one of the **Baruch SBDC's** clients, Gaby Sherrow, on *Business Report* a couple of weeks ago. A film crew went to the center to shoot footage, which showed Baruch Business Advisors (in a non-speaking role) and an Intern at one of the center's seminars the client attended. The video mentioned many of the Center's services and the client spoke fondly about the Advisors. The whole thing took about 4 minutes of air time but the Center got a lot of calls (& clients) as a result.

The **York SBDC** is featured in the Campus' Adult Continuing Education's Fall 2006 Catalog.

The **Corning SBDC** is working with the campus' Director of Marketing and Executive Director of Workforce Development to update the center's promotional materials. A new marketing piece will be created for inclusion in the campus' promotional efforts in the community.

» Program Development: Products and Services

The Director of the **Corning SBDC** routinely brings in speakers to keep her staff informed. For example, the entire staff met with a representative from Paychex to learn about updated products and services for automating small business operations. On another occasion, a new commercial loan officer from M & T Bank met with the staff to exchange information about their respective organizations. The Director challenged her staff to identify and research training topics for future professional development sessions.

» Special Projects

The **Westchester SBDC** is continuing work with the workforce development group that SBDC assembled for its recent study of small business and workforce needs over the next 3-5 years, and to explore grant opportunities. Several conference calls and meetings are scheduled to evaluate the first grant application opportunities.

» Professional Development & Staff Retention

On November 15th, the **Stony Brook and Farmingdale SBDC's** jointly presented a DETA- focused networking and panel discussion entitled "Grab Yourself a Piece of the Pie".

The event focused on the various counseling services available to Long Island manufacturing, technology and service small business owners. The panel discussion was moderated by the DETA Advisor from the Stony Brook SBDC.

Presentations were made by the Farmingdale SBDC DETA Advisor and nine other speakers including representatives from the SBA, LISTNET, LIFT, SATOP, ADDAPT, and the Stony Brook Office of Economic Development. Approximately 55 people attended the half-day event, which was held at the Huntington Hilton.

» Sponsors, Host Institutions, Partners and Alliances

One of the **York SBDC** Business Advisors participated in Web-based informational sessions with Community Express lenders including one for Business Loan Express (BLX) at www.webmeeting.att.com, and one for Superior Financial Group at www.readytalk.com.

» Sponsors, Host Institutions, Partners and Alliances

The SBDC at University at Albany Center, University at Albany (SBDC, UA) has developed an alliance with the Global Business Network (GBN) to promote international commerce for Capital Region companies. Through the alliance the GBN will expand the range of services to its nearly 60 member companies, while SBDC client companies will have readily available access to mentorship from experienced companies and organizations regarding international trade issues. As part of the agreement the SBDC, UA will provide administrative and organizational support to further the mission of the GBN. Melding the strengths of both organizations will increase international trade opportunities throughout the region. Channels for trade will be opened to companies that do not have the resources to sell or source products overseas on their own. The GBN is a member driven not for profit organization dedicated to promoting and sharing international trade best practices. The organization provides international trade workshops and events to better equip member companies with the tools to import or export products or services. The program will be located in the SBDC Harriman Business Center offices. Interns from the University at Albany's MBA program will assist members with planning and coordinating international trade workshops and events.

The **Baruch SBDC** is working closely with its campus public relations office to get more publicity. For example, the PR staff helped get an article placed in a widely-read NYC newspaper. One of the center's long term clients, an African American woman, was the subject of an article accompanied by a very large photo in the *New York Daily News*. The article mentioned the services available at the Center, and the client said nice things about the staff at the center, which resulted in several phone calls and new clients.

» Professional Development & Staff Retention *(continued)*

The **York SBDC** Business Advisors frequently conduct seminars "at the Flushing Branch of the Queens Public Library. Some of the recent seminars presented include "Preparing a Business Plan" and "How To Write a Business Plan."

A Business Advisor from the **Stony Brook SBDC** attended and co-chaired the annual Power Brunch event at the Ward Melville High School in Setauket, New York on Wednesday, November 29th. The event focused on careers in "The Arts", and featured ten panelists who brought a broad range of business experience and insight to over one hundred high school students. The event uniquely positions each panelist at a table of ten students, giving an intimate opportunity for students to ask questions and gain relevant information.

Every eight minutes, the panelists move to a different table, allowing all students to speak with all panelists. Two SBDC clients were invited to participate as panelists, affording them the opportunity to increase exposure for their businesses.

» Technology

The Director of the **Stony Brook SBDC** participated in a campus-sponsored event, "Developing a World Class Workforce: Economic Development Resources," as part of a panel that presented information with the 50 individuals in attendance. Other panelists represented SUNY SB's Center for Emerging Technologies, Strategic Partnerships for Industrial Resurgence, Center of Excellence in Wireless and Information Technology, the Biotech Center for Advanced Technology, Stony Brook's College of Engineering Recruitment, the Suffolk County Community College Advanced Manufacturing Program, and Stony Brook's Department of Technology and Society.

» Technology (continued)

The **Stony Brook SBDC** recently became a member of the American Institute of CPA's Information Technology Section. The annual membership includes issues of the *CPA Technology Advisor*, a monthly eNewsletter, *The IT Section eNews*, the monthly *The ITEC Chairletter*, and a bimonthly newsletter entitled *The InfoTech Update*. The SBDC also received the IT Section Welcome Kit with a CD-ROM Computer Desktop Encyclopedia which includes more than 17,000 definitions of computer terms and concepts, and *A CPA's Guide to Wireless Technology and Networking*.

Do You Have a Comment About the SPD Gazette?

Is there a topic you would like to see in the Gazette? Send your comments to mary.hoffman@nyssbdc.org.

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

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[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](#)

[Go to Issue 11](#)

[Go to Issue 12](#)
