



SPD Gazette

Week of October 2nd, 2006
Issue 4

Program Development: Products and Services

The topic of the week is Program Development: Products and Services – the third of the six core concepts of our Strategic Plan. The strategy:

The NYS SBDC is the premier provider of direct management and technical assistance services to small businesses and entrepreneurs; the access point of choice to enhance client utility of related programs and services; the delivery network of choice for small business services; and, a provider of services highly valued by clients.

The Objectives:

- Refine advisement services to improve efficiency, efficacy and relevance to clients.
- Develop innovative services responsive to small business needs, e.g., changes in technology, shifts in consumer/purchaser behaviors, and changes in local employment environments.
- Use technologies and resources in support of operating efficiencies, e.g., on-line advisement, Web meetings/trainings.
- Analyze work flows and processes to maximize utility of resources.
- Catalog local business-related service providers and develop service delivery partnerships.
- Collaborate with business service providers to assist in their development of services and programs beneficial to SBDC clients.
- Develop, monitor and respond to indices of client satisfaction, provide opportunity or incentive for client referral and promotion of client accomplishment through center assistance.

Sharing Best Practices

My favorite definition of best practice is this one – “a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven to reliably lead to a desired result. A commitment to using the best practices in any field is a commitment to using all the knowledge and technology at one's disposal to ensure success.”

The NYS SBDC has made a habit of sharing best practices at directors meetings and at staff training. This habit has enabled us to improve SBDC products and services throughout the network. The following tips provide some ideas for making best practice sharing even more effective.

Best Practices in Best Practices - Here are ten tips for making your Best Practices initiative one of the best from *Entovation International News*:

- **Have a customer in mind** - identifying potential users ensures that your overall program is customer-focused.
- **Understand the needs of your customers.**
- **"Tell me the ten things I need to know"** – What are the most important elements of a best practice description.
- **Extract guidelines** - synthesize the best practice from a number of cases into some general guidelines that can be used elsewhere.
- **Don't be presumptive** - rather than giving prescriptions, your aim should be to stimulate thinking and action, perhaps through a community dialogue.
- **Create checklists** - illustrated with examples and stories.
- **Provide enough information** to help users qualify the practice e.g. identify in which situations this practice has worked well.
- **Nurture communities and networks.** It is through people-to-person knowledge exchange that the deep knowledge of best practice gets transferred.
- **Close the loop** - use panels of experts and practitioners to validate best practice guidance; use feedback from practitioners to continually improve and build on best practice.
- **Think out of the box** - be creative and keep exploring new ways to carry out the same task. Never be satisfied that your 'best practices' are really the 'best'.

What's New This Week

Marketing

The Stony Brook SBDC held a "Tribute to Our Clients" breakfast sponsored by the Bank of America. Each advisor hosted a table for his or her clients to promote networking and to show an appreciation for their hard work in achieving business success. Each advisor chose a client to have a display table to showcase their products as well as to make sales. On the dais were NYS Senator John Flanagan; Assistant VP for Economic Development at Stony Brook, Judith McEvoy; Scott Passesser of Channel 12 News Jobline, as well as five Bank of America officers. It was a very successful and the Bank of America would like to sponsor it on an annual basis.

Program Development: Products and Services

The SBDC Hempstead outreach center (Farmingdale SBDC) and the Hempstead Education Opportunity Center made presentations to approximately 300 students about services available to them. Students are encouraged to seek counseling from the SBDC if they are contemplating starting their own business or have an established business.

Sponsors, Host Institutions, Partners and Alliances

The Farmingdale SBDC, the U.S. Dept of Commerce, and the NY District Export Council jointly planned a session titled "Exporting Made Simple." The session format consists of a brief introduction from each organization followed by one-on-one break-out sessions with various exporting experts. The International Business Specialist from the Central Office was involved in the planning process.

Special Projects

The Farmingdale SBDC received a \$5000 grant from North Carolina Partnership for Children to investigate the "best shared services model" for home based child care providers. The project will be done in cooperation with the Child Care Council of Suffolk, The Child Care Council of Nassau and the Early Care and Education of L.I. Ritu Wackett wrote the grant and will coordinate the research.

The SBDC at Farmingdale developed a "train the trainer" workshop for the Child Care Council of Suffolk. The SBDC will train Spanish speaking CCCS instructors in Home Child Care Business Management, which will enable the instructors to conduct workshops in Spanish for child care providers.

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 Objectives (statewide implications)
- 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

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