

I have included an electronic copy of my complete entry.

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2011 IEDC EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARDS ENTRY FORM

Please complete this section for all entries.

Include 5 hard copies of the Entry Form and all supplemental information with your submission.

Organization: **City of Dublin, Ohio**

Contact Name: **Nancy Richison**

Email: **nrichison@dublin.oh.us**

Project/Item Name: **The Dublin Apprentice: Teen Entrepreneurial Camp**

Category for Entry: **Entrepreneurship**

Population Category (<25K, 25-200K, 200K-500K, >500K): (Choose One) **25-200K**

Date Project Began: **2008**

Date of Completion (if applicable): **First camp held July 2010**

For Entries in Categories 9 & 10, Enter Your Web Site URL: _____

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

*Please refer to the **Category Description and Judging Criteria Sheet** corresponding to your category when answering the following questions in the space provided.*

Select:

- ☐ Promotional Award Categories 1-8 – **See Sheet A** (page 9)
- ☐ Internet and New Media Categories 9-11 – **See Sheet B** (page 10)
- ☒ Program Award Categories 12-22 – **See Sheet C** (page 11-12)
- ☐ Partnership Award Categories 23-25 – **See Sheet D** (page 13)
- ☐ Leadership Award Categories 26-30 – **See Sheet E** (page 14)

Special Note: The below section is not required for the Leadership Award categories. Please complete a profile of the individual's achievements.

THIS SECTION IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT. PLEASE KEEP ANSWERS TO EACH QUESTION UNDER 200 WORDS.
YOU MAY EXPAND ON THIS INFORMATION IN A SEPARATE PROFILE OF NO MORE THAN 3 PAGES, DOUBLE-SPACED.

1. Please provide a brief description of the project.

To introduce students ages 11 to 14 to the basic ideas, concepts and principals of starting and running a business: being an entrepreneur.

The City of Dublin Economic Development Team recognized a need to create programming to emphasize the importance of entrepreneurial ventures, start-ups and small businesses in Dublin. There also were limited opportunities to engage middle-school-age youth through recreational summer programming. Working together, Economic Development and

Recreation Services created Dublin Apprentice Teen Entrepreneurial Camp, which would use the template of the TV show “The Apprentice.”

This would create a hands-on approach for each business discipline, including marketing, franchising, logo design, social media, idea pitches, presentations, human resources, manufacturing, research and sustainability.

It also was recognized that this constituency – teens and pre-teens – are quite familiar with technology and social media, but the program would give them an opportunity to utilize the technology that they use every day in different capacities. Rather than posting a personal status to their Facebook account, the teens would be using social media to market their companies and their products and gain clientele.

2. What is the goal or purpose of this project?

The primary purpose for the Teen Entrepreneurial Camp, also known as The Dublin Apprentice, was to capture the entrepreneurial spirit inherent in teens by building strong, long-term and sustainable partnerships between teens, local government and businesses. This program also created a system of transfer of valuable knowledge among teenagers and local businesses that prepare them for the future needs of the small business owner and workforce.

The goal is to create a camp that:

- Teaches and impacts students with a deep knowledge of business,
 - Develops an interest in becoming an entrepreneur,
 - Ensures the students have fun while they learn, grow and mature through challenges, as well as trial and error,
 - Mimics the realities of the new entrepreneur as well as the tools needed for the new workforce,
 - Nurtures sustainable positive relationships with businesses in Dublin that not only benefit the students, but also benefit the companies involved,
 - Establishes a niche for recreation services that blends the traditional role of a camp setting to meet the needs of the City of Dublin’s economic development and health, and
 - Grows year after year to benefit new locations and new demographics.
-

3. Who are the participants in this project? Who was involved in planning/implementation? Who is affected?

The Dublin Economic Development Team provides programs to retain, expand, attract and create jobs and promote the success and global competitiveness of Dublin businesses in order to ensure the long-term fiscal health of the City of Dublin, the region and the State of Ohio.

The Dublin Apprentice Teen Entrepreneurial Camp grew out of a number of collaborative efforts taking place in the city and through partnerships that have developed. For the past three years, the city has been facilitating meetings among businesses and educators to develop programs to meet workforce needs now and into the future.

In 2008, Dublin launched the Dublin Entrepreneurial Center to provide services and promote an environment to encourage entrepreneurial ventures. Realizing the need to engage the entrepreneurial spirit at a younger age, the Economic Development Team worked with the city’s Recreation Services Department, which offers school-age activity camps, to create a summer camp aimed at middle-school students. The result is an award-winning program where teens gain real-world business experience that prepares them for their future and gives them an opportunity to create new ventures.

4. What has been the impact of the project? How effective has it been in furthering economic development in your community? Identify any tangible and/or intangible results and value added.

The evaluation process consisted of giving exit interviews to the teen participants; evaluations with businesses through social interaction and social media; post-camp meetings with business leaders and recreation services, as well as developing a tool to evaluate the camp’s effectiveness. The teens developed a Twitter account, as well as a Facebook

page. They had 67 followers within a three-week period, most of which were businesses. The teens hosted a lunch “meet and greet” where more than 50 professionals participated through web blogs and social media.

The Entrepreneurial Camp achieved its primary goal of meaningful recreation and bringing to the forefront relationships between the local business community, teens and local government. Through these partnerships, the camp evolved into a reliable source for the 21st century emerging workforce in Ohio. Recreation services is looking forward to developing the camp into its core programming and expanding the age of the camp to include high school, college and senior adults.

5. Is this project replicable or transferable? Can it be adapted for use in other communities? What lessons have been learned?

This project is very easy to transfer. In fact, the camp leaders have made several presentations in which audience members asked about recreating it in their communities.

There were a few challenges that arose with the planning and implementation of the project. One difficulty encountered was coordinating the different schedules of the 13 participating businesses to fit into the camp schedule so that the participants would get the most out of the presentations from the businesses. Another challenge was the complex transportation system. The main challenge was creating a unique and engaging program in entrepreneurial skills from scratch.

6. In what ways is this project innovative or creative?

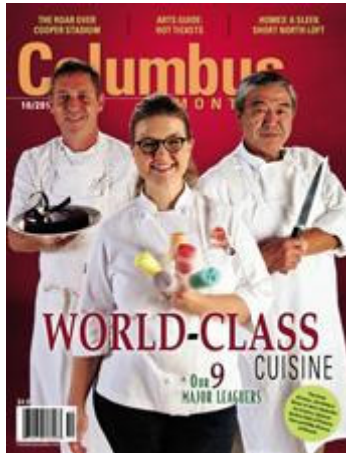
The City of Dublin provides a variety of award-winning summer camps for children. However, most are based on recreational opportunities. The results of the camp illustrated a transference from recreation for leisure to recreation for purpose. The Entrepreneurial Camp was clearly a different concept from the very beginning and involved cross-departmental involvement.

The teens attended daily morning meetings and were given an agenda for the day. They also were given business challenges that allowed them to participate interactively and create problem-solving techniques. The teens worked with businesses to learn about topics such as franchising and grant-writing, manufacturing and marketing. They performed challenges such as redesigning products; forming new products; marketing and selling existing products in new ways; social media networking; and budgeting. During the three-week camp, teams also were challenged with developing their mock business with all the information they had gathered. In the third week, the teams participated in a “shark tank” where each group presented their business plan to a panel of experts who in turn gave feedback and constructive criticism. The panel of experts was impressed with the presentations and some asked for follow-up information for further consideration.

7. Are there any other relevant details not covered above or specific to your category?

Eleven years into the 21st century, it is very clear young adults entering the workforce are not just competing with their neighbors, but workers worldwide. Governments can play a meaningful role in developing and inspiring local teens with the tools needed to stay competitive. The newest generation will need to have an efficient knowledge of technology, a shift from task-oriented skills to a problem-solving thought process and the entrepreneurial and “intrapreneurial” spirit from within the organization. These attributes can be fostered through a camp setting. We believe the best results are learned through fun, creativity and challenges to the mind.

More than 13 local businesses participated by lecturing, assisting with challenges, providing resources, offering staff training sessions and allowing teens to participate in six skills training seminars. All of the businesses were local and helped in making the program viral by helping recruit other avenues for the teens. The camp was promoted by the City of Dublin and the community responded by blogging and attending the teen’s Entrepreneur Fair. The camp also engaged the public and media through social media and challenges the teens faced.



Best of Columbus 2010

By John Champlin, Dave Ghose, Jackie Mantey, John Marshall, Ray Paprocki, Nancy Richison, Taylor Swope and Ben Zenitsky.

Yes, Best of Columbus is back. So get ready to learn about the coolest restaurants, the most intriguing athletes, the hottest shopping, even the best spot to get your photo taken with Brutus.

Camp for aspiring Donald Trumps

In July, the city of Dublin will offer the **Dublin Apprentice Teen Entrepreneur Camp**, a three-week program that focuses on marketing, sales, networking, capital, franchising and other business topics. Like the reality show "The Apprentice," two teams will compete in challenges, though no one will get booted from the camp if they do poorly. Scott Hanks, Dublin's recreation supervisor, says participants (ages 11 to 15) will create mini-Tim Hortons franchises in city buildings and conduct market research for Barbasol, in addition to developing business plans that experienced entrepreneurs will critique. It's a serious, weighty program—and kids will have to forgo flip-flops and shorts for proper business attire. But not always. "There will be a day when we have them dress down, too; Barbasol wants them to do a big shaving cream fight," Hanks says.

Department of Economic Development
Department of Parks and Recreation

The Dublin Apprentice

Teen Entrepreneur Camp
New for 2010



The Dublin Apprentice Teen Entrepreneur Camp is based on the hit reality series *The Apprentice*. The entrepreneur will learn about: marketing, sales, networking, capital, taxes, licenses, risk and profit. Through mock scenarios and challenges, this camp is an entertaining way to turn innovation into venture.

Location: Dublin Entrepreneur Center

Please call 614-410-4557 to schedule a pre-camp interview.

Interviews are held April 8 & 9.

**Date: July 12—30
Monday—Friday (3 weeks)**

Time: 9 a.m.—5 p.m.

Class # 331400.01

Fee: \$305 (\$336 nonresident)

Ages: 11 - 15



Join the next generation of leaders.
This camp is designed to teach and inspire.
Teens with the spirit of innovation can achieve.

For information please call 614-410-4557

dublin
community recreation center

5600 Post Rd.
Dublin, OH 43017
614-410-4550

Camp for young 'entrepreneurs' puts focus on marketing, business plans

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Wednesday, July 28, 2010 02:32 PM

By [JENNIFER NOBLIT](#)

ThisWeek Staff Writer



By Adam Cairns/ThisWeek 13-year-olds Zheng-Da Lim, Anthony Yao and Patrick Murphy use a laptop to create a new logo design Friday, July 23, during the three-week Dublin Entrepreneurial Camp for middle-schoolers.

For 23 campers, middle school isn't too young to start thinking about the future - or business plans and marketing.

This month Dublin's first teen entrepreneur camp began offering tours, lessons and insight into the world of business.

With 23 participants ranging in ages from 11 to 14, the three-week camp that ends this week gave students a look into the working world with days that go from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Students also got a lesson from 10 different companies on the inner-workings of a business. Each carried a challenge.

"The Tim Hortons challenge was to sell coffee and donuts at city buildings," camp supervisor Bryan Arnold said.

Perio, the Dublin-based business behind Barbasol, was scheduled to meet with the students and focus on marketing, shelf position in the store and other facets.

Students then created a scent and label they thought would appeal to consumers.

Campers also conspired on a business plan during camp days; the group was divided into six teams of four and charged with coming up with a business plan and prototype of their product.

Other items on the camp's agenda included a networking lunch and insight into other networking tools: Facebook and Twitter.

Scott Hanks, recreation supervisor, said each team has a twitter account and Facebook page, and one challenge is to get the most followers.

"The mindset for an entrepreneur is, they never really leave their job at the end of the day," he said. "And these kids are checking Twitter when they go home."

According to Hanks, the camp was a collaboration between Dublin's parks and recreation and economic development departments and teaches not just "with lectures and tours, but (also) the success and failures of businesses."

"We treat it like getting a job," Arnold said, adding that campers were interviewed before earning a spot in the camp.

"We'll give them an exit interview to see how much they've learned. We're trying to treat it like a business as much as possible, but remember that they are middle-schoolers."

Camp for young 'entrepreneurs' puts focus on marketing, business plans

[Share This](#) Each day begins with a staff meeting, and campers are given an agenda for the day. Some of the members of Dublin's first teen entrepreneur camp aren't thrown off by meetings and challenges.

"I like the program a lot," Devon Buchanan said, citing the Tim Hortons Challenge and visit to the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium as his favorites.

Zena Spratley said she also enjoyed selling items during the Tim Hortons Challenge.

"It's really fun and gives us a lot of freedom but there's still a lot of learning," she said.

For Spratley, who will enter the sixth grade at Davis Middle School in the fall, the camp was an opportunity to learn.

"It seemed very interesting because it's new and would help with a business as small as a lemonade stand," she said. "I thought it would give me skills for the rest of my life."

"I want to be an entrepreneur when I grow up," said Buchanan, who will be a seventh-grader at Sells Middle School in the fall. "I thought it would teach me and be fun."

Hanks and Arnold plan to expand the program next year. Hanks said the camp eventually could extend to adults and baby boomers.

"Next year we envision different groups going through different tiers (of the program)," Hanks said, adding that although they don't want to be exclusionary, the program will be capped. "We want them to feel they can work intimately and not just a mass lecture. We thought smaller groups would definitely achieve better."

Age groups could be extended next year, but Hanks said they'll work on having this year's class return next summer.

"We wanted to hit a growth market. We wanted a group that could grow with us," he said.

The first Dublin Teen Entrepreneur camp will end Friday; an open house will be held from 3 to 4:30 p.m. at the Dublin Entrepreneurial Center, 7003 Post Road, for teams to present their business ideas.

A four-person panel will judge the ideas and announce a winner at the end of the day.

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Organization: **Washington County Economic Development Council**

Contact Name: **Todd Smith**

Email: **smith@thewcedc.com**

Project/Item Name: **Will This Float**

Category for Entry: **Entrepreneurship**

Population Category (<25K, 25-200K, 200K-500K, >500K): (Choose One) **25-200K**

Date Project Began: **November 2008**

Date of Completion (if applicable): **Ongoing**

For Entries in Categories 9 & 10, Enter Your Web Site URL: _____

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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Select:

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- ☒ Program Award Categories 12-22 – **See Sheet C** (page 11-12)
- ☐ Partnership Award Categories 23-25 – **See Sheet D** (page 13)
- ☐ Leadership Award Categories 26-30 – **See Sheet E** (page 14)

Special Note: The below section is not required for the Leadership Award categories. Please complete a profile of the individual's achievements.

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1. Please provide a brief description of the project.

Will This Float is an annual business pitch competition held each year during Global Entrepreneurship Week. Participants have 5 minutes to pitch their business idea. A panel of three judges provides feedback on their pitch and business concept. The audience however, chooses the winner based on text-voting. The goal is to give entrepreneurs a forum to collaborate ideas and meet potential investors; all in a fun entertaining atmosphere

2. What is the goal or purpose of this project?

The goal is two-fold; Have fun and develop regional entrepreneurial opportunities

3. Who are the participants in this project? Who was involved in planning/implementation? Who is affected?

Will This Float events are planned and implemented by of a board of directors representing economic development entities, East Tennessee State University, The University of Tennessee, and the private sector. The board members represent such a diverse constituency allowing a broad reach throughout the Tri-Cities region

4. What has been the impact of the project? How effective has it been in furthering economic development in your community? Identify any tangible and/or intangible results and value added.

Will This Float has been effective in elevating the ideas of local entrepreneurs. The successful model of Will This Float is recognized across the state, giving participants validity when talking with potential funders or other collaborators across the state

5. Is this project replicable or transferable? Can it be adapted for use in other communities? What lessons have been learned?

Yes, easily replicated. The lesson we learned is to make the effort as regional as possible. We learned that Johnson City alone may not possess the capacity to support a stand alone entrepreneurial effort, but the Tri-Cities region produces enough entrepreneurs with great ideas, along with enough potential investors to develop an entrepreneurial culture.

6. In what ways is this project innovative or creative?

Few local economic development organizations focus on cultivating business opportunities. The Council is unique in that one of the organization's main focus is growing business opportunities. We learned that businesses created locally, tend to grow and stay local

7. Are there any other relevant details not covered above or specific to your category?

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS AND JUDGING CRITERIA

A. PROMOTIONAL AWARDS

PLEASE REFER TO THIS SHEET WHEN COMPLETING THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION SECTION OF THE ENTRY FORM FOR A PROMOTIONAL AWARD.

These awards recognize innovative and effective marketing materials used for attracting, retaining and fostering business as well as communications vehicles used by economic development organizations.

Judging Criteria for Categories 1-8:

Promotional Awards will be judged by the following criteria:

- Effectiveness of the promotion
- Innovation/creativity
- Quality and completeness of information
- Contribution to the economic development profession

Descriptions:

1. General Purpose Brochure

A brochure introducing your state, province, community, region or area to prospects for industrial, commercial, retail, or general development opportunities. The most effective brochures create a positive image of the area for its quality of life and cultural, educational, or other attributes.

2. Special Purpose Brochure

A brochure designed for a special purpose, such as promoting an industrial park or other specific types of promotions.

WILL THIS FLOAT?



Background

Will This Float is a business pitch competition allowing budding entrepreneurs the showcase to display their creative ideas. Formed in Johnson City, TN in 2008 Will This Float covers the entire Tri-Cities regional area of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

The concept was developed from parallel ideas being formed at the same time. In late 2007 the Business Development Focus Group of the Johnson City Economic Summit created a goal of hosting an entrepreneurial focused event showcasing the region's talent. The group identified Global Entrepreneurship Week sponsored by the Kauffmann Foundation (the third week of November) as a target date. At roughly the same time, a group of local technology enthusiasts known as GeekSouth began planning for an event focused on entrepreneurs; during the third week in November. Both groups merged their efforts to create the first annual Will This Float in November 2008.

The Event

Will This Float is a game show type event hosted in the Tri-Cities Tennessee region. The event has been held in Johnson City, Kingsport, and Bristol. Entrepreneurs register their ideas at www.willthisfloat.com. From the registrations, five are chosen to compete in Will This Float. The entrepreneurs then have five minutes to pitch their idea using any tools available. A panel of three judges provides critiques to the presenters based on five FLOAT criteria:

Few or no direct competitors (novel idea)

Low adoption/switching costs for users

On-time (timely entry to market)

Addresses unfilled need or want/solves a real problem (useful)

Target market is identified and large

The judges come from a diverse background representing higher education, a small business development center, venture funding, and mostly private enterprises. Ultimately however, it is the audience and the web viewers who choose the winner via text messaging. The voting is displayed “live” with the winner receiving the buoy trophy.

Participants

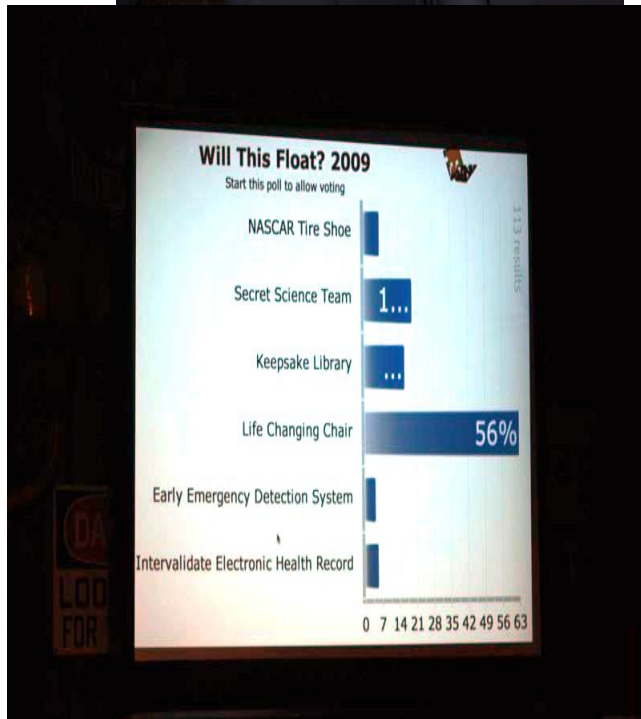
Participants in Will This Float represented a variety of different ideas. The winner of the first Will This Float in 2008 created a website called fellowtip (www.fellowtip.com) allowing users to share ideas, answer questions, and “tip” contributors for especially helpful answers or advice. The 2009 winner came from a tinkerer who built an electric off road wheel chair. After

experiencing a traffic accident that confined him to a wheel chair, Ed Johnson began working on a wheel chair that would lower the center of gravity at the touch of a button allowing him to continue to hunt and fish in the outdoors. Most striking was Ed's actual demonstration of the chair as he started his presentation at Will This Float. Another contestant rolled out a racing tire from a stock car promoting a brand of shoes that featured rubber from the cars of actual NASCAR stars. Another contestant's idea of a science mystery kit has been featured on Good Morning America. Last year's winner was a local chiropractor who developed a kiniseometric machine that measures the range of motion in patients suffering from joint or muscle injuries. The machine can assess the initial range of motion limitation and evaluate the rehabilitation process.

Next Steps

The Will This Float board is actively working with the local economic development entity, The Washington County Economic Development Council (WCEDC), to assist many of the Will This Float participants in implementing or growing their idea. In fact the two groups have recently joined efforts to develop a forum called First Look where entrepreneurs can pitch their concept to a group of local investors. This initial funding is critical in taking these creative ideas to the next stage of marketability. First Look kicked off in February 2011, with the next event planned for the end of April. Furthermore, both Will This Float and the WCEDC are actively facilitating contacts with venture capital firms throughout Tennessee. Larger venture capital firms in places like Nashville may be unaware of ideas coming out of the Tri-Cities area; but Will This Float gives these entrepreneurs a conduit to approach these capital sources.







Organization: Lansing Economic Area Partnership (Leap, Inc.)

Contact Name: Pam Jodway

Email: jodwayp@leapinc.biz

Project/Item Name: Entrepreneurs' Edge

Category for Entry: Entrepreneurship

Population Category: 200K-500K

Date Project Began:

Date of Completion (if applicable):

For Entries in Categories 9 & 10, Enter Your Web Site URL:

Select:

Promotional Award Categories

Internet & New Media Categories

☒ Program Award Categories

Partnership Award Categories

Leadership Award Categories

1. Please provide a brief description of the project.

In the past, Leap developed the SpringBoard program to assist entrepreneurs by offering entrepreneurs easier access to everything they need to launch and build sustainable companies in our region—globally competitive companies that will improve the area's economic health. Through our SpringBoard, we made it easier for entrepreneurs to find local and global capital providers and best-in-class business service suppliers who could guide their young companies' growth—and provide them with relevant, personalized support. Over the past year the SpringBoard program has been completed restructured to include other phases of venture development. Through Entrepreneurs' Edge, entrepreneurs and other small business owners from our region can now engage with Leap's entrepreneurship and innovation team through critical stages of their entrepreneurial venture. E2 participants will gain access to critical support services and expertise including domain experts and investors. E2 programs and events will also offer the opportunity to develop a strong peer to peer network. For entrepreneurs, being agile and intensely connected are essential components of maintaining a competitive advantage.

2. What is the goal or purpose of this project?

Entrepreneurs' Edge allows entrepreneurs to choose when and how to engage, primarily through three key stages - *Discovery*, *Launched* or *Growth*. They may identify with a topic or an individual, attend events where they can learn more about them and then choose to further engage or explore other opportunities. Leap's director of entrepreneurship and innovation and others selected to act

as advisors for the issues entrepreneurs are facing will act as guides to help identify and navigate all the possible sources of help available and advocate for entrepreneurs when opportunities and issues arise.

Stages		
Discovery - for individuals are passionate about their offering (product or service) to the marketplace but perhaps have not yet formulated their business methodology or their niche market. Often these individuals have not fully formulated the skills needed to successfully engage with customers.	Launched - for individuals who have their product or service well defined, their customer and competition understood, and may even be revenue positive. They are looking for mentoring, access to domain expertise, peer connections and possibly access to capital.	Growth - for individuals who have a solid business methodology and have a strong understanding of their market. They, like all Entrepreneurs, need expert help in strategic initiatives, urgent issues or specifics projects. They also may need access to capital.

3. Who are the participants in this project? Who was involved in planning/implementation? Who is affected?

The program involves entrepreneurs at all stages, domain experts who offer assistance to these entrepreneurs, and any person who is possibly entertaining the idea of starting their own venture. The original SpringBoard program was developed through the business development team at Leap. Since hiring an Entrepreneurship Champion, our organization has developed many extensive approaches to assisting businesses. The Entrepreneurship Champion developed the Entrepreneurs' Edge curriculum and utilizes assistance from all other departments to keep the program successful.

4. What has been the impact of the project? How effective has it been in furthering economic development in your community? Identify tangible and/or intangible results and value added.

Through our program and our regions' acceleration efforts, during the first quarter of 2011, we have worked with 105 companies, resulting in 193 new and retained jobs, \$600,000 in new payroll and \$3.5Million in capital investment.

5. Is this project replicable or transferable? Can it be adapted for use in other communities? What lessons have been learned?

Entrepreneurs' Edge is a model that is duplicable in any community and can be used as outreach, education or simply as a methodology for engagement. Leap's intent is to build and strengthen this programmatic support and provide assistance to other communities needing a way to engage this fast growing sector of our economy.

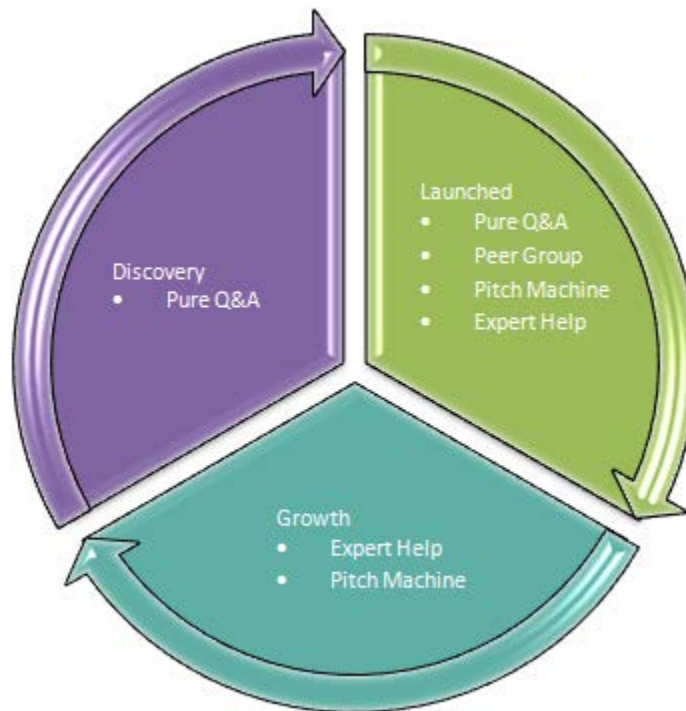
6. In what ways is this project innovative or creative?

What makes Entrepreneurs' Edge unique is that the program is centered around the entrepreneur not the venture. It will stay with the entrepreneur throughout the life of their companies and then even from company to company for serial entrepreneurs.

7. Are there any other relevant details not covered above or specific to your category?

The Entrepreneurs' Edge program consists of 5 parts, Pure Q & A, Peer Group, Expert Help, the Pitch Machine, and a Champion to assist in the journey.

Programs	
Pure Q&A	Monthly meetings hosted by area domain experts and their organizations. These sessions are meant to bring a particular topic to the table to be fully examined by those in attendance. Topics include "Funding your start up", "Managing your pipeline.", "Making a good hire the first time.", "Building an effective communications bridge to your clients.", "What is your IP and how do you protect it?" Sessions include a diverse expert panel from many vantage points of the topic at hand and will allow for time to have personal conversation with those in attendance and the panel.
E2 Peer Group	Provides the opportunity to meet with others in the same stage of business and: bring to the table issues needing resolution, strengthening entrepreneurial leadership skills, examining critical areas of business and building relationships with mentors and coaches. This venue also provides connection to experts who can execute on strategic and urgent projects or initiatives.
E2 Expert Help	Directly connects entrepreneurs with trusted, vetted resources that can execute on strategic and urgent projects or initiatives.
Pitch Machine	A process to get entrepreneurs investment pitch ready and to connect entrepreneurs with investment opportunities.



2011 IEDC EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARDS ENTRY FORM

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Organization: City of Austin Small Business Development Program

Contact Name: Rosy Jalifi

Email: rosy.jalifi@ci.austin.tx.us

Project/Item Name: Small Business Development Program

Category for Entry: Entrepreneurship

Population Category (<25K, 25-200K, 200K-500K, >500K): (Choose One) > 500,000

Date Project Began: 2000

Date of Completion (if applicable): Ongoing

For Entries in Categories 9 & 10, Enter Your Web Site URL:

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1. Please provide a brief description of the project.

In 2010 and 2011, Austin was recognized by BizJournal's Portfolio.com study as the most conducive city in the nation for the creation and development of small businesses. The designation was based on three statistical categories that are critical to entrepreneurship: growing population, strong employment, and strong small business growth. Austin has over 38,000 small businesses and 91% of Austin employers have fewer than 100 employees. The City of Austin's Small Business Development Program (SBDP) exists to support this strong small business economic community.

SBDP is a race and gender-neutral, 100% city-funded program established to foster the creation, growth and survival of small businesses. SBDP has served over 14,000 clients since its inception in 2000. Most services are provided at no cost to the customer.

The SBDP's services are needs-based and address the findings of a small business needs assessment study conducted in 2002 and updated in 2009 by providing the following services:

- Information on doing business in Austin;
- One-on-one assistance in writing a business plan and formulating a marketing plan;
- Direct assistance in preparing a loan package and advocating on applicants' behalf with lenders;
- Assistance with completing forms to establish a business in Austin;
- Referrals to small business services;
- Training classes on a variety of business topics;
- The Business Solutions Center, a dedicated facility, that offers access to business information through a variety of web-based resources;
- BizOpen[®], which helps small business owners navigate Austin's complex land development and building permit processes;
- Special-topic annual events such as the award-winning Meet the Lender[®] and Getting Connected[®] expos;
- Directories of local organizations that help small businesses, networking organizations, and women and minority professional organizations;
- Online small business mapping service, www.ExploreLocalAustin.org.

2. What is the goal or purpose of this project?

The purpose of SBDP is to provide small business owners and entrepreneurs with information and resources that can help them succeed in a competitive business environment.

3. Who are the participants in this project? Who was involved in planning/implementation? Who is affected?

SBDP staff serves as the first contact for Austin entrepreneurs, and provides certain direct services. Additional services are provided by contracted providers or other community partners. SBDP uses the needs assessment studies previously mentioned as a roadmap for developing services, and conducts ongoing customer satisfaction surveys to measure their effectiveness. This ensures that SBDP's services meet the ever-changing needs of Austin's small business community.

4. What has been the impact of the project? How effective has it been in furthering economic development in your community? Identify any tangible and/or intangible results and value added.

SBDP staff has served over 14,000 small business clients in some form since 2000. The following results have been reported over the past four years:

Measure of Success	10/6 – 9/07	10/07 – 9/08	10/08 – 9/09	10/09 – 9/10
No. of Participants Attending Business Start-Up Orientations	365	689	1393	1258
Orientation Participant Satisfaction Rate	94%	96%	96%	96%
No. of Referrals for Bus. Dev. Services	2,269	5,503	12,023	10,084
No. of Unduplicated Customers Referred	797	1,411	2,307	1,878
Hrs. of Technical Assistance (TA)	828	1,449	1,746	1,594
No. of Customers Receiving TA	350	400	457	461
No. of Business Training Hrs.	3,552	2,099	5,365	5,966
No. of Participants Trained	1,246	1,148	2,287	2,342
New Businesses Established	5	9	26	60
Dollar Value of Loans	\$741,000	\$4,434,700	\$1,324,550	\$3,320,000
Jobs Created by Clients	126	82	46	170

5. Is this project replicable or transferable? Can it be adapted for use in other communities? What lessons have been learned?

The programs and services offered through the SBDP are replicable in other locations. The program must have strong support from the local community and its governing body so that adequate funding and resources are made available. It is not necessary to have all types of business expertise in-house, but the program should have an experienced staff that understands small business needs and is knowledgeable about locally-available resources. Austin's SBDP contracts many key services, such as training and one-on-one business coaching, and also refers customers to other non-profit agencies that can serve the small business owner's need. The program should include a strong marketing and outreach component, and relationship building, community partnering, and establishing goodwill are also important elements of being successful.

6. In what ways is this project innovative or creative?

SBDP is one of the few small business development programs in the country that are completely city-funded, which allows more flexibility in tailoring services and desired outcomes to meet the needs of Austin entrepreneurs and the community. SBDP understands that it can not assist every one of Austin's 38,000 small businesses (and growing), so the program actively makes referrals to and creatively partners with other non-profit agencies. SBDP also adheres to a "teach them to fish" philosophy, which focuses on developing small business owners' skills so they can thrive in a real-world, competitive business environment.

7. Are there any other relevant details not covered above or specific to your category?

Austin was recognized by BizJournal's Portfolio.com study as the most conducive city in the nation for small businesses 2010 and 2011 based on growing population, strong employment, and strong small business growth. Austin has over 38,000 small businesses and 91% of Austin employers have fewer than 100 employees. SBDP supports this strong small business growth.

An artistic illustration of a man in a red shirt, blue jeans, and a white cap, playing a black electric guitar. He is standing on a black film strip that loops and curves across the frame. The background is a soft-focus sky with white and orange-tinted clouds. The overall style is creative and evokes the intersection of music and film.

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No-cost Business Loan Fair
August 5th * 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Palmer Events Center
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Learn how to obtain financing for your start-up or existing small business and begin forming those critical relationships with dozens of banks, community lenders, and other investors.

No-Cost classes offered during the fair:

BizAid Orientation presents information about available City resources for businesses at 3:15 and 5:45 p.m.

BizOpen[®] Orientation explains Austin's zoning, permitting, and development process at 4:30 p.m.

Register for these classes at www.AustinSmallBiz.org

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Central Austin houses a valuable resource for local entrepreneurs – the City of Austin’s Business Solutions Center. The Business Solutions Center (BSC) was created to help small businesses get started and existing businesses grow.

The BSC is a dedicated facility comprised of On-Line Plan Room for construction and construction-related businesses and a Business Information Center for all small businesses seeking to conduct research to start a new business or expand their existing business.

In starting or growing small businesses, entrepreneurs need to be able to access state-of-the-art equipment and research technology to compete with larger businesses. One of the chief methods of doing this is through researching business sales opportunities, government procurement opportunities, construction information and demographic research. The City of Austin has invested in several web subscriptions and business software to help entrepreneurs gain access to the information they need.

The great majority of the Business Solutions Center customers are either starting or are operating businesses employing fewer than ten employees. They are seeking methods of selling their product/services to other businesses, to the general public or to the government. In some cases, they are seeking information on commercial real estate that may help them in their goals for expansion. Twelve workstations with privacy panels ensure that the customer can conduct research, create business and marketing plans and respond to bids in a professional, business focused environment.

The On-Line Plan Room portion of the BSC helps construction and construction-related business owners find public and private bid opportunities throughout the State of Texas and in the hurricane affected areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama. The Business Information Center portion of the BSC is dedicated to business research and includes software and web subscriptions for business creation and expansion and houses a business resource library at no additional cost to the business owner. Access to business equipment is available for a nominal fee. The Business Solutions Center has a courteous and knowledgeable staff on hand to assist customers.

business coaching and education

business coaching & education Business Coaching & Education

Austin is a great place to start a business. One of the many resources offered by the City of Austin's Small Business Development Program is BizAid. BizAid is an initiative designed to help new small businesses

start and existing businesses grow. Entrepreneurs from Austin and the surrounding five-county area can avail themselves of a myriad of resources that are free or low-cost. BizAid takes the business owner through all

the stages of owning a business, from conception, to getting financing, through expansion and, if necessary, dissolution of the business.

BIZAID

Small business owners can obtain free personalized counseling and guidance with writing a business plan and a marketing plan. These documents are essential to small business owners in mapping out their success and vital for obtaining financing. Existing business owners may also have their written business and marketing plans reviewed and updated by professional business counselors through BizAid. In the idea stage, potential entrepreneurs who are thinking of starting a business can attend a free BizAid Business Orientation. In this orientation, they will hear the essential factors to consider before starting a business and receive guidance to help them take the first steps of opening a business. Entrepreneurs learn the basic components of a business plan and the resources available to help them make their dreams a reality.

Since financing is a primary need of small business owners in the Austin area, BizAid also addresses the need for obtaining capital. A credit review with a personal counselor starts the process. Once the entrepreneur has completed his or her business plan, he or she can utilize BizAid to determine the best financing options available. Small business owners will receive assistance with discovering which area lenders might be a good fit for their business. Finally, the entrepreneur receives personal assistance filling out loan applications with identified lenders, ensuring the applications are "lender ready". This personally tailored assistance is free of charge. Austin is the only municipality that currently offers the depth of services available through the unique BizAid program.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

All small business owners can utilize the BizAid Business Education series throughout the life of their business. A variety of business classes are available at a nominal charge. Categories of classes include Getting Up and Running, Managing Money, Managing People, Marketing, Small Business Taxes and more. Care is taken to ensure that BizAid Business Education customers receive top quality instruction and materials. A list of Business Education classes is available at www.austinsmallbiz.org and online registration is available.

information and referral

information & referral *information & referral*

Business owners need to know who can help and where to go to connect to other small business owners and professionals. The City of Austin Small Business Development Program offers Information and Referral to Austin area entrepreneurs to help

them discover the rich resources available to them in Central Texas. Information and resources are available through self-referral resource directories, information on the SBDP website and through telephone referrals.

RESOURCE DIRECTORIES

Gold Pages

Customers may need assistance from organizations in addition to the SBDP. Information can be obtained on dozens of local organizations whose mission is to assist small businesses through the SBDP publication *Gold Pages*. This self-referral resource directory can be downloaded or used interactively on the SBDP website and is also available on CD and in hard copy format.

Silver Pages

Many small business owners need networking resources to connect to other small business owners for marketing, support, socializing and business needs. The *Silver Pages* has nearly 100 business networking organizations listed and is available in hard copy, on CD, or can be downloaded from our web page.

Bronze Pages

Women and ethnic minority professional associations are listed in the *Bronze Pages* directory. These associations are membership-based and meet regularly to support the professional needs of their members.

WEBSITE

The SBDP website is a treasure trove of information for local entrepreneurs. The website offers access to information regarding all of SBDP's resources and services, news pertinent to small business owners, articles of interest, success stories and featured small business videos as well as a listing of SBDP business classes and classes and events offered by other organizations.

TELEPHONE REFERRALS

SBDP staff is always available to assist small business owners by answering basic questions over the telephone. For more in-depth assistance, staff will refer the customer to the appropriate program or to a local organization who can help with the customers' specific needs.

opening a business location

opening a business location *Opening a Business Location*

Whether starting a new business or expanding an existing one, Austin entrepreneurs can encounter challenges navigating through the City of Austin's development process.

At times, the development process can lead to unexpected delays and additional expenses for business owners. In order to assist in this area, the Small Business Development Program has launched BizOpen. BizOpen's focus and purpose is to guide business owners through the City's commercial permitting, zoning and inspection processes which can result in fewer delays. Customer guidance begins with a BizOpen Orientation and can include one-on-one coaching. BizOpen provides direct support to the mission of the SBDP which fosters job creation and supports the growth of new and existing businesses by providing capacity-building information, tools and resources.

The BizOpen Orientation provides a general overview of the potential steps in the City of Austin's development process. The objective is to help business owners identify which processes are relevant to their business location development, and how to navigate the steps in a timely and efficient manner.

events

events Events

SBDP special events are legendary for their service to the small business owners of Central Texas. Three major events are offered each year in addition to various other special events throughout the year.

MEET THE LENDER

Every summer, SBDP offers an opportunity for entrepreneurs to interact with lenders in an informal setting. This business loan information fair links entrepreneurs to lending organizations friendly to small business. The free event attracts new entrepreneurs as well as existing business owners to begin financial relationships vital to small business.

GETTING CONNECTED

Small business owners need access to information regarding resources for their success. *Getting Connected* is a great opportunity for entrepreneurs to meet with non-profit organizations that help small businesses, business networking organizations and government organizations that may be of assistance. *Getting Connected* to these resources can make a large impact on any small business.

UPS AND DOWNS OF A SECOND LOCATION

Ups and Downs of a Second Location is an event where a business panel of successful entrepreneurial peers help other small business owners recognize the opportunities and pitfalls of opening a second location. Participants have the opportunity to hear lessons learned from each panel member and are encouraged to ask questions.

small business mapping project

small business mapping project Small Business Mapping Project

Residents of Central Texas have long appreciated the unique flavor of Austin's environment, culture and population makeup. Although the city has grown tremendously over the last few decades, one thing remains the same – the love for the unique and inimitable style that belongs only to Austin.

In 2009, the SBDP officially launched the Small Business Mapping Project. Local residents and visitors to Central Texas can log on to www.ExploreLocalAustin.org to view an interactive map of small businesses. Detailed contact and website information is available for each small business and is categorized by type. Featured business videos are available on the website for interested shoppers to get a personal perspective from local entrepreneurs about what it means to be an Austin small business owner. The site features the City of Austin's own GIS Mapping System to enhance the appearance and flexibility of the map as it moves towards becoming an everyday tool for users in search of local goods and services. The Small Business Mapping Project provides small business owners throughout Austin with an increased web presence and helps residents and visitors alike find more opportunities to shop local.

small business in austin

The City of Austin's Small Business Development Program (SBDP) understands that small business is essential to the health of our economy, both nationally and locally.

The City of Austin is proud that according to the 2007 U.S. Census Bureau, the Austin/Round Rock MSA has 39,539 businesses, of which 33,641 employ fewer than 20 people and 99% of Austin businesses employ fewer than 50 people compared to 86% nationally. The United States Small Business Administration defines small business as employing fewer than 500 employees. The Austin MSA's businesses are 99% small businesses under this definition. This economic engine is vital to the success of the region. By supporting the small business owner, the City strengthens the entire area economically and culturally.

The Small Business Development Program has been positioned to be a portal of information to small business owners and potential entrepreneurs in the Central Texas area. The program, formed in February 2000, is fully-funded by the City of Austin, and the single municipal funding source is one of the reasons that the SBDP stands apart from others of its kind. The SBDP strengthens the Central Texas economy by offering small business resources unparalleled by other cities through its many initiatives and personal customer service.

award winning program

The City of Austin's Small Business Development Program (SBDP) offers resources for entrepreneurs to expand their existing businesses, or to help those with dreams of business ownership to realize their visions. SBDP has been an advocate for small business owners in Austin and the surrounding area since 2000 and has grown in size and scope since its inception. The program, part of the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, has become a portal of information for Austin entrepreneurs to get the tools they need to be successful in our changing economy. SBDP is proud to be an award-winning program.

- In November, 2009 SBDP was chosen to represent the City of Austin at the National League of Cities "City Showcase" conference in San Antonio. The SBDP's "Meet the Lender" special event was selected to be spotlighted as an example of best practices for other cities to recreate.
- SBDP was honored to receive a statewide award from the Center for Digital Government Best of Texas for "Excellence in Technology Promoting Economic Development" in recognition of the achievements of the program's Business Solutions Center. The awards ceremony held on October 14, 2008 at the Austin Hilton offers the highest level of professional acknowledgement within the Texas public sector IT community. The Business Solutions Center was chosen particularly for the outreach to small business owners in the community to utilize the many services available to them.
- SBDP was a 2008 Small Business Week Special Awardee at the U.S. Small Business Administration's Small Business Week Awards Luncheon in San Antonio on May 15, 2008. The awards honor the nation's top entrepreneurs and champions for small business. SBDP was recognized with a special award – "The San Antonio District Director's Alliance Award" for their resources and support of small business owners in the Austin area.
- SBDP received on October 26, 2005 the Austin City Employees' Choice Award in the category of "Gutsy". An estimated 1,300 people attended the Academy-Awards styled event honoring City employees at the Palmer Events Center. The "Gutsy" category is defined as "We honor the public trust by conducting ourselves with integrity and doing what it takes to get the job done right."

small business

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2011 IEDC EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARDS ENTRY FORM

Please complete this section for all entries.

Include 5 hard copies of the Entry Form and all supplemental information with your submission.

Organization: **Small Business Development Center at UCF**

Contact Name: **Jill Kaufman**

Email: **jkaufman@bus.ucf.edu**

Project/Item Name: **Advisory Board Council**

Category for Entry: **Entrepreneurship**

Population Category (<25K, 25-200K, 200K-500K, >500K): (Choose One) **>500K**

Date Project Began: **June 18, 2003**

Date of Completion (if applicable): **Ongoing**

For Entries in Categories 9 & 10, Enter Your Web Site URL:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

*Please refer to the **Category Description and Judging Criteria Sheet** corresponding to your category when answering the following questions in the space provided.*

Select:

- ☐ Promotional Award Categories 1-8 – **See Sheet A** (page 9)
- ☐ Internet and New Media Categories 9-11 – **See Sheet B** (page 10)
- ☒ Program Award Categories 12-22 – **See Sheet C** (page 11-12)
- ☐ Partnership Award Categories 23-25 – **See Sheet D** (page 13)
- ☐ Leadership Award Categories 26-30 – **See Sheet E** (page 14)

Special Note: The below section is not required for the Leadership Award categories. Please complete a profile of the individual's achievements.

THIS SECTION IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT. PLEASE KEEP ANSWERS TO EACH QUESTION UNDER 200 WORDS. YOU MAY EXPAND ON THIS INFORMATION IN A SEPARATE PROFILE OF NO MORE THAN 3 PAGES, DOUBLE-SPACED.

1. Please provide a brief description of the project.

See attached write up for responses to questions 1-7

2. What is the goal or purpose of this project?

3. Who are the participants in this project? Who was involved in planning/implementation? Who is affected?

4. What has been the impact of the project? How effective has it been in furthering economic development in your community? Identify any tangible and/or intangible results and value added.

5. Is this project replicable or transferable? Can it be adapted for use in other communities? What lessons have been learned?

6. In what ways is this project innovative or creative?

7. Are there any other relevant details not covered above or specific to your category?

Please provide a brief description of the project.

The Advisory Board Council (ABC) is an innovative economic development program that operates within the Small Business Development Center at University of Central Florida and is funded by Orange County Government. The program is a next-level business support service which provides no-cost advisory boards to facilitate the growth of second stage companies in Orange County, Florida. The ABC acts as a matchmaker between established businesses and area professionals who volunteer their expertise as members of an advisory board. The program manager performs a needs analysis of each company and hand picks a team of volunteer advisors to work with the company on a board of advisors for a period of 18 months in order to strengthen and grow the business. Advisory board members come from all disciplines relevant to small business. At the end of 2011's first quarter, there were 30 client companies and 270 volunteer advisors participating. Each advisory board meets at least once per quarter and many advisors also put in significant hours assisting ABC clients with follow up work. After 18 months, a client is eligible to graduate from the program. The ABC continues to monitor each business to track the success rate of the program.

What is the goal or purpose of this project?

The ABC was developed by the SBDC at UCF in the post 9/11 era in response to an Orange County Request for Proposals for the county's economic stimulus package. As part of the county's efforts to combat the post 9/11 downturn and jump start the economy, the SBDC at UCF conceived and designed the ABC with the purpose of strengthening Central Florida's economy by assisting small businesses to achieve sustainable job and revenue growth and help companies reach the next level. The ABC strives to help business owners gain the knowledge required to expand their business and generate economic impact to the county. The ABC provides the dynamic talent and expertise of the volunteer advisors at no-cost in order to provide mentoring and help clients address challenges and create opportunities for their business. Since its inception, the ABC continues to attract larger, higher-performing companies with greater potential for growth although the minimum eligibility guidelines are as follows: Orange County licensed business, two years operating experience, annual revenue of \$500,000, and six employees. The ABC measures its success through program statistics and impact metrics including revenue increase, jobs created and retained, capital formation, and government contracts obtained.

Who are the participants in this project? Who was involved in planning/implementation? Who is affected?

The Advisory Board Council was developed by the SBDC at UCF and has formed a strong relationship with its funding partner, Orange County Government, over its eight year history. The Orlando Business Journal was a founding sponsor of the ABC and the Orlando Regional Chamber and East Orlando Chamber have helped to promote the program to their members. The ABC is fortunate to draw upon the resources of the SBDC at UCF and works in close collaboration with UCF's Business Incubation Program and the University's Tech Transfer Office. Other specialized programs offered at the SBDC such as Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Small Business Resource Network and CEO Xchange have developed synergy with the ABC program, fostering client and advisor referrals. The SBDC at UCF's

location in the National Entrepreneur Center has also garnered exposure for the ABC among the Center's service providers and clientele. Although the ABC is only open to Orange County companies, the program boasts a strong network of volunteers who come from the entire Central Florida region and serve as ambassadors for the program. Even after companies graduate from the ABC, many remain strong advocates and some business owners have given back by serving as advisors.

What has been the impact of the project? How effective has it been in furthering economic development in your community? Identify any tangible and/or intangible results and value added.

Cumulative Impact from Reporting Companies since Program Inception:

- \$64,248,244 increase in revenues
- 325 jobs created
- 1,479 jobs retained
- \$14,175,793 in capital formation
- \$54,141,174 in government contracts obtained

Program Statistics since Inception:

- 151 advisory boards formed
- 465 volunteer advisors
- 17,607 volunteer hours of service
- \$1,842,954 market value of in-kind hours contributed
- \$23,350 raised from local business sponsorship of program events

The significant impact of the ABC may be measured through a variety of metrics. The program has provided 151 advisory boards to Orange County businesses in a variety of sectors across the economy. Those businesses have shown a \$64.2 million revenue increase and created and retained more than 1,800 jobs. Clients pursuing public sector opportunities have obtained more than \$54 million in government contracts. Financing support has generated over \$14 million in capital formation. The value of in-kind hours donated since program inception, \$1.84 million, is more than double the \$800,000 that Orange County has put in to fund the program since its start. Immeasurable impact includes relationships forged through the program that result in new business partnerships and ventures as well as leadership development, succession planning and operational turnarounds.

Is this project replicable or transferable? Can it be adapted for use in other communities? What lessons have been learned?

The ABC concept is transferable to other settings and the program continues to receive requests for information from other SBDCs and communities interested in starting their own advisory program. The ABC is a well developed program that boasts an infrastructure and processes to facilitate its operation including documentation such as a white paper, operations manuals, client and advisor orientation packages and marketing materials. Once funding is secured, the program is ready to be replicated throughout the Florida SBDC Network. In 2006, the ABC provided training and assistance to start a

sister program located in neighboring Seminole County. Seminole State College runs the Seminole Advisory Board Council, a very similar yet smaller scale program.

The ABC program has found an ideal home in the SBDC at UCF since it serves companies at all stages of their development and has a continuous pipeline of companies reaching the advisory board stage. The ABC has benefitted from its management's efforts to monitor client feedback and evolve the program to better meet client needs. For example, a change was made to place an SBDC business counselor on each board to provide greater access to SBDC resources and facilitate the board process.

In what ways is this project innovative or creative?

The ABC is innovative through its leveraging of community resources. This has allowed a program with an annual budget of \$100,000 to serve up to 30 companies each year and yield a strong return on its investment. The typical ABC client company receives nearly \$20,000 of pro-bono consulting services through the volunteer advisors at absolutely no cost. Most of the companies who utilize this program would not be able to afford that type of investment in their business, were it not for the ABC. Since its start, the ABC has had 465 area professionals volunteer as advisors for the program and they have donated more than \$1.8 million of consulting services. Although advisors do not gain materially from volunteering, it is also a beneficial experience for them. The program provides networking and relationship-building opportunities and is an excellent professional development and community service experience. The ABC has created a win-win scenario for all involved. Further, by their nature advisory boards encourage creativity. Boards may engage in brainstorming and the program encourages business owners to be receptive to novel ideas. By assisting clients to see challenges from new perspectives, creative solutions to issues facing a business are often devised.

Are there any other relevant details not covered above or specific to your category?

The Advisory Board Council is an award-winning program. In 2009 the Florida SBDC Network named the ABC as Florida Innovative Program and Best Practice Award winner. In 2004 the IEDC recognized the Small Business Development Center, University of Central Florida with a Program Award for Small Business Development Center Use of Volunteer Advisory Boards. Many of the ABC's client companies and volunteer advisors have received accolades. Two ABC clients have been named SBA Business Person of the Year for the state of Florida (2004 & 2007) and in 2010 four clients were named to the *Inc.* 500/5000 Lists of Fastest Growing Companies in America (see appendix). The ABC program manager has also won accolades and last year Jill Kaufman was recognized by the National Association of Small Business Development Centers as State Star in recognition of her guidance of the ABC, along with her outstanding leadership and contributions in innovative program development, creative special projects, enhanced center performance and client impact. Please visit the website for press releases, success stories and program details at www.advisoryboardcouncil.com.

The idea of economic gardening was first pursued as an economic development strategy in 1989 in Littleton, Colorado. In 2000, a similar idea was planted in Orange County, Florida, when a consultant engaged to develop a Metro Orlando Technology Strategy recommended that the county dedicate as many economic development resources to entrepreneurship as to business recruitment. Since then the county has devoted support to innovative economic development programs which foster local entrepreneurs and grow small businesses rather than solely pursue a strategy based on attracting new businesses from outside the area. This strategy has much potential for success because research shows small businesses create most of the new jobs in the U.S. and in Orange County, in particular, 95% of employers have less than 25 employees. Further, since fewer large companies are choosing to move, communities interested in building economic value must provide resources to enable existing small businesses to reach the next level of growth.

It was in consideration of these factors that Orange County began funding the Advisory Board Council (ABC) in 2003. Conceived and designed by the Small Business Development Center at the University of Central Florida, the Advisory Board Council provides no-cost advisory boards comprised of area professionals for established small businesses in order to facilitate their growth. In order to combat the downturn experienced post 9/11 Orange County Government issued a request for proposals for its Economic Stimulus Package 2.0. In response, the SBDC at UCF implemented surveys and discussions with existing business owners to determine the need for “next-level” business advisory services. These more mature companies, which also tend to offer the greatest opportunity for economic development, suggested that the SBDC make advisory boards available as part of their no-cost business assistance services. The “Advisory Board Council” was therefore established to expand the resources offered by the SBDC at UCF to existing business owners so that they could maximize their potential for company growth. Founded with the purpose of strengthening Central Florida’s economy, the program was developed to facilitate sustainable revenue and job growth to help small companies reach the next level. Orange County has funded the \$100,000 ABC operating budget for eight years and maintains a solid partnership with the SBDC as a cornerstone of their economic development initiatives.

Advisory boards are powerful management tools that provide expert advice to help a business owner make strategic decisions in order to accelerate their company’s growth. Boards comprised of business experts in areas such as finance, law, marketing, business development and operations assist firms to address challenges, strengthen their competitive advantage and make the most of market

opportunities. They also provide mentoring and leadership development to guide the entrepreneur in improving his or her management skills. The ABC targets second stage companies and is designed to offer an intensive period of time for the business owner to focus on key strategic issues in order to grow their company and improve business performance. This type of strategic planning can bring new perspectives to a wide range of complex issues and potentials that management may not otherwise identify. Although most businesses can benefit from an advisory board, the process of assessing needs and recruiting and compensating appropriate board members is often too much for a small company to handle. However, with the assistance of the ABC, 151 advisory boards have been formed to enable Orange County small businesses to access this top-notch advice.

Orange County and metro Orlando are hotbeds of entrepreneurial activity and the Advisory Board Council program has found an extremely cost effective model to tap into community resources and expertise for the benefit of small businesses. The program's \$100,000 annual budget is modest compared to the economic impact achieved by its participating companies: \$64.2 million sales increase, 1,804 jobs created and retained, \$14.1 million in capital formation and \$54.1 million in government contracts obtained. The program's cost to create/retain one job is \$443 (\$800,000 cumulative budget/1,804 jobs). Not only has the program yielded results in terms of economic impact, the ABC has garnered the support of the Central Florida business community to build a network of more than 270 professionals that are devoted to the success of small business and currently serve as ABC volunteer advisors. These professionals have agreed to donate their time and expertise for the benefit of the small business community. The ABC hosts popular events each year including Information Sessions and Receptions for Small Business Owners which provide forums to share success stories, network, recruit new clients and volunteers, and help the program gain exposure in the community. Sponsors are recruited for Receptions and the program has raised \$23,350 in such support over the years, a testament to the partnerships and corporate support the ABC has developed throughout the local business community. The support and collaboration of the Florida SBDC Network, UCF College of Business, National Entrepreneur Center, local chambers and Orange County Government have also been instrumental to the program's success.

Since its founding in 2003, the ABC has formed 151 advisory boards for client companies from a broad range of industry sectors including: retail, wholesale, manufacturing, service businesses and high tech firms. This service is completely free of charge to ABC client companies. The typical ABC client receives \$20,000 of pro-bono business consulting during their 18 month tenure in the program but

some companies receive far more. The market value of the advisors' volunteer or in-kind hours is based on each advisor's customary rate for paid consulting. In 2010 alone, 3,276 hours were donated with a reported market value of \$251,969.

The ABC has encountered several challenges since its inception but has demonstrated its ability to adapt and respond quickly to these unforeseen events. When the program began in 2003, the SBDC at UCF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Orlando Business Journal (OBJ) for their marketing support of the program. For the first year, the OBJ provided weekly half-page, four-color advertisements in their newspaper to publicize the program, recognize the sponsors and share information and highlights about the ABC. The annual cost of the ads was valued at \$77,000. However, the agreement was not renewed the second year. This subsequent lack of marketing resources posed a significant challenge to the ABC as no funds were available to replace the OBJ advertising. Therefore, a decision was made to instead focus on public relations, networking and outreach efforts to market the program. The program manager attended numerous networking events and spoke at various business functions to spread the word about the ABC and also put renewed emphasis on quarterly ABC networking receptions, in order to promote the program. Over time, name recognition and momentum for the ABC spread through the community until today there exists a strong base of supporters who act as ambassadors for the program and have helped the ABC overcome its lack of marketing dollars. Moreover, after the partnership with the OBJ was discontinued, the OBJ decided to start its own advisory board program, the Executive Advisory Board Exchange (EABX), which actually competed with the ABC, although it sought a somewhat higher revenue clientele. However, the EABX was not successful and the OBJ ended the program in 2009.

The ABC has worked diligently to adapt to the turbulent economic changes that have occurred over the past few years and offer creative solutions to businesses. The ABC allowed certain impacted companies to extend their term in the program and others were offered the opportunity to have a board for a second full term. This extra support has aided business retention and growth in Orange County. Despite continued challenges, the Advisory Board Council remains committed to fostering entrepreneurship and the growth of small businesses while making an important contribution to the economic development of the Central Florida region.

**Advisory Board Council
Program Statistics from Inception through March 2011**

The Advisory Board Council Client	
Number of Boards	
Total	151
Revenue Increase for Reporting Companies	
Total	\$64,248,244
Jobs	
Jobs Created	325
Jobs Retained	1,479
Capital Formation	
Total	\$14,175,793
Contracts Awarded	
Total	\$54,141,174

The Advisory Board Council Volunteer	
Advisors	
Total	465
Volunteer Service	
Hours Contributed	17,607
Market Value	\$1,842,954

Sponsor Contributions	
Total	\$23,350



Advisory Board Council Awards & Recognition

- Florida Innovative Program and Best Practice Award from the Florida Small Business Development Center Network (2009)
- ABC companies named to the *Inc.* 500 List of Fastest Growing Companies in America
 - Limitless International (2010)
 - Apex Environmental Engineering & Compliance (2006)
- ABC companies named to the *Inc.* 5000 List of Fastest Growing Companies in America
 - Hooah LLC (2010)
 - Common Sense Office Furniture (2010)
 - American Home Companions (2008, 2009 & 2010)
 - Apex Environmental Engineering & Compliance (2007 & 2008)
- ABC client named to the Top 500 Emerging Businesses in the U.S. by DiversityBusiness.com
 - Jorge Suria, president of Hooah, LLC (2009)
- Advisory Board Council client company, Dog Day Afternoon, featured in *Wall Street Journal* article on advisory boards (10/20/2009)
- Graduated ABC client named one of the Golden 100 Ultimate CEO's in Central Florida by the *Orlando Business Journal*
 - Parks Wilson, president of Wilson & Company, Inc (2008)
- ABC clients awarded Florida SBA Small Business Person of the Year
 - Rod Vargas of Apex Environmental Engineering & Compliance (2007)
 - Sharad Mehta of Screenworks USA (2004)
- Program of the Year from the International Economic Development Council (2004)
- ABC Program Manager, Jill Kaufman, recognized by National Association of Small Business Development Centers as State Star (2010)
- ABC Program Manager, Jill Kaufman, named Florida Star of the Year by the Florida Small Business Development Center Network (2010)
- ABC Advisor named SBA Financial Services Champion of the Year for the Southeast Region
 - C. Russell Slappey of Nperspective (2008)
- ABC Advisors named Volunteer of the Year by the Florida Small Business Development Center Network
 - Florida Volunteer of the Year
 - Gary Slavin, independent consultant (2010)
 - Lee Evans, partner, Evans PR Group (2009)
 - Sue Tatum, owner of Vinca Marketing (2006)
 - Clay Worden, partner of Tedder, James, Worden & Associates (2004)
 - Regional Volunteer of the Year
 - Mario Fidanzi, CEO of Med Team Staffing (2011)
 - Toni Springer, owner of Toni Springer, CPA, PA (2008)
 - Nancy Krug, owner of Practical Leadership Strategies (2007)



Advisory Board Council



Leak Doctor, a pioneer in water leak detection, refocused their core strategy with the help of their advisors. Pictured here with their volunteer advisors and ABC Program Manager.



Limitless International, a global transportation company, increased their revenues more than 500% while working with the Advisory Board Council. Pictured here with their volunteer advisors and ABC Program Manager.



Way to Go Applause Kudos Salute **Bravo** Yeah Hats Off Bring Down the House Good Going **Congratulations** Hurray

2010 **Inc. 500** || **5000** Four SBDC at UCF Advisory Board Council clients make prestigious 2010 Inc. 500/5000 list of fastest growing private companies. The list, representing the top-tier businesses in the United States, measures revenue growth from 2006 to 2009.



www.limitlessintl.com

LimitLess International, Inc. is a global transportation company based in Orlando, FL.

Ranked #322
918% 3-year growth

"The Advisory Board Council process helped me become a better leader and manage my company more effectively. The board kept me accountable and focused which was instrumental in helping LimitLess achieve record growth." **Cheryl Stockstad, President**



www.hooah.cc

Hooah is a minority-owned interactive communications firm located in Winter Park, FL.

Ranked #582
521% 3-year growth

"The board has helped us at a strategic level to map out our growth strategies and really hone in on what we do and who we are. There is a direct correlation between the board's involvement and our growth." **Jorge Suria, President**



www.common senseof.com

Common Sense Office Furniture, based in Orlando, FL, is a provider of new and used brand name office furnishings.

Ranked #3,735
41% 3-year growth

"The Advisory Board Council helped me pull my head out of the sand, take a look around and find a path that would lead to future growth. The board members all had backgrounds directly related to the operations and sales parts of my business and they understood each component. I never could have afforded this kind of advice without the SBDC." **Craig Caswell, President**



www.ahccares.com

American Home Companions is Florida's largest live-in companion care agency and is located in Orlando, FL.

Ranked #4,551
16% 3-year growth

"I would have given up on the company had it not been for my board. The board was great for the honest feedback and making those hard decisions. They helped me close poor performing districts and better focus the firm's resources on those areas that had the best potential for growth." **Jim Mark, President**



Founded in 2003, the SBDC at UCF's Advisory Board Council is an economic development program funded by Orange County Government. The Advisory Board Council aims to facilitate business growth through the use of advisory boards for established Orange County companies. The program acts as a matchmaker between established businesses and professionals who volunteer their expertise as members of a 'custom-fit' advisory board.

Providing Expert Advice to Help Grow Your Business
www.advisoryboardcouncil.com



Are you ready to say HOOAH?

Hooah, LLC
www.hooah.cc

Just 18 months after becoming a client of the Advisory Board Council, this interactive communications company achieves 265% revenue growth.

Even while developing his creative talents in art school, Jorge Suria knew he wanted to be an entrepreneur. His dream of opening his own agency came to fruition in 2003 when he established Hooah LLC. An expression of high morale, strength and confidence popular in the military, Suria thought Hooah would be an ideal name for his firm which provides marketing, IT and video production services to clients such as the U.S. Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserves.

Hooah has been utilizing the services of the SBDC at UCF's Procurement and Technical Assistance Center since 2007. In 2008, after attending an SBDC Advisory Board Council (ABC) Reception for Small Business Owners, Suria decided to apply to the program. "We wanted to have an advisory board because we saw potential for growth and the challenges it would bring and we wanted to get objective advice from people who didn't have any personal interest in the company," remarked Suria.



"There is a direct correlation between the board's involvement and our growth."

When Hooah applied to the ABC there was some discussion on the firm's readiness for the program as they barely met some of the eligibility guidelines. However, the company was working hard to reach their potential and was certified as a Minority Business Enterprise and had just been granted Small Disadvantaged Business 8(a) status by the U.S. SBA. Jill Kaufman, ABC program manager, decided to accept Hooah as a client and began work on their board information. According to Suria, "one of the most valuable aspects of working with the Advisory Board Council is the fact that they specifically tailored Hooah's board to our company's needs." He continued, "I can't imagine putting together a board without the SBDC's help."

Some of the projects Hooah sought help with from their board include: contract negotiations and contract review; putting proper accounting systems in place; determining cost and price structures; and mapping out their business development strategy. According to Hooah's vice president, Tanya Zeiher, "the board has helped us at a strategic level to map out our growth strategies and really hone in on what we do and who we are. They helped us define our strengths and clarify the areas of service we should focus on." Some of the board's best advice surrounded Hooah's business development plan. Suria commented, "the board helped us create a very effective business development strategy which enabled us to branch into and win work in the utilities sector, a new industry segment for us."

Today, Hooah is one of the fastest growing companies in the entire ABC program. "There is a direct correlation between the board's involvement and our growth," remarked Zeiher. Revenues have jumped 265% to \$2 million and in 2010 the firm expects to double its sales again. Hooah has also tripled its number of employees and hired 10 new staff members. The firm targets federal and local government work and also serves large private sector organizations. In August 2009, Hooah opened a branch office in Arlington, Virginia to better serve their growing clientele in Washington, D.C.

No Limits.

Limitless International, Inc.

www.limitlessinc.com

For this global transportation company, the SBDC at UCF has been the ticket to success.

Limitless is not only the name of Cheryl Stockstad's company, it is how she sees her opportunities in business. Stockstad, a licensed U.S. Customs broker and freight forwarder with over 25 years of experience in global trade, founded Limitless International, Inc. in 2002 as one of the very few 100% woman-owned freight forwarding businesses in the United States.

Although a vision for her company was in place, Stockstad faced some setbacks during the early stages of business. Knowing that she needed to seek quality business advice, Stockstad reached out

to the SBDC at UCF. The SBDC at UCF has been a key partner to Stockstad in the growth of her business. Starting in 2003, Stockstad has utilized almost all of the services the SBDC at UCF has to offer including one-on-one business counseling, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), government contracting training and, most recently, the Small Business Institute®.

However, her longest term commitment with the SBDC at UCF has been her participation in the Advisory Board Council (ABC). Limitless first joined the ABC program in 2006 and is now completing her second term. According to Stockstad, Limitless' board, comprised of experts in government procurement, marketing, strategic planning, finance and law, has been a key element in the astonishing growth of her firm and in her own personal development as a business woman. "The board has helped me become a better leader and manage my company more

effectively," explained Stockstad. "I have been fortunate to have a group of professionals who have been so dedicated to the success of my company."

Stockstad also benefited from her board's impressive level of service. Limitless' board members contributed 289 in-kind hours of service in support of the firm. With a reported market value of more than \$52k in pro-bono consulting, this was a record for any Advisory Board Council client. "Meeting with my board every quarter keeps

me accountable," commented Stockstad. "The process of reviewing what's been done and how decisions I've made have affected the company, has been extremely beneficial."

Today, Limitless is well-poised for growth. The firm is certified by the Federal government as a Small Disadvantaged Business, a Woman Business Enterprise, an 8(a) corporation, and is also a registered central contractor with the U.S. Department of Defense. From 2007 to 2008, Limitless' revenues jumped more than 500% to \$3.3 million. In 2008, Limitless was awarded the opportunity to become a subcontractor to one of the largest Department of Defense transportation contracts in history, a \$4.6 billion contract to move cargo between the 67 U.S. military bases. In early 2009, Limitless expanded to open a second branch in a Hubzone in Norfolk, Virginia.



"The board has helped me become a better leader and manage my company more effectively."



Real-Time Success.

Praxis Software, Inc.

www.praxsoft.com

With assistance from the Advisory Board Council, PraxSoft achieved a 540% increase in revenues.

As a university professor and an engineer, the husband and wife team of Amin Ismail, Ph.D. and Rhonda Copley had a lot going for them when they founded Praxis Software, Inc. (PraxSoft) as a small engineering consulting firm. However, expertise in business was not among their strong points. It was during a 2005 meeting with a U.S. SBA Business Opportunity Specialist that Copley explained her firm's desire for business advice, particularly with market expansion and navigating the intricacies of selling to the government. "We needed to ensure that strategic decisions for our business and resource allocation were appropriate and wanted expert advice from experienced business professionals who had worked with successful entrepreneurial firms," said Copley. The U.S. SBA recommended the



SBDC at UCF's Advisory Board Council as a way to access the needed expertise.

PraxSoft was accepted into the program and a board of advisors was hand-picked comprised of experts in the fields of finance, government contracting, law, marketing, and strategic planning. The board kicked off their first meeting in early 2006. "We have a strong technical background," says Ismail, "but having an advisory board has helped us from a business and financial point of view."

"The board members have given so unselfishly of their time and have been able to share so much of their experience with us, that it's been invaluable," reports Copley. In fact, during their two terms in the program, PraxSoft's volunteer advisors donated more than 300 in-kind hours of service to the firm, representing a market value of \$36,623 pro-bono consulting services. Copley worked with her board's CFO to develop models for product pricing, cost of goods sold and margin analysis. Another board member assisted

PraxSoft with government contracting and how to take full advantage of their 8(a) certification. "We didn't know how to operate in the Federal/Military environment and he helped guide us," comments Copley.

When Copley and Ismail moved the business from Ohio to Central Florida in 2004, they began development on a group of products to collect real-time data from remote wireless sensor devices and deliver it via multiple communication methods. Their unique combination of RFID and wireless sensor node technology is utilized in the firm's three main products: WeatherActive™,

"Not only did the advisory board provide guidance on financial issues and increasing sales, they mentored us on putting the proper processes into place to sustain that growth."

SensorActive™ and AssetActive™. Today, PraxSoft has more than 1,000 customers in commercial and government markets as a developer of cutting-edge products that integrate hardware and software in order to improve asset management in wastewater/storm water, public safety and other government operations. Recently, the firm won a contract through the Florida Department of Forestry to use their RFID and wireless sensor node technology to track Wildfire Suppression Resources.

All of the expert assistance PraxSoft received from the SBDC at UCF has paid off for the company. Since becoming a client of the Advisory Board Council, PraxSoft has achieved a 540% increase in revenues, doubled their number of employees and quadrupled their office space.



www.sbdcorlando.com

Home sweet home.

American Home Companions, Inc.

www.theliveinexperts.com

Orlando-based company becomes a leader in the elder care industry.

When Jim Mark took over the leadership of American Home Companions, Inc. (AHC) from his father-in-law in early 2004, it was a small-scale, family-owned business struggling to compete in the home care market. And, although Jim was an accomplished businessman with nearly 20 years of experience, he had little understanding of the home care industry.



Knowing he needed expert advice to turn the company around, Jim reached out to the Small Business Development Center at UCF and applied to the Advisory Board Council program. AHC was accepted to the program and began meeting with a custom-fit advisory board in March 2004. Jim credits much of the company's success to the assistance he received as an Advisory Board client. "I would have given up on the company had it not been for my board. The transitional problems were overwhelming. The board helped me work with my father-in-law to effect a successful transition."

Jim's board guided him through the company acquisition and business transition issues, as well as assisted with the development of a much needed infrastructure. AHC graduated from the program in 2005 and applied for a second board to

"I would have given up on the company had it not been for my board."

focus on sales and marketing. According to Jim, "The second board was great for the honest feedback and making those hard decisions. They helped me close poor performing districts and better focus the firm's resources on those areas that had the best potential for growth."

Within three years, Jim turned the company around to achieve \$4.5 million in sales and the position of market leader for the live-in home care industry segment in Florida. Known as the "live-in experts," AHC offers an alternative to assisted living facilities by providing in-home elder care services for aging and disabled persons. The company works with medical professionals and home health care nursing agencies to allow elderly individuals to remain living in their own home. Recently, AHC was recognized for growth and determination by earning a spot on the 2008 Inc. 5000 list of the fastest growing private companies in America.



The sky's the limit.

Interiors in Flight, Inc.
www.interiorsinflight.com

An aircraft refurbishing company enrolls with the Advisory Board Council and doubles their revenues.

"We were literally two guys in a garage when we started our company," remarked Larry Heilbron on the humble start to the company he and his partner, Terry Turner, founded a few months after 9/11. In 2001, with an initial investment of \$1,000 each, Heilbron and Turner formed Interiors in Flight, Inc., a custom manufacturing company specializing in aircraft interior refurbishment.



As with many new companies, the business challenges grew quickly. "Like I always said, we know how to do airplanes, but we didn't know how to run a business," said Heilbron. The partners turned to the SBDC at UCF's Advisory Board Council program for guidance. In early 2006, the partners were accepted into the program and a board comprised of sales and marketing, finance, strategy, operations and management experts were pulled together.

When the company started the Advisory Board Council program, they had revenues of \$500k and seven full-time employees working in a 4,000 sq. ft. facility. Benefitting from being receptive to the advice and input from their board, the company experienced a dramatic growth spurt and, by the close of 2007, their revenues rose to nearly \$1 million. Moreover, the company moved into a 6,500 sq. ft. facility and increased their staff to 17 full-time employees to accommodate the increased work volume.

"We're more involved in planning the business now. The board has helped us in a lot of ways to make better decisions for the

Through participation in the Advisory Board Council, changes in the company ran deeper than the numbers. "How we look at the business is different now," said Heilbron. "Before we were always putting out fires. Now we prevent them so they don't even start." Since going through the program

Heilbron and Turner see the business differently. "We've definitely matured as business owners," commented Turner. "We have a new confidence now. Instead of looking at the business as just a paycheck, it's where our future is."

As an FAA approved repair station, Interiors in Flight offers refurbishment and repairs for executive and corporate aircraft. The firm's high-quality refurbishment covers the cabin, cockpit, lavatories, galleys and even the cargo holds. Interiors in Flight customers include many of the major aircraft manufacturers in the business including Cessna, B/E Aerospace and Gulfstream.

