Ontario’s Business Retention + Expansion Program

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
September 25, 2016
13 million people in Ontario

20% of the population is considered as rural

444 municipalities &

95% have a population less than 50,000
Ontario’s BR+E Model

- A community-based approach to business retention and expansion
- Trained volunteers to conduct confidential interviews
- Community’s are responsible for determining priorities and developing their action plan.
Program Components

- Provincial Staff Advisors
- Coordinator’s Manual
- Business Surveys
- Executive Pulse System
- Coordinator Training
- Provincial BR+E Survey Results
- Rural Economic Development Program*
2013 Review Findings

Successes to Build on:
- Acting on Results
- Monitoring outcomes of their action plans
- Training
- Provincial Staff support

Challenges to Address:
- Survey
- Database system
- Data Analysis & Reporting
Updated Four Stage Process

1. Stage I - Preparation
2. Stage II - Collect and Analyze
3. Stage III - Develop Goals and Action Plans
4. Stage IV - Implement and Monitor
New Coordinator Manual

Step-by-step process with a greater emphasis on:

• Project design
• Performance measures
• Data analysis
• Priority setting
BR+E Survey Review

Number of questions in the retention survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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Question review principles:

- Assist with strategic planning
- Identify specific business growth or retention opportunities
- Provide general business information
Sector Surveys

- Tourism
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Downtown Revitalization / Retail
- Local Food
- Natural Resources
Provincial Survey Results 2009 - 2014

84% Locally owned & operated with one location

No. of employees at this location:
- 1-4: 46%
- 5-9: 22%
- 10-19: 14%
- 20-29: 6%
- 30-49: 5%
- 50-99: 4%
- 100+: 4%

Primary Market for Business:
- Local: 35%
- Regional: 43%
- National: 11%
- International: 12%
Success Story: Northumberland

- Regional Local Food BR+E project undertaken in 2012
- Identified a need for value added food processing
- 2014-15 creation of a 15,000 sq. ft. facility. $1.1M investment
Success Story: Wellington

- In 2012 Wellington County undertook its first economic development strategy. One of the objectives of that strategy was a BR+E program focused on the County’s key sectors.
- Interviewed 270 businesses across the 7 townships in 4 key sectors:
  - Agriculture
  - Manufacturing
  - Creative Economy
  - Health Care
- Final report and action plan released April 2014
- $175,000 Budget commitment to implement
Attributes of Successful Projects

- Have commitment, buy-in and engagement from stakeholders
- Well trained volunteers
- Demonstrate the importance of local businesses
- Accurately assess the needs of local business community
- Build networks in the community/region
- Develop and implement actions plans
Thank You

For More Information, visit

http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/bre/index.html

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