

SMALL BUSINESS SEMINARS

Promoting Economic Development through a Community of Support for Small Business

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Introduction: Importance of Small Business

Small businesses are a vital part of any community, whether in a rural or urban setting. In fact, 94 percent of employers in Tennessee have less than 50 employees (and 70 percent have less than 10).¹ In addition to these small business employers, Tennessee is home to more than 870,000 self-employed individuals (representing 23 percent of all jobs, including more than 71,000 farmers).² Given these facts, it is no surprise that communities across Tennessee have people who are, have been or want to be engaged in owning/operating a small

business. However, despite the broad array of available resources, these current or potential business owners are not always able to find what or who they need to help them be successful.

A first step that a community can take to improve its small business sector is to offer small business seminars. The goal of these seminars should be to give individuals the tools and knowledge needed to successfully start up or expand a small business in the community.

Why Conduct Small Business Seminars?

The reasons to host a small business seminar series will vary by community and by business owner. There is definitely no “one-size-fits-all” model/structure. Therefore, tailoring the series to local needs is best. Some examples of why a seminar series may make sense for a community include:

- Sector-specific needs (e.g., agriculture, retail, arts/crafts, home-based business, etc.)
- Chamber of Commerce membership cultivation
- Youth entrepreneurship
- Creating ‘buy-in’ and a foundation for entrepreneur-led economic development

In addition, such efforts are a good way to complement regional offerings (e.g., Small Business Development Centers, etc.) by tailoring the training to meet specific local needs. These seminars can also serve as an excellent way to foster collaboration among technical service providers. This is the critical first step towards building a robust, community-level entrepreneurial system that is easily navigable for aspiring and current small business owners. Lastly, since these seminars are targeted at small business owners and entrepreneurs, a successful series can lead to the development of entrepreneurship clubs or other forums through which people can network with one another during the seminars and afterwards as ‘alumni’.³

Curricula and Topic Design

Extension has a long history working with small businesses from many different sectors using the “seminar series” or “small business college” model. Experience has shown that the following are the most sought-after topics of discussion for people interested in starting their own small business. This fact sheet is meant to be a guide to help set up a small business seminar. As with all programming, a community (or “needs”) assessment should determine if these topics fit the needs of a community or if additional topics should be addressed. The assessment should take a community-based approach and focus on the community’s assets.⁴

Community Assessment for Small Businesses

Every potential small business owner should understand the situation and dynamics of his or her market and location. This section will cover basic community demographics, offer general (and/or sector-specific) community economic and trade area analysis. It is important that individuals study their market carefully and consider the areas in which their competitors are already firmly situated. Often, small business owners must take into account specific information about their location (e.g., zoning, parking, etc.), location of competitors and traffic flow of surrounding areas. It is also necessary to characterize or analyze the economic situation of the community in which they plan to open their business.

Contacts for this area include Extension specialists, local economic development council/agency, Chamber of Commerce, local tourism director, Small Business Administration (SBA) <http://www.sba.gov/> representatives, Tennessee Small Business Development Centers (TNSBDC) <http://www.tsbdc.org/>, Center for Profitable Agriculture (CfPA) <http://cpa.utk.edu/>, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) <http://www.tva.gov/> and Labor and Workforce Development (LWFD) <http://www.tn.gov/labor-wfd/>.

Business Plan

In the overwhelming majority of cases, business plans play an important part in the success and future of a small business. Each small business owner should have a business plan in place **before** final considerations are made to open the business. The importance of a comprehensive, thoughtful business plan cannot be overemphasized. Some of the topics that should be considered include: outside funding; credit from suppliers; management of the operation; finances, promotion and marketing of the business; and realizing the owner’s goals and objectives – including the life-cycle of the business. Discussion includes starting a business, the importance of a business plan and business plan preparation. Many potential and even current small business owners are intimidated by the very thought of outlining their business’ operations on paper. This session should have a primary goal of alleviating those fears and convincing the participants that a business plan is an exercise in thinking, not an exercise in writing.

Contacts for this area include Extension specialists, TNSBDC personnel and local lending institutions. Representatives from the SCORE Association – a not-for-profit organization dedicated to education and counseling of entrepreneurs, growing, solving challenges to their business or forming new businesses, in the small business community – is another option.



Marketing

The most important consideration that a small business owner must face is “Will customers buy the product or service that I am able or willing to provide?” Many owners/operators think their marketing effort should consist solely of placing flyers under car windshields at the local shopping center. However, marketing is much more than this type of advertising.

Marketing is taking the time to figure out who your customers are and what you can do to convince those people to purchase your product. Developing a marketing plan or strategy also enables the small business owner/operator to identify the most effective means to reach these customers and establish communication with them. The bottom line of marketing is to understand the customers’ needs and develop a plan that embraces those needs. Is it a product, good or service that is marketable, or just something that seems like a great idea? Community assessment plays a major role on the front end. However, careful planning, use of appropriate/effective technology and execution of a robust strategy will determine success.

Extension specialists, the CfPA, the Chamber of Commerce, local public relations/advertising agencies and local tourism councils are excellent sources to provide advertising, promotion and marketing assistance.

Using a Web-based Social Network

In today’s world of “Likes” and “Tweets,” using a computer means much more than maintaining financial records or monitoring a production process. Small business owners may need to be on top of the latest social media trends, such as Facebook™, Twitter™ and YouTube™ to be successful and in touch with younger, as well as more established audiences; all are part of an overall marketing strategy. Tweeting has become a very inexpensive way for small business owners to advertise the latest promotions within the store. Setting up a Facebook page can offer a free way to get the name of the small business into the consciousness of a more modern, more technology-driven society. One “Like” can lead to a whole string of “Fans” and this can lead to an expanded customer base. Website development is another important basic to the success of a small business. In today’s web-savvy world, an impressive, up-to-date website can make or break sales. In this section, it is important to focus on website development and maintenance, specialized computer uses and the use of social media.

Contacts for this area can be Extension personnel, local website developers, public relations/communications experts and local marketing specialists.

Accounting for Non-Accountants

Accounting is one of the most essential aspects of starting and operating a small business. It is easy to get caught up in the exciting startup tasks of choosing a business name or picking out equipment, yet without a solid understanding of the numbers, the business will not survive. Some former business owners ignored the financial side of business only to discover too late they were operating at a loss, not a profit.

For this section, it is advisable to recruit a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or TNSBDC representative to present information on computerized record-keeping systems, budgeting, balance sheets and profit-and-loss statements. In addition, the SBA has created very professional balance sheets and profit-and-loss statement templates that can be used as guides for small business owners to access when performing accounting basics. UT Extension’s area farm management specialists are also well equipped to offer training in this area, especially for those businesses in the agricultural sector.

Taxes

New and long-time small business owners need to know their local, state and federal tax responsibilities. It is important to the success of the business that owners pay only their fair share, but that this fair share is paid. Topics include business tax, sales tax, use tax, local option tax rate, registration, tax classification and licensing.

Contacts for this section include Extension specialists; local tax preparers; local tax assessor's office; local CPAs; TN Department of Revenue, IRS and TNSBDC representatives.

Financing a Business

Finding and securing financing for startup and beginning operational expenses is just one aspect of overall financial management for small business owners, but it is critical to their ultimate success. Small business owners should investigate a number of options before they make their final decision by listing the pros and cons of each type of financing. Taking time to make the best long-term decisions will contribute to the sustainability and success of the business. Topics for this section can include sources of capital, preparation of a loan application and available assistance.

Contacts for this area include local lending institutions, representatives from Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD), SBA, TNSBDC, SCORE and the local Chamber of Commerce.



Personnel Management

As we have heard, a business is only as good as the people in it. A small business owner must take the time to locate and hire the right employees. Productive employees are a vital key to a small business's success. Detailed and well-structured training is vital to establish and maintain employee productivity and satisfaction.

Contacts for this section, such as a human resource manager, local private business owner or Extension personnel can speak about hiring, training and retaining employees; additional costs associated

with employees; and how to properly hire and fire employees. A local insurance agent can also be contacted to speak about insurance policies and coordinating benefits for the small business owner's employees.

Role of the Facilitator

As with many "resource development" Extension activities, the role of the Extension agent starts with facilitation and logistics, but may also include content delivery and follow-up. The following are some 'best practices' that have surfaced over the years.

Program Name

- ❑ There are a variety of ways to name this program in different areas. For example, Small Business Seminar (single class), Small Business Series (periodic offerings) and Small Business College (set time frame).

Secure a Location

- ❑ Choose a location with good accessibility and high-speed Internet capabilities. It is also helpful if the location is conducive to breaking the participants into small groups for specific exercises.



Set time frame

- ☐ Select a time frame that best fits the needs of the participants.
- ☐ This program may be set up in a variety of ways, such as one meeting per week, multiple nights/days weekly, or an all-day or weekend workshop.
- ☐ Night meetings tend to work better with this audience, since potential participants are usually operating their businesses during daytime hours.
- ☐ Allow enough time for presentations and questions following the presentation. It is typically recommended that a total of two hours be allotted per section.

Confirm presenters

- ☐ Bring in the 'best' and try to use local or regional presenters. These are the people who will be interfacing with the participants afterward.
- ☐ Contact and confirm presenters by phone or email to see if they have any special technical needs for their presentation.

Obtain sponsorship

- ☐ Seek sponsorship to cover travel, supplies, additional materials, copying, meals and other expenses from local cooperatives (including public utilities), private industries, lending institutions, government grants, Chambers of Commerce and local economic development funds.
- ☐ Place sponsors' logos on brochures, printed materials, websites and other marketing materials.
- ☐ Keep in mind that 'sponsorship' comes in many forms, including volunteer time. Make certain that all sponsors, including mentors and volunteers, are recognized and thanked in a meaningful way.

Market or publicize program

- ☐ The program can be marketed on local television or radio stations, in the local newspaper business section or Extension column, the county Extension website, social media, email blasts and/or flyers displayed at area public gathering locations.
- ☐ Collaborate with partners/sponsors (e.g., local Chamber of Commerce, economic development council, small business development center, etc.) to publicize the program at their meetings, on their websites or in their email blasts.

Create a participant notebook

- ☐ Be sure to provide a meeting schedule, class syllabus, notepad, pen and other meeting materials participants may need.
- ☐ Include dividers for each class section's handout materials.
- ☐ Include contact information for all participants, presenters, partners and sponsors (if permission to share this information is given). Also, include contact information for agencies, departments, institutions and associations that could play a role in participants successfully starting their own business.

Charge for the program

- ☐ Charge a nominal fee to attend the program. Prices may vary depending on the size of class, location and overall cost after sponsorships.
- ☐ Do not set the fee too low so participants feel they are not going to be getting high-quality information. Just as important, do not charge too high a price so participants are deterred by the cost of the program.
- ☐ Offer reduced rates for business partners who wish to share materials.

Set class size limit

- ☐ Setting a participant limit size sends a message to participants that they need to sign up early to guarantee their seat for the program.
- ☐ Smaller class sizes can promote greater learning and discussion.
- ☐ Limited class size may also promote need for future programs.

Establish an attendance policy

- ❑ Set up an attendance policy for participants. The number of classes will determine how many sessions participants must attend. As most participants may have outside employment and scheduling conflicts due to family or work, having the participants attend a minimum of 80 percent of the seminars seems to work. Some have found success reimbursing the fee to those with perfect attendance.
- ❑ Establish the attendance policy in writing on the participant application/registration. It is often helpful to have participants read and sign a separate “attendance contract” so that the policy is understood.
- ❑ Place a copy of the policy in the syllabus and announce it at the first meeting.
- ❑ Remain faithful to the policy.

Prepare/plan/organize and host a graduation ceremony

- ❑ Give special recognition to those with perfect attendance by recognizing those individuals who have adhered to the attendance policy.
- ❑ Give a certificate of completion for participants to display in their small business. They may also want to place a copy in their business plan.
- ❑ The graduation ceremony should be positive and motivational.
- ❑ The ceremony should strive to celebrate achievement, yet remain simple.
- ❑ It is meaningful to the participants if an entity that has a vested interest in local economic development (such as a bank or Chamber of Commerce) sponsors a meal and a representative from that entity talks about the importance of small businesses to the community.

How to market the event to entrepreneurs / potential entrepreneurs

Marketing will vary depending on the size of community the program is offered in and the amount of funds available. Newspaper advertisements, radio spots and local television commercials are traditional ways to market to clientele, while email blasts and social media are other ways to reach the interested audiences. Networking with local Chamber of Commerce leaders, civic organizations and economic development committees will also be a beneficial way to market the program to current and potential entrepreneurs.

Remember that aspiring entrepreneurs often have challenging schedules and may access a wide range of information outlets. Keep the messaging realistic and succinct. Make sure that the message originates from respected sources and be sure to emphasize the educational and networking components of the training program.

Resources

There are many resources that can be used to supplement your small business offerings and most are found conveniently online. Some of the best include:⁵

Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

(<http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org>)

A nationally recognized leader in entrepreneurship development, the Center’s mission is to be the national, value-added resource for rural communities, regions and states interested in building more sustainable economic development frameworks around entrepreneurship. The Center offers guidance on a variety of topics through its online portal and fee-based programming (“Energizing Entrepreneurs”) that can be done face-to-face or via webinar. Their “Resource Library” is filled with tools and information that can greatly enhance community- and entrepreneur-level support efforts.

Cashing in on Business Opportunities

(<http://srdc.msstate.edu/cashing/>)

This online curriculum recognizes that becoming a successful entrepreneur requires nearly equal parts ambition, dedication and knowledge. With this complete, research-based curriculum, you can fill in gaps that may exist in your agenda, provide a foundation for your scheduled speaker or refer to the materials so participants can take a more in-depth look at topics of particular interest.

Lessons include:

Part One: Sharpen Your Entrepreneurial Skills

Assessing Self-Employment for Success
Spotting Opportunities among Scams
Working and Living in the Same Space
Developing Time-Management Tactics
Professionalism Pays

Part Three: Plan as You Expand

Targeting New Markets
Your Online Presence
Incorporating Social Media into Your Marketing Plan
Keeping Tabs on Cash
Recruiting, Training and Motivating Employees
Insuring against Catastrophes

Part Two: Get Down to Business

Writing a Business Plan
Setting the Right Price
Choosing the Best Business Structure
Adhering to Regulatory Requirements
Managing Inventory
Deciding on a Distribution Channel

Part Four: Boost Your Bottom Line

Calculating Financial Ratios
Getting Your Just Deductions
Searching for Capital

Creating a Rural Entrepreneurial System in Tennessee

(<http://trend.ag.utk.edu/crest.html>)

Some say "it takes a village to raise a child." In the same sense, it takes a community to foster entrepreneur-led development. Creating a Rural Entrepreneurial System in Tennessee (CREST) seeks to assist targeted rural communities in Tennessee in transforming their local economies through the development of key components required for entrepreneurship and small business development. CREST achieves this goal through its key objectives:

- Assist the community in understanding the impact and importance of small business development.
- Identify components that should be in place in the community to support small business development and entrepreneurship.
- Help the community develop an effective organization that will focus on small business and entrepreneurship development locally.
- Assist the community in an asset-based strategic planning process that identifies the existing ESBD assets and weaknesses in the community.
- Help the community identify projects that can be undertaken to build community capacity for small business development.
- Work with the community to prioritize potential projects, choose a project that builds upon local and regional assets and successfully implement the project.

As of July 2011, CREST has been piloted in eight rural Tennessee communities. Currently, a CREST facilitator's guide and online learning modules are being developed and will be deployed in early 2012.

Table 1. Selected Agencies, Organizations and Institutions That Provide Entrepreneurial Support

Domain	Name	Description	Website
Federal	U.S. Department of Agriculture -Rural Development	The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development office operates small business financing programs targeted at rural entrepreneurs and business owners, with an emphasis on retaining and creating jobs in rural Tennessee.	http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn/
	U.S. Small Business Administration	The SBA provides a number of financial assistance programs for small businesses. In addition to loans, the SBA operates a wide range of programs focused on assisting American small businesses. Comprehensive tools for entrepreneur development and planning are available online.	http://www.sba.gov and http://www.sba.gov/tn
	Tennessee Valley Authority	The TVA supports small, disadvantaged, minority and women-owned firms and targeted commercial sector businesses through strategic partnerships, outreach activities, networks, electronic tools and business assistance.	http://www.tva.com
State	Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development - Business Enterprise Resource Office	BERO provides information about grants and loans; directs entrepreneurs to partnerships with government and private entities; offers one-on-one technical assistance; hosts financial and procurement workshops/conferences and helps with small business expansion, relocation and turnaround situations.	http://ecd.state.tn.us/bero/
	Tennessee Small Business Development Centers	The TSBDC provides no-cost, one-on-one counseling and low-cost, educational workshops to start-up and existing business owners. Business counseling is offered in the areas of financial management, marketing, human resources, operations and information technology.	http://www.isbdc.org
	Tennessee Technology Development Corporation	TTDC is dedicated to building a vibrant entrepreneurial culture within the state and maximizing the potential of entrepreneurs. TTDC initiatives targeted to entrepreneurs include the Tennessee Enterprise Network, Innovation Capacity Grants and the Tennessee Mentor Network.	http://www.intechology.org/
Regional	Tennessee Development Districts	The districts work regionally in wide variety of ways that support small business and entrepreneur development in addition to conducting community-level development projects and programs.	http://www.discoveret.org/eidd/tda.htm
Regional	SCORE	SCORE (score.org) offers management counseling for small business. The wide range of expertise of SCORE members, all retired executives and business owners, allows for matching SCORE members with client needs. SCORE also conducts seminars and workshops with special emphasis on small business start-ups.	Chattanooga: http://www.scorechattanooga.org/ Johnson City: http://www.scorejn.org/index.html Knoxville: http://www.scoreknox.org/ Memphis: http://www.scorememphis.org/ Nashville: http://www.scorenashville.org/
Regional (East)	Tech 2020	Tech 2020 is focused on encouraging entrepreneurship, increasing access to capital, growing technology companies and supporting the technology community in East Tennessee through a range of initiatives.	http://www.tech2020.org
Regional (Middle)	Mind2Marketplace	A consortium formed to bring technology-based ideas and concepts forward to be developed, tested and introduced to the marketplace, all in order to create jobs and expand economic development in Middle Tennessee.	http://www.mind2marketplace.com
Local/ Regional/ State	Chambers of Commerce and local Economic Development Organizations	Whether based on geography, ancestry or gender, there are over 100 Chambers of Commerce and local economic development organizations across Tennessee. Though each varies in size and capacity, these organizations are dedicated to championing their 'community' and fostering the success of their members, typically through networking, education and training.	
University	University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service	IPS helps companies, entrepreneurs, organizations, cities and counties across the state access university expertise, resources and intellectual assets to help advance the economic well-being of Tennessee and create and retain quality job opportunities.	http://www.ips.tennessee.edu
	UT Extension / TSU Cooperative Extension	UT Extension brings research-based information about agriculture, family and consumer sciences, youth development and resource development to the people of Tennessee. Similarly, TSU Cooperative Extension educates limited-resource urban and rural families, small farmers, individuals, and rural groups/organizations.	UT Extension http://utextension.tennessee.edu TSU Cooperative Extension http://www.instate.edu/cep/
	UT Extension - Center for Profitable Agriculture	The Center is committed to the mission of increasing the value of Tennessee's economy through new, expanded and improved processing and marketing of agricultural, aquacultural and forestry products.	http://cpa.utk.edu/default.htm
	UT - Martin - Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Center	The Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Center (REED Center) serves existing and prospective entrepreneurs and supports economic development in rural northwest Tennessee. The REED Center offers courses, workshops and training sessions that respond to the needs of small businesses and supports regional economic development.	http://www.utm.edu/departments/reed/

National e-Commerce Extension Initiative

(<http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/>)

The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative features interactive online learning modules and “turn-key” curricula that can be readily deployed in your community. The Initiative’s “Learning Center” provides e-commerce resources for entrepreneurs, small business owners, Extension educators, community development professionals and group leaders. With presentations, speaker notes and facilitators guides, the Initiative offers an interesting variety of training opportunities to consider. In addition, the program’s website offers a library of additional resources and a “Tutorials” section for greater explanation on website design and function.

TVA’s “Consumer Connections”

(http://www.tvaed.com/consumer_connect.htm)

The Consumer Connection is an economic development program that TVA developed to link communities with business opportunities, as well as foster business retention and expansion. Since the program is designed to help community leaders understand retail development and retention, this program can play an important role in identifying potential entrepreneurship options. At a community level, potential outcomes include expanding the local tax and revenue base, enhancing property values, supporting job growth and enhancing local capital investment.

Other Resources

In addition to these resources, each community or region likely has a wide variety of entrepreneurial assets that can be used effectively in an effort to enhance participant learning and success. These resources are typically grouped into individuals and associations/institutions.

Individuals who are often asked to present in support of this type of programming include professionals in the fields of accounting, law, public relations, finance, education, government, economic development and community service. Tapping local resources provides the opportunity to build the ‘bridging’ social capital that is critical to the success of building a productive and sustainable system of support for entrepreneurship. That said, one must keep in mind that there may be several equally qualified and willing individuals who could participate. Rather than showing favoritism, organizers should strive to provide opportunities for these professionals to participate as speakers and/or mentors to the participants as they go through the business planning process.

Also, keep in mind that even though someone may be employed in a field listed above, he or she should have experience directly related to small business development and be willing to recognize other options that may exist in the community rather than simply using this as a means of generating business. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, local entrepreneurs should be included as panelists, presenters and/or mentors. Peer-to-peer learning can pay dividends and enhance the success of the business development efforts.

Institutions and associations that support entrepreneurship are scattered across Tennessee, but tend to aggregate in metropolitan areas. A short list of such groups can be found in Table 1. It is important to note that most, if not all, community colleges and other institutions of higher education have entrepreneurship classes, centers and/or faculty who can assist with entrepreneurship support efforts. In addition, the Tennessee Technology Center system is an excellent source of participants, information/training resources and a potential programming venue.

Conclusions

The purpose of small business seminars is to provide the tools and information needed for potential and/or current small business owners to set up or maintain a successful small enterprise. Small businesses make up an important part of the economic infrastructure in Tennessee. Many individuals are seeking to own and operate their own businesses and need the proper resources to succeed. The educator and/or facilitator will need sufficient time and willing collaborators to develop and maintain successful small business seminars. With these elements in place, the seminars’ results will not only be beneficial to participants, but the impacts on Tennessee communities and counties, regardless of size, are limitless.

Sample Budget

Every event should take on a 'local flavor' and be conducted using methods that are appropriate for the clientele. The table below provides some general budget categories that are often encountered when executing this type of educational program. Extra spaces are provided if there are additional costs. Historically, programs run by Extension have attracted between 15–25 participants per offering and costs can run between \$500 to \$2000 for the entire series depending on food, equipment, materials, etc. Since this topic offers an excellent opportunity for fee-based programming, be prepared to cover costs and ensure that the quality of the program measures up to the price. If the program is underwritten (sponsored) by a grant or local organization/institution, then the fee can be used for revenue generation to fund future programming, or as an incentive for participants as their 'perfect' attendance could warrant a complete refund.

Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Materials		Lessons	
Copies		Projector	
Binders		Screen	
USB flash drive		Room rental	
Notepads			
Marketing		Lesson Archive	
Daily/weekly newspaper advertising		Website updates	
Radio advertising		Video/Web camera	
Email blasts		Webinar software	
Newsletter		Microphone	
Food		Acknowledgements	
Snacks		Graduation certificates	
Graduation reception		Speaker gifts/fees	
Lender's luncheon			

Evaluating the Program

At the conclusion of the Small Business Seminar, participants should have a working knowledge of, but not limited to, the following:

- The skills needed to develop a business plan.
- Improved record keeping systems.
- Financial management skills and basic knowledge on marketing, accounting and computer programs.
- An understanding of various business functions and practices and their impact on the successful operation of a business.
- The impact of business decisions on the external environment.

A post-evaluation has been developed to assist in determining if these outcomes were met during the Small Business Seminar.

The post-evaluation should be administered at the end of the final class section. Participants should complete and turn in the evaluation before receiving a certificate of completion.

Pre/post Participant Surveys

Please rate your current level of knowledge in the following areas:

(Do not fill in all the numbers! Allow participants to fill in the chart!)

	No Knowledge (1)	Some Knowledge (2)	Proficient (3)	Expert (4)
Writing a business plan				
Acquiring funding for a small business				
Hiring employees				
Locating a local resource for assistance with a small business				
Local business compliance issues				
Business marketing				

Please feel free to share your thoughts concerning your expectations about this series of classes.

Post Participant Evaluation

Your responses will be helpful in evaluating this Small Business Series and improving future programs. Please read and respond to all items. Thank you for your help with this evaluation!

For each item listed below, circle the number that corresponds with your knowledge after completing this program. (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest.)

Because of my participation in this seminar, I have a better understanding of.....	Lowest amount of knowledge gained				Highest amount of knowledge gained
The different types of taxes associated with opening and running a small business.	1	2	3	4	5
How to write a successful business plan.	1	2	3	4	5
How to apply for small business loans.	1	2	3	4	5
How to establish and maintain a website and use social media such as Facebook.	1	2	3	4	5
How to market and promote a small business.	1	2	3	4	5

What other topics would you like to be discussed in future programs? _____

PLEASE TURN OVER TO COMPLETE SURVEY.

Please place an (X) in the appropriate column in response to each of the following items:

Because of my participation in this program.....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I found the information presented to be useful.					
I found the instructional techniques and materials helpful in teaching the material.					
I found the program presentations to be very high-quality.					
I plan to use this information and adopt or make changes in my role as a small business owner or someone thinking about starting a small business.					
I think I have increased my knowledge about the tools needed to start a small business.					
I would recommend this seminar to others if it were to be offered again.					

How would you rate the program overall?

1 2 3 4 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Thank You!

NOTES:



References

¹U.S. Census. 2011. County Business Patterns. Online. Accessed February 22, 2011. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html>. For data on your county, you can use the same site and find information on the number, size and revenue generated by businesses with employees by sector at the state and county level from 1998 to approximately three years prior to the present. Earlier data can be found but business sectors are classified using the old Standard Industrial Classification (SIC Code) system.

²For data on the self-employed (nonemployer) in Tennessee you can use the U.S. Census Bureau's Nonemployer Statistics (<http://www.census.gov/econ/nonemployer/index.html>). The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis' Regional Economic Information System (<http://www.bea.gov/regional/reis/>) use Table CA25N - Total full-time and part-time employment by NAICS industry) also has data on the self-employed ("Proprietor") but the two sources are not directly comparable due to differences in how self-employment is defined and counted. In the text, we refer to BEA data, as they include farmers.

³For more information about and examples of Entrepreneur Clubs and Networks please see: the Entrepreneur Center in Nashville, TN (<http://entrepreneurcenter.com/>) and the Wisconsin Entrepreneur Network (<http://www.wenportal.org>) with their searchable Entrepreneurship Club database (<http://www.wenportal.org/ProviderLocator/Peer-to-PeerLearning.htm>). Also, Green, Wise and Armstrong (2007) provide some interesting insights in their conference paper entitled, "Inventor & Entrepreneur Clubs: Investment in an Innovative Approach to Entrepreneurship." Available online at: <http://www.ssu.missouri.edu/agecon/mccel/materials/green-wise.pdf>.

⁴See the CREST website (<http://trend.ag.utk.edu/crest.html>) for general information and Dr. Bo Beaulieu's webinar on asset mapping for entrepreneurship. Also, the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship is an excellent source for assessment tools (http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=36).

⁵Some of the material in this section has been adapted with permission from: Wilcox, M.D. and D.M. Lambert. 2009. "Entrepreneurship in Tennessee: Striving for Success: A Baseline Analysis." http://trend.ag.utk.edu/entrepreneurship/EntrepreneurshipFinalReport11_18_08.pdf.

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<http://trend.ag.utk.edu/crest.html>

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