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# Business Development Network

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## Business plan competitors advance to finals to compete for cash prizes

Participants from four area competitions were selected to compete in the Pitch Your Plan final competition on April 22. The competition is co-sponsored by WesBanco and Adena Health Systems.

At the Gallia/Jackson/Vinton competition, Lorraine Walker won the \$250 cash prize in the business category, while the business team of Teresa Altherr and Nina Cox took home the \$600 prize for the innovation/new technology category. The winners will compete in the final competition at OSU South Centers on April 22. Additionally, Joy Kocmoud was presented a certificate for CPA services from Lynn Angell, CPA, Gallipolis.



Lorraine Walker, Teresa Altherr, Nina Cox, and Joy Kocmoud, winners at the Gallia/Jackson/Vinton Pitch

At the Lawrence/Scioto competition, Colleen Griffiths won the \$250 business award, while Kelley Alexander won the \$600 award for the innovation/new technology category. Along with them, Francesca Hartop will advance to compete in the final competition.

At the competition held in Chillicothe, Sue and John Hillger were awarded the \$250 business category prize for the Adams/Brown/Highland area competition. Thomas Johnson won \$250 in the business category for the Ross/Pike area competition. Winning the \$600 innovation/new technology award was Wyndan Skye. Hillger, Johnson, and Skye will all advance to the final competition. Christopher VanBuskirk and Randel Monhemius were awarded certificates for legal services from Jonathan D. Schmidt and Douglas Sladoje.



Francesca Hartop, Kelley Alexander, and Colleen Griffiths advance from the Lawrence/Scioto competition.

At the final competition on April 22, cash awards to be given include a \$10,000 prize for the winner of the innovation/new technology category, and a \$5,000 prize for the business category winner. If you would like to attend the Pitch Your Plan competition finals, please contact Kimberly Roush at 740-289-2071 EXT 232.



Ryan Mapes—OSU South Centers, Christopher VanBuskirk, John Hillger, Sue Hillger, Thomas Johnson, Wyndan Skye, Ronda Kinnamon—Governor's Regional Representative, Randel Monhemius, and Meagan Barnes—OSU South Centers, at the competition held in Chillicothe for Ross, Pike, Adams, Brown, and Highland Counties.

## Leading from the middle

by Becky Nesbitt

Leading from the top is rare. In fact, only about one percent of people are actually the CEO, executive director, or president of their organization or business. So what about the other 99 percent? Can people in the middle of an organization become great leaders as well?

According to John Maxwell, you don't have to be the top dog to lead effectively. In his 2006 book, *The 360 Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization*, Maxwell explains that leadership is more about influence than authority and position. Strong leaders can have influence from any position in an organization.

If you find yourself in the middle, like the other 99 percent of American workers, Maxwell suggests several principles to help you "lead up," increasing the influence you can have with your supervisor or leader.

**Lead yourself exceptionally well.** The demonstration of leadership ability begins with how well you can manage your own emotions, time, priorities, energy, thinking, words and personal life. People trust and respect the individual who is stable, reliable, and balanced – both at work and at home.

**Lighten your leader's load and become a go-to player.** Do your own job well. Show that you can consistently deliver and make a difference when it really matters. Remain productive even when time is short, circumstances are stressful, resources are limited, and the momentum is low.

**Be willing to do what others won't.** Adopt a "whatever it takes" attitude. Think outside of your job description and volunteer to take on the tough jobs.

**Do more than manage, lead.** Managers focus on production, tasks, and often live in the moment. Leaders focus on relationships, think within a broader context and see themselves as agents of change. While managers strive to achieve metrics, leaders strive to develop the people around them.

**Invest in relational chemistry.** Develop a strong relationship with your leader, getting to know his/her priorities, vision, and interests. Understand your leader's strengths and weaknesses, and work effectively with both.

**Know when to push and when to back off.** Become aware of the emotional atmosphere of the workplace and your leader. Carefully choose the right time to present ideas. A good idea presented at the wrong time becomes a bad idea.

**Be better tomorrow than you are today.** Adopt the philosophy to be growth oriented rather than goal oriented. Search for opportunities to improve your skills and interpersonal abilities.

## Technology Corner: Skype

by Melissa Hurtt

Is your business spending too much money on your phone bill each month? If so, then maybe you should look into Skype. By downloading Skype (skype.com), your business can talk to anyone in the world for FREE just by calling anybody on your contact list. Skype uses your internet connection to make a phone call through your computer to whomever you want to contact. If the parties that you need to contact do not have Skype, your business can purchase a plan at a nominal monthly charge month to allow unlimited calling to anywhere in the world, regardless of whether the other party has Skype. You can set up conference calls, video conferencing, chats, and other great tools on Skype. Your business could cut down costs and keep in touch with clients, partners, and stakeholders simply by using Skype!



## The proactive business

by Ryan Mapes

Today's economy presents many challenges to small business owners. Success of these ventures is sometimes dependent upon the company's ability to look forward and adapt, or make changes if needed. Business planning is a necessary component to overcome the challenges that are present in this economic environment. Owners must be proactive in managing areas such as cash flow and marketing. The ability for a company to be flexible and to make changes is critical when managing cash flow. Look for new or creative ways to generate revenues and decrease expenses. Market diversification could positively impact sales and make the difference between a positive and negative cash flow.

Have you heard the expression "Running my business is getting in the way of running my business"? Don't wait until it is too late to seek advice in these areas. Small Business Development Centers are an excellent resource that provides one-on-one counseling services and training events covering a broad range of topics. For assistance, contact the Small Business Development Center at the OSU South Centers, phone 740-289-2071 EXT 111.

## Business resource seminar series

by Brad Bapst

Is your business suffering due to the recent downturn in the economy? Are you searching for new market opportunities for the products or services that your business offers? If so, then the Business Resource Seminar Series may be able to help.

The program was developed to provide local assistance to business owners that have been impacted by some of the major business closings in the region. The OSU South Centers Business Development Network has partnered with the Highland County Chamber of Commerce, along with the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Business Connection to provide a series of workshops that fit the needs of businesses in the region to assist them in recovering lost revenues. The classes are designed to provide information to assist small businesses owners in better understanding specific areas of marketing and managing their business.

Upcoming events in the series will be held at the Highland County Chamber office, located in the Hi-Tec Center, 1575 N. High St., in Hillsboro. Currently scheduled events include:

- March 31, 2009 – Global Marketing Strategies
- April 6, 2009 – Overview of Quickbooks
- April 21, 2009 – Cash Flow / Financial Resources

All of the seminars are from 1 to 3 p.m. More events are currently being planned and will be announced soon. For additional information on these programs, contact Brad Bapst at 740-289-2071 EXT 230.

## PitchThenPlan™



by Kelly O'Bryant

PitchThenPlan™ is a new resource offered by the Business Development Network that can be used to assist business owners and entrepreneurs in crafting their business plan.

PitchThenPlan™ is a business planning technique that quickly translates business ideas into business plans. The process starts with a ten-slide business “pitch” which covers the essentials of the business and how it operates. The next step is to complete the “plan.” The plan takes each slide of the ten-step pitch and drills down to the next layer of detail. Finally, the process is completed by taking the money assumptions from each of the slides and creating a financial projection for the business.

This process provides business owners with a sense of clarity about the few things that matter most. By limiting the discussion about the business, the process forces the entrepreneur to be clear, concise, and concrete about what they know and what they will do.

There is no charge to use PitchThenPlan™. For a demonstration, or to start your own “pitch,” visit the website:

[www.pitchthenplan.com/tb/osusbdc.htm](http://www.pitchthenplan.com/tb/osusbdc.htm) .

## Farmers' Market Management Network holds annual meeting

by Christie Welch

The Farmers' Market Management Network, Inc. (FMMN) recently elected its board of directors at the FMMN Annual Meeting. The meeting was held at the Ohio Department of Agriculture with nearly 50 attendees. The FMMN is a cooperative of farmers' market managers and vendors whose mission is to enhance Ohio Farmers' Markets, both large and small, to create unity, consistency, and sustainability through collaboration and education. The FMMN supports the growth and sustainability of Ohio Farmers' Markets through collaboration to:

- Share best practices
- Provide solutions to challenges
- Advocate for sound policies and regulations for the benefit of our members
- Share resources for cost-effectiveness

Newly elected president, Mark Krist is excited about the opportunities for the network. He said, “The FMMN provides a great opportunity to advance farmers' markets throughout Ohio by networking and sharing best practices.” He went on to say that the small businesses that make up farmers' markets can play a vital roll in the economic recovery of Ohio and provide resident access to local foods in addition to the social benefits of markets which can help enhance a sense of community.”

The Farmers' Market Management Network, Inc. was assisted in its formation by Tom Snyder, Program Manager of the OSU South Centers Ohio Cooperative Development Center, as well as OSU Extension, OARDC, Ohio Department of Agriculture, and USDA Rural Development.

If you would like more information about the FMMN or are interested in becoming a member, you can go to [www.ocdc.osu.edu/farmersmarkets](http://www.ocdc.osu.edu/farmersmarkets) or contact Christie Welch, Farmers' Market Specialist with the OSU South Centers at [welch.183@osu.edu](mailto:welch.183@osu.edu) or 740-289-2071 EXT 234.

# The Ohio State University South Centers

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We're on the web!  
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## Endeavor Center Spotlight

# Toobla develops "new view" to internet

by Kimberly Roush

Developing a "new view" to the internet is the goal of Jake Saxbe and Bob Falcone, co-founders of Toobla, Inc. Established in July 2007, Toobla is an early-stage company with a unique Web 2.0 technology, or user-generated content building technology, aimed at the explosive social networking websites, such as MySpace and Facebook. Toobla enables Internet users to easily use web applications or widgets in an integrated way that has never been done before. These web widgets, which are portable chunks of code embedded within a web page that adds content to a page, such as stock market tickers, daily weather updates etc can be customized by each user.

Toobla can change and improve online communications by providing a functional canvas where widgets can be imported, moved, resized, layered and combined with other widgets. This happens in real-time, so that viewers don't have to refresh their screen when changes are made. Toobla provides a widget storage utility that works with all widgets across all platforms and an easy-to-use widget mashing application.

With successful product development, Toobla, Inc. was ready for commercialization of the new internet platform technology, and engaged The Ohio State University South Centers Small Business Development Center to provide assistance with the commercialization process.

Through the creation of a strong presentation and supporting documentation, Toobla, Inc. received a \$60,000 operational assistance award through the Entrepreneurial Signature Program. Toobla has subsequently secured a pre-seed investment, funded jointly by TechColumbus and TechGrowth Ohio, totaling \$800,000. These funds also provided leverage for Toobla, Inc. to secure private investment dollars.

"It's exciting to see the development of such innovative technology right here in southern Ohio," said Meagan Barnes, a Business Development Specialist at the OSU South Centers. "Due to Toobla's innovations, internet users, especially those using social networking sites, will soon have a seamless interface for web applications."

The Toobla logo, featuring the word "toobla" in white lowercase letters on a green rectangular background.