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Check out the recently updated  
OSU South Centers Business  
Network web site:

<http://southcenters.osu.edu/benet/>

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# Business Development Network

## Manufacturing co-ops can save money, boost profits

The Ohio Cooperative Development Center (OCDC) is hosting a manufacturing cooperatives workshop on January 11<sup>th</sup> at The Ohio State University South Centers. This workshop is designed for manufacturing companies that wish to save money, increase profits and performance through working cooperatively with other companies. For example, if you need a good healthcare benefit package and cannot afford it on your own; then maybe as a group, a better healthcare package could be made more affordable. Other topics to be covered are: employee recruitment, screening, and training; purchasing, lean processes, quality systems, legal, and accounting services.

The workshop is free of charge and lunch will be provided. Please plan on attending to see how we can help you form a cooperative. For more information please go to this website:

<http://ocdc.osu.edu/pdf/manufacturingbrochure.pdf> or feel free to contact Tom Snyder at: 740-289-2071 ext. 220 or [snyder.11@osu.edu](mailto:snyder.11@osu.edu).

## Winter Schedule of Business Training Events

Jan 10	<b>Successful Food Cooperatives</b> OSU Ag Administration Bldg, OSU Columbus Campus, 9:30 am - 2 pm Lunch and refreshments provided	This workshop will cover accounting systems, legal issues, effective web sites, and food safety issues.	<b>FREE</b>
Jan 11	<b>Manufacturing Cooperatives Workshop</b> OSU South Centers Endeavor Center, 10 am - 3 pm	Identify and link companies to work together to facilitate shared	<b>FREE</b>
Jan 18	<b>Building a Drug Free Workplace Seminar</b> OSU South Centers Endeavor Center, 9 am - noon	Learn how to develop policies and procedures for implementing a Drug Free Workplace Program.	<b>FREE</b>
Jan 18	<b>Building Your Own Business Workshop</b> Highland County Chamber of Commerce, 9 am - 12 noon	Provides you with the tools for developing your business. This workshop will focus on money, marketing, and management.	<b>\$20</b>
Jan 30	<b>Lean Operations for the Office</b> OSU South Centers Endeavor Center, 9 am - 2 pm	Understand characteristics and benefits of a "lean" versus "traditional" office environment, how to identify wastes in the office, and how they affect costs.	<b>\$99</b>
Feb 8	<b>Quicken for Non-Profit Organizations</b> OSU South Centers Endeavor Center, 9 am - 5 pm	Learn how to use Quicken for non-profit financial management and record-keeping. Register with the Scioto Foundation at 740-354-4612.	<b>\$20</b>
Feb 13	<b>Developing Your Leadership Style</b> OSU South Centers Endeavor Center, 9 am - 3 pm	Use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to understand your leadership style. Develop an individual leadership plan.	<b>\$149</b>
Mar 2	<b>Business &amp; Production Skills Workshop for Beginning Landscape, Greenhouse and Nursery Professionals</b> OSU South Centers, 9 am - 3 pm	Business plans, marketing, production, water quality, pesticide issues.	<b>\$20</b>
Mar 28	<b>Understanding the 990-Non-Profit Organization tax form</b> Scioto Foundation, 1 pm - 4 pm	To register, contact the Scioto Foundation at 740-354-4612.	<b>\$20</b>

## A New Year's Resolution for Your Office

*By Brad Bapst*

As you ring in the New Year, here is a nifty idea for a resolution for your office. Many office processes have gained “fat” over time and have become inefficient. They, like most of us, could use a little change in our consumption habits this time of the year. A possible solution to reduce your office’s inefficiencies is to register it in the “Lean Operations for the Office” workshop at the OSU South Centers.

Too many offices devote an excessive amount of time with traditional administrative functions. Daily office activities, such as scheduling, purchasing, accounting, and data entry can represent up to 80% of the cost of doing business. Streamlining these processes will allow the business to devote more attention to the customer. Lean Operations for the Office focuses on the front side of your enterprise’s operations to reduce overhead expenses, increase productivity, and to boost your bottom line through efficiency savings.

The workshop will explain the features and benefits of a “Lean” office compared to a traditional office. It will also assist in identifying the eight most common wastes in the traditional office setting, and their effects on cost and downtime. Examples will be given on the implementation of “Lean” office techniques, and how they have helped to provide businesses with a competitive advantage.

The “Lean Operations for the Office” workshop will be held on Tuesday, January 30, 2007 from 9:00 a.m to 2:00 p.m. at the OSU South Centers. The workshop fee is \$99 per participant. For more information, contact Joy Bauman at 740-289-2071 EXT 111, or email [jbauman@ag.osu.edu](mailto:jbauman@ag.osu.edu).

## Where do I begin to start my small business?

*By Christie Welch*

You have an idea that you would like to turn into a small business. Where do you begin? One of the most important things you can do is conduct some preliminary research. This process is typically referred to as a feasibility study. The purpose of a feasibility study is to identify those issues that will “make or break” a business. This study should be conducted before making investments of time and money in a small business.

Ok, so what does a feasibility study entail? Generally, feasibility studies focus on three areas: 1. market issues, 2. organizational/technical issues, and 3. financial issues.

**Market Issues**—To identify the market issues that can “make or break” a small business, one must conduct some research on the proposed market. This involves gathering information about a particular segment of the market or the target customers. Based on the product or service you are exploring for your small business, who are the potential customers? One should try to gather as much information as possible in identifying this customer group. Questions that one might ask are: What is the age range of the target customer? What is the income level? Where are they located? How do they get their information? How much are they willing to pay for your product or service? How often are they willing to buy? And, how many of these target customers are there? It will take some time and effort to gather this information. You may want to look at census data, industry publications, and other sources to gather this information.

**Organizational/Technical Issues**—The second area to research is the organizational/technical issues of the idea. This includes information about: Who are the owners of the proposed business? Where will the business be located? Will the business have employees? How many and from where will they come? Do the owners and employees have the proper training and knowledge to conduct the business? If not, how will the needs be addressed? What equipment needs are there for the proposed business? Is there sufficient capital to acquire this equipment?

**Financial Issues**—At this stage, the third area to consider is the financial issues. Do the owners have sufficient capital to invest in starting the business? If funds will need to be borrowed, can the owners demonstrate the ability to repay the debt? Will the proposed idea generate sufficient cash flow for the business and for repaying the debt? What level of sales must be maintained to generate this cash flow? Are the sales seasonal? If so, will sufficient cash flow be maintained during the slower season? How? Has a break even analysis been conducted? This is a critical step in determining whether or not to proceed with the proposed business.

By taking the time and effort to conduct a feasibility study, one can save a great deal of time, money and frustration. By identifying those “make or break” issues, one can then develop an appropriate plan to address them. Or, one can decide that this is not the right idea, right time, or right place to pursue the project. To further explore the feasibility of your business

## Minimizing the Risk of Small Business Failures

By *Christie Welch*

For many, starting a business is a life-long dream. But what happens when the reality does not match the dream? There are ten primary reasons for small business failure:

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Lack of experience              | 6. Poor credit arrangements       |
| 2. Insufficient capital (money)    | 7. Personal use of business funds |
| 3. Poor location                   | 8. Unexpected growth              |
| 4. Poor inventory management       | 9. Competition                    |
| 5. Over-investment in fixed assets | 10. Low sales                     |

Source: Small Business Management, Michael Ames  
<http://www.captureplanning.com/articles/69960.cfm>

It can be a difficult experience to pursue your dream only to find you are living a nightmare. With proper planning and effective goal-setting, an entrepreneur can minimize the risk of failure. These goals can deal with return on investments, owner's ability to pay him or her self the desired salary, the ability to set one's own hours, and many other benefits. Setting and tracking goals is a critical step needed to gauge the business performance and make adjustments along the way. It is also a useful tool in deciding when to close the doors. If the goals are not being met, one may decide to shut the business down.

Many of the reasons for shutting a business are often tied to the financial management of the business. If one finds oneself going further and further in debt the best decision may be to close the business. If this is the case, it is advisable to choose this exit strategy while the owner still has some choices in the process. If the situation becomes so bad that creditors begin collection procedures, the options are greatly limited. Often times, the business owner procrastinates on this decision. While determination and stick-to-itiveness are one of the characteristics that make entrepreneurs able to make a small business a success, this can also be a down fall if one finds oneself in this particular situation.

If you are an existing business owner or you are considering starting your own small business, thoroughly researching the market, competition, and location can help to mitigate some of the risks of failure. In addition, the establishment of specific and measurable goals which are tracked on a regular basis can help avoid these situations. And finally, it is critical to regularly monitor the financial status of the business in order to avoid finding oneself in this type of situation. If you would like to learn more, contact the Small Business Development Center at The Ohio State University South Centers. Call (740) 289-3727 Ext. 111 or e-mail [jbauman@ag.osu.edu](mailto:jbauman@ag.osu.edu).

## Develop your leadership style

By *David Boulay*

It seems leadership is one of the most talked about and least understood phenomena today. While we can identify leaders in our midst, it is very difficult to define the exact style and attributes that make successful leaders. While your personality typically does not need to change when assuming a leadership role, being an effective leader does take work. Developing leadership skills often occurs through self-study, evaluation sessions, and on-the-job experiences.

We are proud to present "Developing Your Leadership Style" on February 13, 2007. This unique event will begin by helping you explore your personality preferences and types. The use of proven tools like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, serve as a great resource to evaluate and provide some self-study of your leadership style. Upon completion of this self-understanding, this event will focus on discovering different leadership styles and the qualities of a strong leader. Each participant will develop an individualized leadership action plan allowing you to apply the experiences of this event in your work setting. This is an excellent opportunity to invest in your leadership skills in a meaningful way.

The fee for this workshop is \$149. Contact Joy Bauman at [jbauman@ag.osu.edu](mailto:jbauman@ag.osu.edu) or 740-289-3727 EXT 111 to register or learn more.

**SmallBizU**<sup>TM</sup> The Business  
Development  
Network is

excited about its newest approach to business assistance—online courses available 24/7. SmallBizU is an online university created especially for small businesses and entrepreneurs. There are 18 different courses that focus on teaching the "3M's"—money, marketing, and management. Each course is delivered via the Internet and is full of animated slides accompanied by narration, PowerPoint presentations, worksheets, and toolsets. SmallBizU is an excellent addition to our newly redesigned website and to you as a business owner or entrepreneur.

The new website and SmallBizU will be available on February 1, 2007. For more information on SmallBizU contact Kelly at (740)289-3727 ext 235 or email

## The Ohio State University South Centers

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Sign-up to receive future newsletters and announcements electronically! Contact Joy at:

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We're on the web!

<http://southcenters.osu.edu/benet/>

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### Endeavor Center Spotlight

## On-Demand HR Solutions 24/7 at HRTwentyFour.com

HRTwentyFour.com seeks to solve your people problems all day, every day. As a busy manager (or owner) of a small business, we know that you may need answers to some difficult Human Resource questions, as you may not have a fully staffed HR Department. For that matter, you may BE the HR Department.

Our Founder and President, Matt Rosen, realized two years ago that HR Departments, managers and supervisors were not getting the real answers they needed to solving HR issues when corporate legal counsel would state, "it depends...or that's risky...and I'll get back with you". Matt knew that after 25 years in the business, the gap needed to be filled as the niche concept and potential market base was an increasingly viable option. In an effort to combine "in the trenches" HR expertise and practical knowledge of labor and employment law, HR24 (the PeopleProblemPeople-TM) was formed in 2004.

Matt, along with Cindy Davis, VP Operations and COO, decided upon Southern Ohio as the logical launch point for a web-based Human Resource Solutions business site, after many conversations and meetings in early 2006. Matt notes, "The regional economic mix, diversity of businesses and definite need to fill the HR gap in small and medium sized businesses that are challenged by lean operations, fixed budgets and ease

of use of a web-based product and service that HRTwentyFour.com provides is definitely unique."



**Matt Rosen, President, and Cindy Davis, VP Operations and Chief Operating Officer of HRTwentyFour.**

Responsible for Project/Program launch and daily operations at the OSU Endeavor Center, Cindy also states, "The past few months have been very busy with project timelines and deliverables, from working with locally based IT developers and marketing experts for TV radio and print media outlets, to participating in regional business expos and working with regional Chambers of Commerce". Our regional beta launch group consists of a variety of business model types from manufacturing suppliers to healthcare groups and growing established businesses.

Our market research reveals the need for the interactive web site service to be user friendly, timely and consistent, so feedback from our focus groups are very important in this test and launch phase".

Both Matt and Cindy reflect, "This it has been a relatively seamless transition from concept to reality, with greatly appreciated help and support of the OSU Endeavor Center. The professional environment, coupled with on-site expertise and state-of-the-art facilities are outstanding. This is a great time to be creative in a web-based business offering, as the technology available and possibilities for growth are