

BUSINESS SUCCESS Case Study

Strategic Partnering: Corporations, Universities and Government

NJ Small Business Development Centers Strategic Branding for Accreditation



*Thought Leadership Management Forum
Lessons Learned*

NJ SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER FACTS

\$72mm facilitated for over 5,500 clients annually.

Project Timing

Six months rebranding for accreditation.

Project Results

One year to realize results.

THE CUSTOMER

The ASBDC, a national network, was established by Congress in 1978 and is reviewed under Malcolm Baldrige Quality Assurance Standards and criteria-based accreditation standards. The NJSBDC network is composed of headquarters located at Rutgers Business School and 12, full-service, regional centers, with 28 affiliate offices. The SBDCs provide assistance to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs with free business consulting and low-cost training services. SBDCs are hosted by leading universities and state economic development agencies and funded in part through a partnership with SBA.

THE CHALLENGE

To meet ASBDC accreditation compliance, a uniform branding initiative across all centers was identified through an audit. The strategic challenge addresses the autonomous culture of each Center embedded for 30+ years. With 12 main Centers strategically positioned throughout the State, each operates in a decentralized manner with Regional Directors and overarching management team from 'headquarters.' The Center's marketing materials have been self-directed by each Center to include brochures, web sites, and conference exhibits. The ASBDC has identified the lack of cohesive branding (messaging, positioning, offerings and delivery). It faced Accreditation issues if not resolved within certain time constraints.

THE SOLUTION

Working side-by-side with each Regional Director and the Management Team as a neutral entity, we completed Malcolm Baldrige training. Then, identified areas for branding and marketing consistency. Developing a process of a franchise business model, we proposed a strategic plan and process to follow where the headquarters worked with each center as branches from the core. We developed a strategic plan, generated buy-in, breaking down old-culture and out of date mindsets. Launched a new image, directly competing with the surge of new programs in the marketplace. Designed new content strategy for web sites, web site development for centers and collateral materials. Developed in depth "client attraction programs" as the measurable impact for stakeholders has shifted to reach more existing businesses. Launched in depth campaigns constructed to magnetize new clients.

THE RESULTS

Transitioned strategic plan and tactical process into operations. Generated measurable effectiveness through Inbound Programs that increased registration for client services by 2500%.

NJSBDC-Rutgers University Business School

CENTER LOCATION	NJ COUNTY SERVED
Richard Stockton University	Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland
Ramapo College, Bergen Community College, Meadowlands Accelerator	Bergen
Rutgers Camden	Camden, Gloucester, Salem, Burlington
Rutgers Newark	Essex
New Jersey City University	Hudson
Raritan Valley Community College	Hunterdon and Somerset
The College of New Jersey	Mercer
Rutgers New Brunswick	Middlesex
Brookdale Community College	Monmouth, Ocean
William Paterson University	Passaic
Kean University	Union