

Business



Small Business Development Center

WHAT WE DO

Through direct counseling, the North Country SBDC provides a range of management and technical assistance services. These services include:

- Business plan development
- Cash flow projections
- Export assistance
- Marketing
- Business start-up information
- Funding information
- Family business transition
- New product development

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Source/SBDC Brochure

PR Graphic/John Burgess

INFORMATION

Please send me the following:

- ☐ Training and Workshop List
- ☐ Start-Up Information
- ☐ Call me to make appointment

Type of Business

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail

Send to: North Country SBDC
Plattsburgh State University
Ward Hall 118, 101 Broad Street
Plattsburgh, NY 12901-2681



Dr. Lise Heroux, professor of marketing and management at Plattsburgh State University's School of Business and Economics, said students entering the entrepreneurial program have the flexibility to take courses matching their plans after graduation, with options targeting marketing, advertising, public relations or even starting a franchise.

North Country Small Business Development Center

at
Plattsburgh State University of New York



New York State Small Business Development Center

Making a Difference

Helping People Achieve
Business Success!



Dr. James Csipak, associate professor of marketing and management at Plattsburgh State University's School of Business and Economics, said many see entrepreneurs as risk-takers, when actually they "plan and calculate, then invest their time and energy."

Staff Photos/Rob Fountain

Rick Latour, owner of Gioiosa's Liquor, told students interested in the entrepreneurial program that starting a business requires hard work, persistence and patience, but is very rewarding. In addition to a full-time job as plant manager at Johns-Manville, he spends four nights a week making sure the liquor store is running smoothly.



Example of a certificate earned for attending a workshop through the SBDC.

Serving the counties of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Warren and Washington

SBDC offers classes in entrepreneurialships

By DAN HEATH
Staff Writer

Slackers need not apply. Plattsburgh State's School of Business and Economics is offering students the chance to major in entrepreneurial studies, tailoring aspects of their curriculum to their own interests.

The program uses much of the standard business-school curriculum. Dr. Lise Heroux, a professor of marketing and management, said five aspects distinguish the entrepreneurial program, including three foundation courses:

► Dr. James Csipak, associate professor of marketing and management, teaches an introductory course in entrepreneurship — starting your own business — and intrapreneurship — instilling entrepreneurship into an already existing company.

► Plattsburgh State Small Business Development Center Director Dee Clark teaches small-business management, the day-to-day operations of a company.

Clark serves a dual role as director of the center and example to business owners.

"The SBDC is a wonderful resource to have," Csipak said. "Dee and her husband own the Plattsburgh Flower Market. They have 25 years as entrepreneurs."

► The third foundation class is personal finance planning, teaching students to organize their personal finances so they will be ready to start their own business.

Students can choose their own path in other upper-level classes, such as advertising, sales-force management, retail-store management or even e-commerce.

"This provides the flexibility. Students can

choose courses based on their own particular interests," Heroux said.

They also have the choice of a management internship or independent study.

"While it is flexible, we are in favor of an internship," Heroux said.

Two local entrepreneurs recently shared their experiences running their own businesses.

Rick Latour is the owner of Gioiosa's Liquor Store in Skyway Plaza. He is also the interim plant manager at Johns-Manville Roofing Manufacturing in Plattsburgh.

Latour started on the floor at Imperial Wallcovering, working his way steadily upward until the company closed in 1998. He then went back to school and began working at Gioiosa's, studying while at work.

In 2001, Gioiosa's owner Barney Walpole decided it was time to retire and asked Latour if he wanted to buy the business.

Latour jumped at the chance.

"I was handling the business while he was in Florida already," Latour said. "I had a lot of ideas of how to improve the business. He didn't really want to change."

Examples of the effort needed to run a business soon became all too apparent.

"It was a nightmare to get a liquor license," he said, displaying a thick form he had to submit. "I started the process in 2001. I was able to buy it in 2002."

Since then, the business has steadily increased. His ideas included targeting an audience, with renovations to match; and implementing a new ordering system, buying in larger quantities to reduce costs.

Gross sales that first year totaled \$364,000. Last year, Latour had increased sales to \$446,000 and was on pace for \$508,000 for this year.

"If you have the drive and determination, owning your own business is the most rewarding experience you can have," he said. "It's a very powerful feeling to have your

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Rick Latour

SBDC: Introduction to Public Speaking to internships

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own business."

Csipak, said he found it interesting that Latour worked at the business before buying.

"It's a good idea for any job to try it out before you jump in," he said. "The more you know about a business, the better you can judge your chance of success."

Harold Hance provided another example of entrepreneurial success. He is the co-owner, CEO and president of Mountain Valley Teleservices

and Adirondack Customer Care in Ausable Forks.

The Mountain Valley side of the business takes calls for direct-response marketing clients, those who advertise products through infomercials, television, radio and print advertisements.

Adirondack takes care of post-order customer service.

Hance started in human services, then moved into the call-center business. He had success within the company but started searching for more stability when the company went through a series of buyouts.

He initially contacted State Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward, then the town supervisor in Willsboro. She directed him to the Essex County IDA, which sent him to Clark.

Clark was able to help Hance whittle his 100-page business plan to a tightly focused 32 pages.

That helped him start from the ground up, with three clients and 40 employees taking about 40 calls per day.

He and co-owner Kurt Ellis now have 77 employees. They take 3,500 calls a day for nine

clients, averaging \$250,000 to \$300,000 in sales per week.

Another 18 employees are due to start work Tuesday, and Hance expects to have more than 100 by the end of April. He originally owned more than 60 percent of the company but relinquished about 30 percent in his efforts

to attract investors.

"I had to make that sacrifice," he said. "I could because I trust my partners."

He gave the students interested in the Plattsburgh State program some advice.

"My philosophy is to manage by solution, not excuses. You definitely will make some

mistakes. Minimize them."

He advised budding entrepreneurs to take care of things today, not tomorrow.

"Also, don't burn your bridges. It's funny how the world goes around."

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