

Measuring Performance

How do you know that you are effectively delivering services?
How do you know that you are meeting your goals?
How do you know that your efforts to assist clients are successful?

It is simple, right? Establish some goals and milestones, and then check periodically to see if you are meeting them. Metrics will answer the question, "How effectively and efficiently is the agency achieving its mission?"

How do you develop meaningful performance measurements (metrics)? The following article excerpt offers a few suggestions:

Principles of developing effective strategic metrics^{*}

1. Limit the number and type of measures to those that most directly reflect your achievement of the organization's vision and goals. Measures should be specific and focus on key areas of concern. Using too many measures dilutes the effectiveness of measuring and may cause confusion about which measures are most important.
2. Select the right mix of measures. Identify a group of measures that address a broad range of dimensions and that have a cause and effect relationship. In so doing, you ensure measures are diversified, which makes for a more successful implementation of your plan.
3. Set measures that focus on what you want to achieve. What you measure is what you get. For example, don't measure what you don't care about, as this will be wasted effort producing meaningless results. Ensure that the measures you set are congruent with your organization's mission. Understand that the usefulness of the measure is only as good as the data used to measure it.
4. Emphasize outcome measures over process measures.
5. Useful measures should be both conceptually appealing and easily measured (i.e., relatively simple to collect and calculate). Be sure that you have the means to measure what you care about.
6. Be aware that some data are not possible to track.
7. Keep in mind that measures can lag. Recognize and accept the intrinsic delay and limitations in obtaining some data. Some measures have a shorter lag time (e.g., staffing/productivity and financial performance), while others have a longer one.

^{*}Excerpted from: *Staying on Course with Strategic Metrics* by Susanna E. Krentz, Aaron M DeBoer, and Sasha N.Preble, in *Healthcare Financial Management*, May 1, 2006

Metrics on an organization's performance offer critical information to policymakers so they can oversee the efficiency and effectiveness of strategies and programs. Together with the state strategic plan, metrics assist organizations in allocating funds to programs that achieve desired results.

From e-newsletters

New e-Commerce Curriculum for Food Retailers Unveiled:

The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative, in coordination with the Southern Rural Development Center, is pleased to announce the release of Marketing Food Specialty Products Online, an online learning module, researched by Stan Ernst and designed by the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative team. The learning module was made for use by grocery store managers and marketers of specialty food products. Whether the food business is large with many employees or a small operation with very specialized sales, all can benefit from this self-paced learning module. With this new tool, food managers can evaluate the role of technology in their business, examine the strategies necessary to institute the technology and weigh out cost/benefit measures. If the business is already using technology, the module also presents ideas on how to refocus and evolve current uses. To view this exciting module, visit http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/curricula/rural_retailing.

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK?

Each of the focus areas listed in this section contain descriptions of activities relating to SBDC's key objectives and are the basis of the metrics by which our Strategic Plan implementation is measured and assessed.

MARKETING & ADVOCACY

In August, the Stony Brook SBDC hosted an all-day event, "Is Entrepreneurship an Option for You?" which was attended by more than 50 people. Speakers talking about everything from how to operate a home-based business to whether a franchise is a good option in today's economic climate. Representatives from Suffolk County and the Town of Brookhaven spoke about Licenses and Permits, an accountant explained legal structures, a business owner discussed the hot topic of "green businesses", and a website developer talked about establishing an e-commerce or E-bay business. becoming an entrepreneur. The topics of discussion were chosen with this in mind. The program ended at 3pm but many people lingered and continued in animated discussion. All in all it was a resounding success!

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: PRODUCTS & SERVICES

In July, Brockport SBDC Business Advisor Drake Thomas conducted a successful workshop in conjunction with the Rochester Procurement Technical Assistance Center. After participating in Nancy Fisher's Contract Reporter training earlier in the year Drake was comfortable in guiding the business participants at the workshop on a tour of the information found on the NYS Contract Reporter and the NYS Office of General Services websites. Ms. Fisher, Deputy Director of Empire State Development's Small Business Division, in an email to Jim King, said "This was exactly the result I hoped to achieve in conducting the training and I commend your staff in applying and utilizing the information learned in the training. I was pleased that Drake called to let me know, and I hope to hear of other events like this at other SBDCs around the state."

In August, the Brooklyn SBDC, in conjunction with Olé, sponsored a two-hour workshop on Understanding Legal Structures hosted at La Marketa in Williamsburg. The event was made possible with the collaboration of the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project and Brooklyn Development Corporation BEDC. The event, which was a complete success, was presented entirely in Spanish, and more than 20 Hispanic entrepreneurs attended.

Safety is a major issue on every construction site. As of July 2008, all workers on any public works project (state or municipal) in excess of \$250,000 must be certified as having completed a 10 hour U.S. Department of Labor OSHA-approved safety course. The program is intended to provide a variety of construction safety and health training to construction workers, foremen, job supervisors, and anyone involved in the construction industry. Stony Brook SBDC Senior Business Advisor Ann Garbarino coordinated an OSHA safety program on August 19-20 for construction companies in the area. The program was offered at a participant cost of \$30, attracting a class of 39 whom upon completion received OSHA construction health and safety certification. Maureen Moynihan-Fradkin, authorized Outreach Trainer and OSHA Compliance Assistance Specialist, conducted the training.

Mid-Hudson SBDC Business Advisor Don Dods and Director Arnaldo Schwerert attended a meeting with NYS Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli at the Orange County Chamber of Commerce in Montgomery. The event highlighted the state's support for venture capital investment funds as it applies to small business funding.

SPONSORS, HOST INSTITUTIONS, PARTNERS & ALLIANCES

In August, the Corning SBDC provided an informational session at "Navigating the New Road to Success: Identifying the Challenges and Opportunities for Upstate NY Small Businesses," an event hosted by the Corning and Watkins Glen Area Chambers of Commerce. The event featured Congressman Eric Massa from the 29th District and speakers from the US Chamber of Commerce, SBA, NYS Department of Labor, NYS Economic Development Council, and Business Council of NYS.

Staten Island SBDC Director Dean L. Balsamini was installed as President of the South Shore Rotary Club on Staten Island on July 1, 2009. Previously, during his nine years in Rotary, he served as President-elect, Vice-President, Secretary, and Membership Chairman of the organization. He also serves as a trustee on several Boards in the Staten Island community. Dean is an Adjunct Professor of Marketing in the Business Department at the College of Staten Island and is a member of the Provost Council at the College.

In August, two of the Research Network information specialists were nominated to hold leadership positions on the Executive Board of the Upstate NY chapter of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) – Amelia Birdsall and Alexis Mokler. Following in the footsteps of Mary Beth Bobish, a former RN staffer, Amelia is a candidate for President-Elect of the chapter and Alexis is a candidate for director of membership and recruitment. Neither Amelia nor Alexis has a contender for her respective position. Participation in the SLA results in personal and professional networking opportunities with information specialists from numerous organizations, which benefits the NYS SBDC. Best of luck to Amelia and Alexis!

TECHNOLOGY

Mid-Hudson SBDC Director Arnaldo Sehwerert contacted Michael DiTullo, Managing Director of the newly created Orange County Business Accelerator, a high tech incubator in New Windsor scheduled to open in October. Discussions are under way to establish a working relationship.

Over the summer numerous advisors have used the NYS SBDC Listserv to get information from advisors in other centers throughout the state to assist clients.

SPECIAL PROJECTS - International

The Mid-Hudson SBDC is one of the founding members of the Ulster-China Business & Trade Group, which was formed in order to guide and support business relations between China and the Ulster Region. The members are the Ulster County Development Corporation, The Ulster County Chamber of Commerce and the Mid-Hudson SBDC. In early August, Director Arnaldo Sehwerert and the Ulster-China Business & Trade Group attended a meeting in Albany with a delegation from Dezhou City headed by Mayor Cuiyun Wu. The following week, the Mid-Hudson Center hosted the visit by Mr. Wenjin Xu, US Representative for the Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area (TEDA) to promote business in the Mid-Hudson Region and showcase the area as a tourist and capital investment destination. The visit was arranged by Mr. Jinshui Zhang, Director of International Business Development Program and supported by both the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce and the Ulster County Development Corporation.

ABOUT THE GAZETTE

The SPD Gazette is a brief newsletter distributed via email and posted on the Internal Web Site. It will feature a column to be titled, What's New This Week, in which the network will share best practices in strategic objectives. A series of articles in the Gazette will explain the program's statewide approach to strategic objectives in six key areas:

- Marketing
- Professional Development and Certification
- Program Development: Products and Services
- Special Projects
- Strategic Partners and Alliances
- Technology, Information and Communication

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