The Implementation of a National Small Business Training Network Program at Miles Community College, Miles City, Montana

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ABSTRACT

Miles Community College was contacted by the National Small Business Training Network and encouraged to become part of the Network. There had been a variety of business training programs sponsored by many different institutions in Miles City. MCC needed to determine if there was a need for additional training. An Initial Needs Survey was undertaken in July of 1982. Four hundred forty businesses were contacted and questioned about their need for education in business related topics. A net response of one hundred seventy-three was attained by the response deadline of July 15, 1982. The responses were used to organize a schedule of eight Training Units as required by communities of the size if Miles City to receive NSBTN sanction. Responses on the survey were used to select the day of the week, the instructional format and the fee to be charged. When the schedule was set and speakers arranged, a brochure was printed and mailed to all businesses participating in the Initial Needs Survey. As each Training Unit was conducted, attendees were asked to complete a Training Unit Evaluation form. These forms were then tabulated and sent to the NSBTN headquarters as required. Evaluations of all Training Units were good with most attendees indicating their satisfaction with the training. Conclusions drawn from both the Initial Needs Survey and the Training Unit Evaluations warrant the continuation of the program. However, several recommendations can be made about the implementation of future NSBTN programs and reconstruction of both the Initial Needs Survey and the Training Unit Evaluation forms. It is also recommended that Miles Community College continue the Small Business Training Network sanction.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and the Small Business Administration have joined in their efforts to provide training for employers and employees of small businesses. This effort, called the National Small Business Training Network, is a group of one hundred eighty-six colleges across the nation.[1] The Network's purpose is to introduce would-be entrepreneurs and current business people to a variety of cost effective strategies for improving business and reducing the high rate of small business failure. Colleges in the Network receive technical assistance in making the analysis of local needs, curricula development, staffing and marketing of the programs. Miles Community College was contacted by the AACJC and encouraged to become a member of the NSBTN. Correspondence between Dr, Fred McKee, Director of Continuing Education at MCC and Carol Eliason, Director of the NSBTN, set forth the basic steps to follow to attain membership. This paper describes the process by which MCC applied for and obtained sanction of the National Small Business Training Network.

Statement of the Problem

In order to become a member of the National Small Business Training Network,Miles Community College had to establish that businesses in the Miles City area felt a need for such business training. The intent of

the Initial Needs Survey was to answer several questions; Did a need for business training exist in the Miles City area? Would area business people make use of such training if offered? What topics would be of the greatest interest? How would these topics best be presented? Once these questions were answered and a training program implemented, it would then be necessary to evaluate the program. This would best be done with a Training Unit Evaluation intended to determine; Did the Training Units offered meet the expressed needs of area business people to the satisfaction of the NSBTN and Miles Community College? Was each Training Unit presented effectively? Was the Training Unit practical? Were Training Unit attendees given a working knowledge of the subject presented? Two studies were undertaken by the college to find the answers to these questions.

Limitations of the Study

- The Initial Needs Survey was limited to business people in Miles City and the surrounding area.

- The Initial Needs Survey was limited to the businesses listed in the 1981-1982 publication of the Miles City Telephone Directory.

- The Initial Needs Survey was limited to the direct responses on the two page questionnaires that were returned by July 15, 1982.

- The Training Unit Evaluation Survey was limited to those persons in attendance at each Training Unit.

- The Training Unit Evaluation Survey was limited to the evaluation instrument prepared and required by the NSBTN.

- The Training Unit Evaluation Survey was limited to the direct responses given on the two page evaluation form provided.

Organization of the Study

The organization of the study is affected by the fact that it was done in two parts: the Initial Needs Survey and the Training Unit Evaluation Survey. Sections of Chapter 1, including Statement of the Problem, Limitations of the Study and Definition of Terms combine the two studies. Chapter 2, Review of Literature, examines the origin of the NSBTN program, the training offered in the Miles City area and other programs to assist the small business owner or employee. Chapter 3, Procedures, explains the steps followed in conducting both the Initial Needs Survey and the Training Unit Evaluation Survey. Chapter 4 is devoted to the Analysis and Results of the Initial Needs Survey and Chapter 5 to the Analysis and Results of the Training Unit Evaluation Survey. Chapter 6 gives the conclusions drawn and the recommendations forwarded for both the Initial Needs Survey and the Training Unit Evaluation Survey.

Definition of Terms

Initial Needs Survey - this refers to the survey done of four hundred forty local businesses to determine if the need for training existed.

Training Unit Evaluation Survey - refers to the evaluation of each of the eight Training Units offered.

NSBTN - National Small Business Training Network, the organization title of the joint program established by the AACJC and the SBA.

AACJC - American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, a professional organization of two-year schools.

SBA - Small Business Administration, the federal program for small business assistance established in 1953.

MCC - Miles Community College, the potential member of the NSBTN in the business area under study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature examined on the subject of small business training can be classified as national or local. Two sources about national training provide an insight into what has been and is being offered by community colleges across the nation. They are the Small Business Administration and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

There is a series of booklets published by the United States Small Business Administration Office of Management Assistance.[2] Thirteen hundred members of the AACJC were contacted and asked to contribute course descriptions and syllabi in the area of small business management. This information was then compiled and organized in three sections in the booklet: a list of the schools submitting useable information, a section of course descriptions and a section of course syllabi. The booklets were published as information guides to assist individuals in locating relevent training offered in their geographical area. They are also intended as a resource for schools interested in developing courses or training in the area of small business management or entrepreneurship.

The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges also did a survey of their members in the spring of 1981.[3] Five hundred thirty of the thirteen hundred members responded to the two page

questionnaire. The purpose of the survey was to determine if the schools were reaching their potential with business training. Some highlights of the survey were that, of the schools responding,

73.7% offered courses in Financial Management or Accounting

58.1% offered one or more courses in Personnel Management

58% offered 'How to Start a Business'

54.6% offered one or more courses in Advertising or Marketing

40 % offered a course in Micro-Computers for Small Businesses.

The survey also revealed that the largest amount of offerings were in the evening, with early morning and weekend events on the increase. Eighty-eight percent of the schools responding utilized community business persons for some type of small business instruction. Specialized training such as Tax Accounting, Micro-Computers and Energy Audits were staffed with community based specialists.

After review of what was being done in community colleges across the nation, it was necessary to examine the possibilities for training in the Miles City area. Little published literature was available on the topic of training in this area. But, the information that was available was provided by the Miles City Chamber of Commerce and Miles Community College.

MCC offers many classes that could be of assistance to a small business owner or manager. They include Business Law, Business Math,

Accounting, Marketing, Management, Personnel Management, Advertising and Salesmanship. These courses are taught on a regular basis from year to year. MCC has recognized the need for specialized classes based on demand. Courses that have been offered in this manner are Real Estate, Money and Banking, Microeconomics and Macroeconomics. The school has also developed programs to meet the needs of the diversified markets in Southeastern Montana. Some of the newest programs include Power Plant Technology, Computer Science and Farm and Ranch Management. In order to make these courses and programs available to business people, the college has adopted a policy requiring instructors to teach two night classes per six quarters.

The local Chamber of Commerce has been very active in providing education on business related topics. An annual event sponsored by the Chamber has been the Small Business Clinic. Representatives of the Small Business Administration, the Department of Labor, the Division of Worker's Compensation, the Montana Department of Revenue, the Human Rights Division, the Unemployment Insurance Division and the Internal Revenue Service come together to assist the business owner or manager with problems related to each specific area. The workshops have been on one day from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and, according to Mr. Art Taft, Director of the Chamber of Commerce, have been very successful. This Small Business Clinic has been held every year for four years. The Chamber has also had occasional guest speakers at their Merchant's Meetings. The speakers have covered such topics as Recognizing Counterfeit Money, Handling Bad Checks, Controlling Shoplifting and Salesmanship. Some of the topics have been presented in conjunction with movies provided by the SBA office in Helena, Montana.

Mr. Taft has also referred business people with specific needs to those sources that could be of assistance.

The Business and Professional Women's Club is a local organization for the advancement of women in business. They sponsor an annual seminar for working women in Miles City and the surrounding area. The all-day seminar is divided into several mini-sessions on a variety of topics. The 1983 program included Stress Management, Time Management and Professional Development. Local working women and students were invited to attend and this year's success insured the continuation of this type of training.

Several private businesses have presented seminars locally. KATL Radio sponsored a program entitled 'Developing Effective Local Advertising Strategies'.in February of 1982. International Business Machines has held a number of seminars at Miles Community College usually dealing with technological improvements or new applications of word and data processing equipment.

With the wide variety of subjects covered by many different organizations, it would be necessary to determine if there was a need for additional training. Miles Community College, in conjunction with the NSBTN, undertook the Initial Needs Survey to see if a gap between needs and offerings existed.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES

Miles Community College was invited by the National Small Business Training Network to participate in a small business training program. The NSBTN provided a framework of criteria and procedures within which the program had to operate. The goals of MCC's participation were two-fold: to provide the NSBTN with empirical data gathered in establishing the program and to acquaint the small businesses in the Miles City area with the educational resources available at the college. The procedures to accomplish these goals were as follows:

Step I: The Initial Needs Survey - the Initial Needs Survey instruments were provided by the NSBTN. The only alteration to the form was the insertion of 'Miles Community College' or 'Miles City' where necessary. (Appendix A)

The 1981-1982 Miles City, Montana telephone directory was used to compile a list of individuals and firms operating in the Miles City area. Four hundred forty firms were listed to be surveyed.

A cover letter was constructed to be included with the survey instruments distributed. The cover letter explained the purpose of the survey and the requested return date. (Appendix A)

All survey instruments were distributed by mail.

Step II: Computations and Processing of Initial Needs Survey - One hundred seventy-three survey instruments were returned by the July 15

return date requested.

All data were compiled and entered into MCC's records. The physical copies of the survey were mailed to the NSBTN. Pertinent information was examined to assist with the selection and scheduling of the Training Units to be offered.

Step III: Selection of Training Unit Topics - the topics listed on the survey instrument were ranked according the number of responses indicating an interest in the topic. The eight most selected topics were chosen as Training Units. They were:

Selling Techniques

Advertising and Sales Promotion

General Management and Supervision

Time Management

Motivational Psychology

Tax Information and Year End Tax Planning

Understanding and Using Financial Statements

Applications of Computer Technology for Small Business

To fulfill the requirements of the NSBTN, these eight Training Units had to be completed and evaluated by December 31, 1982.

Because of the similarity of the topics 'General Management and Supervision' and 'Managing Self. People and Organizations', they were combined and thereafter referred to as 'General Management and Supervision'. The next most selected topic was then chosen as the eighth.

Step IV: Presentation of the Training Units - A schedule for the presentation of the Training Units was arranged by Ranna Widdicombe,

Instructor, with the assistance of Dr. Fred McKee, Administrator of Continuing Education and Dr. John Koch, Dean of Instruction, Miles Community College.

Speakers for the topics selected were chosen from both in and out of the Miles City area. Criteria for selection was cost, expertise, availability and recommendation by an organization to whom the speaker had made a presentation. The speakers selected were:

Linda Reed of Retail Management Group, Billings, Mt.

C. W. Wilcox of KXXE Radio

Mr. Art Taft, Chamber of Commerce

Ranna Widdicombe, Business, Miles Community College

Teri Lipinski, Psychology, Miles Community College

Mr. Doug Benge, CPA, Rowland, Thomas & Associates

Mr. Frank Tooke, CPA, Cole and Tooke, Inc.

Dennis Lordeman, Computer Science, MCC

Loretta Andrews, Computer Science, MCC

Kent Sandefer, Computer Science, MCC

A brochure was printed with the schedule and the speakers and was mailed to each of the businesses participating in the Initial Needs Survey. (Appendix A)

Mrs. Lee Langdorf, Public Relations Director at Miles Community College, organized the advertising for the Training Units. Media used included newspaper, direct mail and radio advertising.

Step V: Training Unit Evaluation - As each topic was presented, the attendees were asked to evaluate the Training Unit. The evaluation

form used was provided by the NSBTN. (Appendix A)

Upon completion of the Training Unit and evaluation, the forms were compiled and sent to the NSBTN headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Miles Community College followed the guidelines set by the NSBTN closely in order to ensure that the school would be sanctioned during the 1982-1983 academic year. Shortly after completion of the program, the college did receive notification that the sanction would be continued.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF INITIAL NEEDS SURVEY

On July 2, 1982 the Initial Needs Survey questionnaires were mailed to four hundred forty firms in the Miles City area. Nine of questionnaires were returned as undeliverable and five were returned as being duplicate mailings. A net total of one hundred seventy-three questionnaires were returned to MCC by the deadline of July 15, 1982. It was determined that this return was sufficient for establishing the need and selecting the topics to be presented. Also, the NSBTN required that eight Training Units be completed, evaluated and the findings submitted to the NSBTN office by December 31, 1982. The NSBTN deadline was the prime-requisite in selecting July 15 as the return date.

The returned questionnaires were then analysized, the data was entered into MCC records and copies of the findings were forwarded to the NSBTN office. According to Tables #1 and #3 the majority of businesses responding were small retailers and service organizations, most having fewer than seven full time employees. The survey forms were most often completed by the owners or managers of the business. All of the topics suggested on the questionnaire had some indication of interest but the top eight were chosen as Training Units as shown in Table #5. The training topics of 'General Mangement and Supervision' and 'Managing Self,People and Organizations' were combined.

They were thereafter referred to as 'General Management and Supervision'. The similarity of the two was considered in evaluating respondant preference as well as course content and presentation. The Training Units selected in descending order of preference were:

Selling Techniques	52
Advertising and Sales Promotion	50
General Management and Supervision	49
Time Management	44
Motivational Psychology	43
Tax Information and Year End Tax Planning	37
Understanding and Using Financial Statements	37
Applications of Computer Technology For Small Business	36

After selection of the eight topics, dates for the Units were set. Information from Table #8 prompted the selection of Monday and Wednesday evenings for most of the Training Units. It was suggested by Dr. John Koch that Wednesdays be kept to a minimum because of the number of church related activities in the community on that evening. After analysis of the current MCC evening class schedule and the community events schedule, it was necessary to have some Training Units on Saturdays. It was felt that the low response to Saturday could be attributed to the wording of the question, referring to Saturday night. It was not felt that this would have an adverse impact on Saturday morning or afternoon sessions.

Analysis of the information in Table #6, the preferred instructional format, lead to the selection of a one time, three hour session

as the format. It was necessary to have two Training Units on the Saturdays selected in order to complete the series within the time frame set by the NSBTN. The following schedule was organized:

October 23 - 1. Advertising and Sales Promotion

October 23 - 2. Time Management

November 1 - General Management and Supervision

November 8 - Motivational Psychology

November 15 - Selling Techniques

November 16 - Applications of Computer Technology for Small Business

December 4 - 1. Understanding and Using Financial Statements

December 4 - 2. Tax Information and Year End Tax Planning

The payment method for the seminars was selected as a flat fee according to the most popular type of payment method shown on Table # 7. The fee charged for the Training Units was $25.00 per person. A price reduction was given on Saturdays for those persons attending both sessions. Few people responding to the survey showed interest in getting college credit for the training. Following is a tabular presentation of the data collected in the Initial Needs Survey.

TABLE #1 - TYPE OF BUSINESS

Question #1 - Which of the following best describes your business?

GROSS RESPONSES - 173	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 100%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
Retail	55	31.79
Wholesale	16	9.24
Construction	13	7.51
Service	71	41.10
Manufacturing	11	6.35
Finance	3	1.73
Transportation	4	2.31

TABLE #2 - DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDANT

Question #2 - Are you the owner/manager, assistant manager, supervisor or other, (please specify).

GROSS RESPONSES - 160	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 92.48%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
Owner/Manager	147	91.18
Assistant Manager	1	.0625
Supervisor	4	225
Other		
Salesperson	3	1.87
Office assistant	2	1.25
Director	1	.0625
Vice President	2	1.25

TABLE #3 - CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES

Question #3 - How many employees work at your business part time?
Full time?

GROSS RESPONSES - Part time, 109	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 63%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
1 to 3 employees	79	72.47
4 to 7 employees	11	10.09
8 to 10 employees	3	2.75
11 to 15 employees	9	8.25
16 to 20 employees	2	1.83
20 or more employees	3	2.75
GROSS RESPONSES - Full time, 144	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 83.23%	
1 to 3 employees	76	52.77
4 to 7 employees	39	27.08
8 to 10 employees	10	6.94
11 to 15 employees	7	4.86
16 to 20 employees	6	4.16
20 or more employees	6	4.16

TABLE #4 - FELT NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Question #4 - How much need do you feel you would have for additional training in areas related to your work?

GROSS RESPONSES - 163	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 94.21%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
No need	19	11.65
Little need	31	19.01
Some need	81	49.69
A lot of need	27	16.56
Great need	5	3.06

TABLE #5 - TOPICS FOR POSSIBLE PRESENTATION

Question #5 - What topics would be of the most benefit to you?

GROSS RESPONSES - 113	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 65.31%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
Motivational Psychology	43	39.82
Tax Information and Year End Tax Planning	37	32.74
Understanding and Using Financial Statements	37	32.74
Applications of Computer Technology For Small Business	36	31.85
How to Plan and Use Marketing Research	21	18.58
Credit Management	31	27.43
Interviewing and Training New Employees	32	28.31
Advertising and Sales Promotion	50	44.24
Training New Supervisors	11	9.73
Selling Techniques	52	46.01
Pilferage and Shoplifting	10	8.84
General Management and Supervision	42	37.16
Proper Display Techniques	22	19.46
Public Speaking	25	22.12
Money and Banking	35	30.97
How to Build Self-confidence	27	23.89
Managing Self,People, Organizations	49	43.46
Time Management	44	38.93
Speed Learning Through Effective Reading	21	18.58

TABLE #5 - TOPICS FOR POSSIBLE PRESENTATION, continued

RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSES
Stress Management	36	31.85
Becoming a Cooperative Education Training Station	7	6.19
Starting Your Own Small Business	12	10.61
Other (Please specify)	0	0

TABLE #6 - PREFERRED INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT

Question #6 - For seminars and workshops, which instructional format would you prefer?

GROSS RESPONSES - 141	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 81.50%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
Night class one night per week for three hours	71	50.35
Friday night/Saturday morning one time seminars	12	8.51
Mini-workshops, one or two nights a week for one, two or three weeks	34	24.82
One weekend workshop, all day Saturday or Sunday	11	7.80
Individual training sessions for employees at your place of business	10	7.09
Other (please specify)	1	.01

NOTE: Of the 113 questionnaires returned indicating more than little need for additional training, 141 responded to Question #6 for a response rate of 124.77%.

TABLE #7 - PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD

Question # 7 - To cover the cost of instruction and materials for a special workshop or seminar, would you be willing to pay: $12 per hour, a flat fee of $20 to $75 or another method, (please specify).

GROSS RESPONSES - 140	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 80.92%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
$12 per hour for 3 to 6 hours		
Yes	22	15.71
No	104	74.28
A flat fee of $20 - $75 depending on length and content of course		
Yes	115	82.14
No	35	25.00
Another method (please specify)		
Yes	3	2.14
No	1	.71

NOTE: Of the 113 questionnaires returned indicating more than little need for additional training, 140 responded to Qeustion #7 for a response rate of 123.89%.

TABLE #8 - PREFERRED NIGHT OF THE WEEK

Question #8 - If interested in taking classes, wich night of the week would you prefer?

GROSS RESPONSES - 145	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 83.81%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
Monday	47	26.85
Tuesday	31	17.71
Wednesday	43	24.57
Thursday	34	19.42
Friday	12	6.85
Saturday	5	2.85

NOTE: Of the 113 questionnaires returned indicating more than little need for additional training, 145 responded to Question #8 for a response rate of 154.86%.

TABLE #9 - INTEREST IN COLLEGE CREDIT

Question #9 - Would you be interested in college credit for any of these seminars?

GROSS RESPONSES - 97	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 56.06%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
Yes	38	39.17
No	59	60.82

NOTE: Of the 113 questionnaires returned indicating more than little need for additional training, 97 responded to Question #9 for a response rate of 85.84%.

TABLE #10 - WILLINGNESS TO PAY MCC FEES

Question #10 - If interested in college credit, would you be willing to pay the standard Miles Community College tuition fee for it?

GROSS RESPONSES = 45	GROSS RESPONSES AS PERCENT OF RETURN (173) - 26.01%	
RESPONSES	NUMBER RESPONDING	PERCENT OF GROSS RESPONSE
Yes	37	82.22
No	8	17.77

NOTE: Of th 113 questionnaires returned indicating more than little need for additional training, 45 responded to Question #10 for a response rate of 39.82%.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF TRAINING UNIT EVALUATIONS

The Miles Community College Training Unit series began with the Advertising and Sales Promotion and Time Management units on Saturday, October 23, 1982. A prerequisite for conducting the Training Units was that at least three people attend. Because of this minimum, the unit on Advertising and Sales Promotion was cancelled. This limit also caused the cancellation of the unit on December 4, 1982 on Tax Information and Year End Tax Planning. Evaluations of six Units that were presented were analyzed and forwarded to the NSBTN office in Washington D.C. The evaluation form was provided by the NSBTN and a facsimile is provided in Appendix A.

Three participants attended the second Training Unit offered on Saturday, October 23, 1982. Ms. Teri Lipinski, an MCC psychology instructor, presented the unit from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. Three of the four attendees had heard of the training through the direct mail pamphlet while one learned of it through the local newspaper. All had mentioned their attendance was because of a personal need for instruction in time management. One person attending had a Bachelor degree and all had attended some type of workshop or seminar previously, two indicated that the seminars had been sponsored by the SBA. All three of the attendees felt the information was presented effectively and that it was practical. Two of the three also indicated that they agreed that

the course was sufficient for their purpose and they were given good working knowledge of the subject presented and that the course helped them. One person strongly agreed to the same statements. Two of the three strongly agreed and one agreed that they were able to acquire the practical skills and knowledge necessary to solve their business problems. One person responded to Question #8 by saying they were planning many changes. No one responded to Question #9 or #10, possibly because they require estimations about conditions that may or may not occur. One person responded to Question #11 by saying the dollar savings to their firm would be considerable. Two people responded to Question #12 asking if the money, time and effort they expended was worthwhile and both answered 'yes'. Attendees of this Training Unit were engaged in the businesses of retailing, banking and commercial service. Two indicated they were owners or managers of these businesses while the other was not. One had managed a business before while two had not. One business had been in existence for twelve to fifteen years while the other two had been in business more than sixteen years. All three of the attendees indicated that they would benefit from additional training. They showed an interest in Cash Flow, Accounting, Marketing, Market Analysis, Inventory Control and Personnel. There were two males and one female attending, none of whom were veterans and all of whom were white.

The 'General Management and Supervision' Training Unit was held on Monday, November 4, 1982, from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. and was presented by Ms. Ranna Widdicombe, Business Instructor at MCC. There were ten people attending the training, most of whom heard about the course through the

the direct mail pamphlet or the local newspaper. Three had heard of course from a friend or employer. One attendee had a Bachelor degree, one an Associate degree, six had high school diplomas and ten had continued their education through seminars, workshops or evening college courses. Two had attended other SBA sponsored seminars. One hundred percent of those attending felt the information was presented effectively and that the material presented was practical. Nine of ten agree or strongly agreed that the course was sufficient for their purpose, they were given good working knowledge of the subject presented in the course and that they were able to acquire the practical skills necessary to solve their business problems. One person was undecided in these three areas. All ten indicated the course helped them. None of the attendees responded to Questions #8, #9, #10 or #11. All ten said the money, time and effort expended was worthwhile. One person attending was in the construction business while four were in commercial or industrial service and five in other service organizations. Six indicated they owned on managed the business, three said they did not for a response rate of 90%. Five indicated that they had managed a business before while five said they had not. Six persons answered Question #15 for a response rate of 60%. Half of these said their businesses had been in existence for up to three years, one from eight to eleven years and two for over sixteen years. Eight of the nine responding to Question #17 felt they would benefit from additional training. They indicated an interest in the areas of Accounting, Marketing, Cash Flow, Market Analysis, and Cost/Benefit Analysis. There were seven women and three men, one of whom was a veteran, in attendance. All ten

classified themselves as white.

Ms. Teri Lipinski of MCC was the instructor for the Training Unit on Motivational Psychology held on November 8, 1982 from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. Eleven people attended. Eight had heard about the training from the direct mail pamphlet, two from the local newspaper, one from a friend and one heard of it in the Chamber of Commerce newsletter. One person responded to Question #3 by saying they wanted to improve their time management skills. Two attendees had Bachelor degrees, one an Associate degree, four had high school diplomas and seven indicated they continued their education through seminars, workshops and evening courses. For three people, this was the first experience with continuing education. All eleven of the attendees, for a response rate of 100%, felt the information was presented effectively and that the material was practical. All the people attending felt the course was sufficient for their purposes, that they were given good working knowledge of the subject and that the course helped them. Eight people agreed that they had acquired the practical skills and knowledge needed to solve their business problems but the rest were undecided on this subject. No one responded to Question #8. One person indicated that there had been an increase in personnel efficiency and a decrease in material waste as a result of the Training Unit. No one responded to Question #11. All attendees responding to Question #12 said the money, time and effort expended was worthwhile. Two in attendance came from retail businesses and eight from service organizations. One person did not indicate their type of business. Five presently owned or managed the business while six did not. Five also indicated they had previously

been managers while six had not. Most of the businesses represented at this Training Unit, six businesses, had been in operation for sixteen years or more with one less than one year, two from one to three years, one from eight to eleven years and one from twelve to fifteen years. Nine persons indicated they could benefit from more training in the areas of Personnel, Inventory Control, Marketing, Advertising, and Cost/Benefit Analysis. Nine women and two men, one of whom was a veteran, attended the Training Unit. All eleven were white.

The Training Unit entitled 'Improving your Selling Techniques' was the most attended of the series. It was held on November 15, 1982 from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. and was presented by Ms. Linda Reed of Retail Management Group from Billings, Montana. Twenty-two people attended, eleven at the request of their employer. Four had learned of the training from the direct mail pamphlet, four from the local newspaper, one from a friend and one from the Chamber newsletter. Most attended because of their employer, others because of a personal interest in improving their selling. Three had Bachelor degrees, one an Associate degree and nine had high school diplomas. Seventeen had attended seminars, workshops or evening classes to further their education. All felt the information was presented effectively and that the material was practical. In response to the statement 'In general, the course I attended was sufficient for my purpose', six strongly agreed, thirteen agreed, two were undecided and one disagreed. In response to 'I was given good working knowledge of the subject presented in the course', nine strongly agreed, ten agreed, two were undecided and one disagreed. In response to the statement 'As a result of the course, I was able to acquire the practi-

cal skills and knowledge needed to solve my business problems', four strongly agreed, thirteen agreed, three were undecided and one strongly disagreed. In response to 'The course helped me', six strongly agreed, thirteen agreed, two were undecided and one disagreed. No one responded to Questions #8 through #11. Sixteen of the twenty-two responded to #12 indicating the course was worth the money, time and effort expended. Ten of the respondants came from retail businesses, one from a wholesale business, nine from service organizations and two did not indicate business type. Ten were either owners or managers of the businesses while twelve were not. Five had been managers before and sixteen had not. One did not reply. Of the businesses represented, one was less than one year old, five were from four to seven years, three from eight to eleven years, two from twelve to fifteen years and five were more than sixteen years old. Six people did not respond as to the age of their business. Twenty of the attendees felt they would benefit from more training and showed interest in Accounting, Marketing, Market Analysis, Advertising, Cash Flow, Inventory Control and Personnel. There were fifteen women and seven men, two of whom were veterans, in attendance. All indicated 'white' as their race.

The next Training Unit to be held was 'Applications of Computer Technology for Small Businesses'. This was a panel presentation on November 16, 1982 from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. Mr. Dennis Lordeman, Mrs. Loretta Andrews and Mr. Kent Sandefer, Computer Science Instructors at MCC, and several equipment vendors were on hand to explain applications of computers for small businesses and to answer questions or operate the equipment. Six people attended. Five had learned of the

seminar through the direct mail pamphlet and two had heard of it in the local newspaper. All indicated an interest in the subject had prompted their attendance. Three had Bachelor degrees and three had high school diplomas. Four had continued their education by attending workshops and seminars, one of which was sponsored by the SBA. Five felt the information was presented effectively and one did not. Five felt the material was practical and one expressed no opinion. In response to 'In general, the course I attended was sufficient for my purpose', one strongly agreed, three agreed and two disagreed. In response to 'I was given good working knowledge of the subject presented in the course', one strongly agreed, four agreed and one disagreed. in response to 'As a result of the course I was able to acquire the practical skills necessary to solve my business problems', one strongly agreed, one agreed, two were undecided and two disagreed. In response to'The course helped me', two strongly agreed, three agreed and one disagreed. No one responded to Questions #8 through #11. Five of the six attending felt the money, time and effort expended was worthwhile and one felt it was not. The businesses represented included retail, construction, wholesale and service organizations. Three were from one to three years old, one from four to seven years and two had been in business for more than sixteen years. All six in attendance were the current owners or managers of the business and three had owned or managed a business previously. All six indicated they would benefit from additional training in the areas of Accounting and Personnel. There was one woman and five men, three of whom were veterans, attending. All indicated they were white.

The final Training Unit to be conducted was that of 'Understanding and Using Financial Statements'. This session was presented by Mr. Frank Tooke of Cole and Tooke, CPA's. It was held on December 4, 1982 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Of the six attending, three had heard of the course from the direct mail pamphlet, one from the local newspaper and two from local bankers. Two attending had Bachelor degrees and two had high school diplomas. All six felt the information was presented effectively and the material presented was practical. In response to 'In general, the course I attended was sufficient for my purpose', one strongly agreed, four agreed and one was undecided. In response to 'I was given good working knowledge of the subject presented in the course', two strongly agreed, one agreed, two were undecided and one disagreed. in response to 'As a result of the course, I was able to acquire the practical skills and knowledge needed to solve my business problems', one strongly agreed, three agreed, one was undecided and one disagreed. In response to 'The course helped me', three strongly agreed and three agreed. No one responded to Question #8 through #11. All six attending felt the money, time and effort expended was worthwhile. Businesses in attendence were construction and service organizations. Five of the attendees were not owners or managers and one was. Five had never owned or managed a business and one had. Five of the businesses represented had been in existence for more than sixteen years. One had been in existence from four to seven years. One person felt they would not benefit from additional training but the other five showed interest in Accounting, Tax Preparation, Marketing, Cash Flow, Inventory Control and Cost/Benefit Analysis. Three women and three men, one of whom was a veteran, were attending and all indicated their race as 'white'.

After individual analysis of the Training Unit Evaluations, a cumulative analysis was completed. The 'typical' respondant was a white female or male who is not a veteran and who attended a four hour course offered on a Monday in November of 1982. The 'typical' student attending sought information to aid in operating a small retail firm. The student had received previous training in the business area primarily on the high school level and supplemented by business oriented seminars and workshops. The student felt the material was presented effectively and that the material was practical. He/She agrees,but not strongly, that the course was sufficient, that a good working knowledge was obtained, that practical skills were acquired and that the course was helpful. The student made no changes and made no estimates as to changes in operations or expenditures that resulted from attending the course. It was felt the course had been worthwhile and that benefits could be obtained from additional training, especially in the areas of accounting, marketing and advertising. This analysis of the 'typical' student was compared to the national 'typical' student. Information about the national average was given in a report submitted by George T. Soloman, Research and development Specialist for the Small Business Administration.[4] Comparison with the 1981 national data revealed few differences between 'typical' students. The only major difference was in the length of training, with the national average being 15 hours and Miles Community College's was 4 hours.

Further analysis revealed that 82.7% felt the course was worthwhile and 87.9% felt they would benefit from additional training,

hence suggesting the program should be continued. 31.03% of the respondents desired additional Accounting training, 29.31% Marketing and 32.75% Advertising, giving information for possible topics for the next series. Direct mail and local newspapers were the mediums that reached the greatest number of participants, 55.63%. The balance of the participants were reached through the remaining six media. Only 1.72% of the participants provided feedback about possible increases or decreases in their firms operations and 1.72% were able to estimate dollar savings. This may suggest more accurate data could be gained by mailing a follow-up study to the participants to get information concerning the utility of the course.

In conclusion, the information from both the individual analysis and the cumulative analysis of the Training Unit Evaluations suggests several strong points in the program and improvements that could be made. Recommendations for these improvements affect both the Training Units and the Training Unit Evaluation forms. These recommendations are presented in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions drawn from the Initial Needs Survey can be directly related to the questions the survey was intended to answer. A need for training did exist in Miles City with just over 69% of the respondents to the survey indicating some, a lot of or great need for training. As many as fifty-two requested one topic with the average number of requests being 30.9. This indicated the local business people have an interest in training and would make use of it if offered. The results of the survey gave an indication of what should be offered, what format for presentation should be used and when the training should take place.

Several conclusions could be drawn about the Training Units after they were offered and evaluated. Indications from the evaluations were that the Training Units met the expressed needs of the area business people. Most attendees felt the Training Units were presented effectively and they left with a good working knowledge of the subject presented. There was,however,a much lower turnout for the Training Units than the Initial Needs Survey would indicate. The surveys and the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the surveys have revealed several recommendations to improve the program and to facilitate its operation in the future.

1) It is recommended that the Initial Needs Survey instrument be reconstructed to reflect the unique characteristics of Southeastern

Montana. Questions #1 and #2 should remain the same. Question #3 should be rewritten to include 'seasonal employees' to reflect the agricultural nature of the area. Question #4 could be abridged by combining 'no need' and 'little need' to read 'little or no need'. Question #5 should be left intact with the inclusion of pertinent topics as the need arises. Mcc could benefit from accumulation of this data over a long period of time and the information could be used for long term curricula planning. Question #6 should be shortened to the most feasible instructional formats, keeping in mind this years poor response to weekend Training Units. Question #7 should not be a 'yes or no' question but should allow the respondent to choose one preferred payment method. Because of the lack of interest in weekend sessions, Saturday could be dropped from the choices given in Question #8. These recommended changes in the survey instrument may encourage a higher respone rate and more accurate answering of the questions asked. A suggested Initial Needs Survey instrument has been included in Appendix B.

2) It is also recommended that, because of the inclusion of Question #17 on the Training Unit Evaluation form, the Initial Needs Survey need not be done every year but every three to five years to determine if continuation of the NSBTN program is warranted.

3) It is recommended that several changes be made in the Training Unit Evaluation form. The form's largest flaw lies in Questions #7 through #11. These questions require the participant to respond to conditions that may or may not occur. These questions would yield more accurate data if they were to be part of a follow-up study. The follow-up study could be administered to the participants by mail three to six months following their completion of the Training Unit. A sample

follow-up study form is included in Appendix B. It is also suggested that the college complete Question #1 of the form with the information about the date and title of the Training Unit.

4) After deletion of Questions #7 through #11, changes in the structure of the Training Unit Evaluation form could facilitate participant response. A sample Training Unit Evaluation form is included in Appendix B.

5) It is recommended that the Training Units be scheduled over the period of a year rather than four months, as with the 1982 series. Nights for the Training Units could then be chosen further in advance and could more closely reflect the survey results as the most convenient: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. With the Training Units further apart, promotion could concentrate on each unit and be more intensive.

6) It is recommended that the direct mail pamphlet be continued as one of the major advertising media used for the program. Many attendees indicated that this was their major source of information about the Training Units.

7) Because of the good turnout at the Training Unit conducted by Ms. Linda Reed of Retail Management Group, Billings, Montana, it is recommended that more Training Units be presented by out-of-town guest speakers. This would necessitate funding by the college but reimbursement would be possible with greater attendence expected.

8) It is recommended that Question #12, referring to whether or not the money, time and effort expended was worthwhile, should also be included in the follow-up study. The comparison between responses on the Training Unit Evaluation and the follow-up study could be significant.

9) It is also recommended that the college consider a computer software package for analysis of the results of both future Initial Needs Surveys and Training Unit Evaluations. This could also facilitate the follow-up study and provide storage for all required NSBTN information.

It is hoped that these conclusions and recommendations aid both the future Miles Community College NSBTN programs and others in planning, implementing and evaluating a successful National Small Business Training Network program.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY FORMS

MILES COMMUNITY COLLEGE BUSINESS EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY SURVEY

1. Which of the following best describes your business?

_____Retail
_____Wholesale
_____Construction
_____Service
_____Manufacturing
_____Finance
_____Transportation

2. Are you: the Owner or Manager _____ Assistant Manager _____
Supervisor_____ Other (Please specify)_____

3. How many employees work at your business?
Number working full time_____ Number working part time _____

4. How much need do you feel you would have for additional training in areas related to you work?
No need_____ Little need_____ Some need_____ A lot of need_____
Great need_____

**********IF YOU CHECKED NO OR LITTLE NEED, DO NOT COMPLETE*********
THE REST OF THE SURVEY

5. What topics would be of the most benefit to you ?

_____Motivational Psychology
_____Tax Information/Year End Tax Planning
_____Understanding and Using Financial Statements
_____Applications of Computer Technology for Small Business
_____How to Plan and Use Marketing Research for Businesses
_____Credit Management
_____Interviewing and Training New Employees
_____Advertising and Sales Promotion
_____Training New Supervisors
_____Selling Techniques
_____Pilferage and Shoplifting
_____General Management and Supervision

5. Topics, continued

_____Proper Display Techniques
_____Public Speaking
_____Money and Banking
_____How to Build Selfconfidence
_____Managing Sel, People and Organizations
_____Time Management
_____Speed Learning Through Effective Reading
_____Stress Management
_____Becoming a Cooperative Education Training Station
_____Starting Your Own Small Business
_____Other(Please specify)

6. For seminars and workshops, which instructional format would you prefer? _____Night class, one night per week for three hours
_____Friday night/Saturday morning one time seminars
_____Mini-workshops, one night per week for one, two or three weeks
_____One weekend workshop, all day Saturday or Sunday
_____Individual training sessions for employees in your business
_____Other(Please specify)_____

7. To cover the cost of instruction and materials for a special workshop or seminar, would you be willing to pay:
_____yes _____no $12 per hour for 3 to 6 hours
_____yes _____no a flat fee of $20 to $75 depending on the content and length of the course
_____yes _____no another method of payment (Please specify)_____

8. If interested in taking classes, which nights of the week would you prefer? _____Mon. _____Tues. _____Wed _____thurs _____Fri. _____Sat.

9. Would you be interested in college credit for any of these sessions?

_____yes _____no

10. If interested in college credit, would you be willing to pay the standard Miles Community College tuition and fee charge for it?

_____yes _____no

11. Please list any suggestions or comments on how the Business Administration division of Miles Community College might meet your needs as a business person in the Miles City area:

July 2, 1982

Dear Businessperson:

Miles Community College has submitted an application to become part of the National Small Business Training Network. In order to meet the needs of Miles City, we would like your input into the training to be offered.

Attached is a survey pertaining to this subject. Please complete the survey form and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. We would like to receive your reply by July 15 in order to schedule the first Training Unit for August.

We would greatlty appreciate your participation in this project and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Fred McKee
Director, NSBTN
Miles Community College
2715 Dickinson
Miles City, Montana 59301

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please note: The information you provide is confidential. It will be used to develop a national evaluation of two year college small business training.)

1) a) When was the course offered?(Sarting date)_____
   b) What day of the week?.....
   c) What time of day?.....
   d) Total number of hours.....

2) How did you learn of the course?
   a) ___From a friend
   b) ___Diect mail pamphlet
   c) ___Local newspaper
   d) ___University publication
   e) ___Local banker
   f) ___Local SBA office
   g) ___Radio or TV advertisement
   h) ___ Heard about at luncheon
   i) ___Other (Please specify)
   _____

3. Why did you attend this course?_____

4) What previous forms of training/classroom instruction have you had in regard to sarting/operating your own business?
   a) ___Business degree
   b) ___Associate degree
   c) ___High school
   d) ___Workshops,seminars
   e) ___Evening college courses
   f) ___SBA sponsored courses other than this course
   g) ___None
   h) ___Other (Please specify)
   _____

5. Did you feel the information was presented effectively?
   a) ___Yes b) ___No c) ___ No opinion

6. Did you feel that the material presented in this course was practical?
   a) ___Yes b) ___No c) ___ No opinion

7. (Please use the following scale to indicate your response to the statements below: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree, UN=Undecided/Not applicable; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree).

   In general, the course I attended was sufficient for my purpose.
   a) ___SA b) ___A c) ___UN d) ___D e) ___SD

   I was given a good working knowledge of the subject presented in the course.
   a) ___SA b) ___A c) ___UN d) ___D e) ___SD

   As a result of the course, I was able to acquire the practical skills and knowledge needed to solve my business problems.
   a) ___SA b) ___A c) ___UN d) ___D e) ___SD

   The course helped me.
   a) ___SA b) ___A c) ___UN d) ___D e) ___SD

8. As a result of attending the course, have you made any changes? If so, what were they? (Please write any comments).

9. As a result of your attending the course, there has been an INCREASE in your firm's (check all that apply):
   a)__Gross sales
   b)__Employment
   c)__Net profit
   d)__Personnel efficiency
   e)__Other(specify)_____

10. As a result of your attending the course, there has been a DECREASE in your firm's (check all that apply):
   a)__Material costs
   b)__Material waste
   c)__Theft
   d)__Personnel costs
   e)__Marketing costs
   f)__Promotional costs
   g)__Other (specify)_____

11. The estimated dollar savings to your firm as a result of attending the course is $_____.

12. Was the money,time and effort you expended on the course worthwhile?
   a)__Yes
   b)__No

13. Check the type of business you are engaged in or plan to be engaged in:
   a)__Retail
   b)__Construction
   c)__Wholesale
   d)__Service (commercial/industrial)
   e)__Service (Other)
   f)__Manufacturing

14. Do you presently own, operate or manage a small business?
   a)__Yes
   b)__No

15. How many years has your business been in existence?
   a)__Less than one year
   b)__1-3 years
   c)__4-7 years
   d)__8-11 years
   e)__12-15 years
   f)__16 or more years

16. Have you ever owned/managed another business?
   a)__Yes
   b)__No

17. Do you feel that you would benefit from additional training?
   a)__Yes
   b)__No

   If so, what type(s) of training?
   a)__Accounting
   b)__Tax preparation
   c)__Marketing
   d)__Market analysis
   e)__Advertising
   f)__Cash flow
   g)__Inventory control
   h)__Personnel
   i)__Cost/benefit analysis
   j)__Other (specify)_____
   _____

18. Sex:
   a)__Male
   b)__Female

19. Veteran:
    a)__Yes b)__No

20. Racial/Ethnic status:
    a)__Black d)__Asian/Pacific Islander
    b)__Hispanic e)__White
    c)__American Indian f)__Other (specify)_____

21. Other comments: _____

_____

APPENDIX B

RECOMMENDED SURVEY FORMS

MILES COMMUNITY COLLEGE BUSINESS EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY SURVEY

1. Which of the following best describes your business?

_____Retail	_____Manufacturing	_____Finance
_____Wholesale	_____Transportation	_____Other (specifiy)
_____Service	_____Construction	_____

2. Are you: the owner_____ the manager_____ other_____
   (if 'other' please specify_____)

3. How many employees are employed by your firm?
   _____Full time _____Part time _____ Seasonal

4. Do you feel you need additional training in areas related to your firm or business?
   _____Great Need _____Some need _____Little or no need

******If you checked little or no need, thank you for participating**** and please return this survey to Miles Community College. If you checked some or great need, please complete the rest of the survey.

5. What topics or offerings would be of the most benefit to you?

_____Motivational Psychology
_____Year End Tax Planning
_____Understanding and Using Financial Statements
_____Computer Technology for Small Businesses
_____Planning and Using Market Research
_____Credit Management
_____Interviewing and Training New Employees
_____Advertising and Sales Promotion
_____Training of Supervisors
_____Selling Techniques
_____Pilferage and Shoplifting
_____Management and Supervision
_____Display Techniques

5. Topics or offerings, continued...

_____Public Speaking
_____Money and Banking
_____Building Self-confidence
_____Time Management
_____Speed Learning Through Effective Reading
_____Stress Management
_____Starting Your Own Small Business
_____Becoming a Cooperative Education Training Station
_____Other(please specify)_____

6. Which seminar format would you prefer? Check one.

_____Night class, once for three hours
_____Mini-workshops, (1 or 2 nights a week for three weeks)
_____A weekend workshop, (all day Saturday or Sunday)
_____Other (please specify)_____

7. To cover the cost of the seminar, which payment type would you prefer? Check one

_____A per hour fee _____A flat fee _____Other (please specify)
_____

8. Which night of the week would you prefer for the seminars?

_____Monday _____Tuesday _____Wednesday _____Thursday _____Friday

9. Would you be interested in receiving college credit for the seminars?

_____Yes _____No

10. To receive college credit, would you be willing to pay the standard Miles Community College fees and tuitions?

_____Yes _____No

11. Please comment on how Miles Community College might be of aid to the business community in the Miles City area?

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please note: the information you provide is strictly confidential. It will be used to develop national standards for evaluating two-year college small business training. It is essential that all questions that apply to you be answered.)

1. When did you attend the course? Date_____

   Day of week_____Time of day_____

   Title of course_____

2. As a result of attending the course, there has been an INCREASE in your firm's...

   _____Gross Sales
   _____Employment
   _____Net Profit
   _____Personnel Efficiency
   _____Other (please specify)
   _____

3. As a result of attending the course, there has been a DECREASE in your firm's....

   _____Material costs
   _____Material Waste
   _____Theft
   _____Personnel Costs
   _____Marketing Costs
   _____Promotional Costs
   _____Other (please specify)
   _____

4. Please use the following scale to indicate your response to the statements below: SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, UN - Undecided, D - Disagree, SD - Strongly Disagree.

   In general, the course was sufficient for my purpose.

   _____SA _____A _____UN _____D _____SD

   I was given good working knowledge of the subject.

   _____SA _____A _____UN _____D _____SD

   As a result of the course I was able to acquire the practical skills and knowledge needed to solve some of my business problems.

   _____SA _____A _____UN _____D _____SD

   The course, in general, has aided me in my business operations.

   _____SA _____A _____UN _____D _____SD

5. The estimated dollar saving to your firm as a result of your attending the course is $_____.

6. At the present time, do you feel the money, time and effort you expended on the course was worthwhile?
   _____Yes _____No _____No opinion

7. At the present time, would you attend any future SBA cosponsored courses at this college?
   _____Yes _____No _____No opinion

8. Additional comments:

Your cooperation in completing thie questionnaire will help to plan and implement future small business courses. Thank you for your cooperation.

ALTERNATIVE PARTICIPANT EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please note: the information you provide is strictly confidential. It will be used to develop national standards for evaluating two-year college small business training. It is essential that all of the questions that apply to you be answered.

1. Course title: _____

   Date_____ Day of week_____ Time _____

2. Sex: Male_____ Female_____

3. Armed Forces veteran? Yes_____ No_____

4. Racial/Ethnic Heritage?

   _____American Indian
   _____Black
   _____Hispanic
   _____White
   _____Asian/Pacific Islander
   _____Other (please specify)
   _____

5. What is the type of business you are engaged in or plan to be engaged in?

   _____Construction
   _____Manufacturing
   _____Retail
   _____Service(Commercial/Industrial)
   _____Service(other)
   _____Other (please specify)
   _____

6. Do you presently own, operate or manage a small business?

   _____Yes
   _____No

7. How many years has the business you work for been in operation?

   _____Less than one year
   _____1 - 3 years
   _____4 - 7 years
   _____8 - 11 years
   _____12 - 15 years
   _____16 or more years

8. Have you ever owned or managed a business previously?

   _____Yes
   _____No

9. Why did you attend this course?_____

10. What previous forms of training have you had in regard to starting or managing your own business?

_____Bachelor degree
_____Associate degree
_____High school
_____Workshops or seminars
_____Evening college classes
_____SBA sponsored courses other than this course
_____Other (please specify)
_____

11. Do you feel you would benefit from additional training?

_____Yes
_____No

12. If you replied 'Yes', please check as many of the following as appropriate:

_____Accounting
_____Tax Preparation
_____Marketing
_____Market Analysis
_____Advertising
_____Cash Flow Improvement
_____Inventory Control
_____Personnel
_____Cost/Benefit Analysis
_____Other (please specify)
_____

13. How did you learn of this course?

_____From a friend
_____Direct mail pamphlet
_____Local newspaper
_____Local banker
_____Chamber of Commerce
_____Radio or TV advertisement
_____Other (please specify)
_____

14. At the present time, do you feel the money, time and effort you expended on the course was worthwhile?

_____Yes _____No _____No opinion

15. Did you feel the course information was presented effectively?

_____Yes _____No _____No opinion

16. Did you feel the course material was practical?

_____Yes _____No _____No opinion

17. At the present time, would you attend any future SBA cosponsored courses at this college?

_____Yes _____No _____No opinion

18. Additional comments:

Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire will help to plan and implement future small business courses. A follow-up questionnaire will be mailed to you in three months. You assistance in completing the follow-up survey is essential. Thank you for your cooperation.