MINNESOTA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

Shaping the future of small business

2005 Strategic Plan

October 13 and 14, 2004
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MISSION\textsuperscript{1}

Minnesota Small Business Development Centers (MNSBDCs) provide quality business development assistance to existing and prospective businesses to promote growth, profitability, innovation, increased productivity, management improvement, employment and economic development.

VISION\textsuperscript{2}

Through mutually beneficial partnerships, utilization of emerging and interactive technology, and promotion, the MNSBDCs are recognized as the pre-eminent, nationally accredited providers of business development services in Minnesota, generating significant economic impact and return on investment.

OPERATING VALUES AND BELIEFS\textsuperscript{3}

1. SBDCs deliver counseling and training that is timely and useful to clients in making business decisions.
2. SBDC counseling and training services are directed at meeting identified client needs.
3. SBDC counseling relationships are based on an understanding between the SBDC and the client of mutual expectations.
4. SBDC client satisfaction and impact of services are assessed on a regular basis, with results utilized to effect continuous improvement.
5. SBDC counselors are competent in the areas in which they offer assistance and maintain currency in their field.
6. SBDC counselors avoid conflicts of interest in their relationships with clients and the SBDC program.
7. SBDC personnel maintain a visible presence in the economic development community, within their host institutions, and in their service area.

8. SBDCs deliver services that are innovative and fundamental in shaping the future of small business.

9. Regional differences are recognized and respected to the extent possible within the constraints of effective and efficient program delivery.

10. Through mutual cooperation, responsibility and financial support, the Minnesota SBDC network is a partnership program of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and sponsoring regional centers working in collaboration to achieve specified, attainable program goals.

MARKET, CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Market

SBDCs serve for-profit businesses throughout Minnesota that meet the SBA definition of a “small business.”

Customers

SBDC customer segments are:

- Information transfers/inquiries
  - An information transfer is a contact with a business or individual of a substantive nature that does not meet the classifications below or the minimum standards defined as counseling or training.

- Nascent entrepreneurs
  - A nascent entrepreneur is an individual who has taken one or more active steps to form a business and is in the stage of seeking assistance.

- Existing start-up businesses
  - An existing start-up business is an organization engaged in activities of commerce fundamental to the mission of the business which has been in business for less than one year.

______________________________

4 Adopted April 2002.
• Existing established businesses
  o An existing established business is an organization engaged in activities of commerce fundamental to the mission of the business which has been in business for more than one year.

• Training attendees
  o A training attendee is an individual who attends a structured program of knowledge, information, or experience on a business-related topic.

• Stakeholder Priorities
  o Individuals identified as stakeholder priorities, e.g., women, ethnic minorities, veterans, targeted industries, businesses in disaster areas.

Because existing businesses offer greater potential for economic growth, Minnesota SBDCs plan to deliver a minimum of 70% of its counseling resources (i.e. counseling hours) on clients who are already in business or who are actively developing their business plans (i.e., existing start-up and established businesses). Nascent entrepreneurs and information transfers are directed to training seminars, publications and other partner technical assistance resources to assist them in business research and developing their business plans.

**Stakeholders**

SBDC stakeholders are:

• Host partner institutions, including federal, state and local hosts
• Funding sources; public and private
• Community and economic development organizations
• Bank and non-bank financing sources
• Program personnel, including private consultants
SBDC SERVICES

SBDC services include:

- One-on-one, free confidential business development counseling
- Business management training
- Access to business and regulatory information
- Loan packaging

Numerous educational, for-profit and non-profit organizations throughout Minnesota offer business management training to existing and prospective business owners. In contrast, relatively few offer the level and extent of one-on-one counseling offered by Small Business Development Centers, at a price small entrepreneurs are able to pay. Accordingly, the Minnesota SBDC network focuses the majority of its resources on delivery of counseling services. All regions are, however, expected to sponsor and cosponsor training programs to meet the needs of the small business community they serve and utilize program resources efficiently in delivery of those programs. Therefore, each regional MNSBDC plans to partner with other small business assistance organizations to cosponsor a minimum of ten (10) training programs each program year. All MNSBDC sponsored or cosponsored training programs are expected to be, at a minimum, self-supporting.

MNSBDCs offer innovative quality business development assistance tailored to meet the current and future needs of Minnesota’s small businesses. Historically, identified needs have included counseling in the areas of business planning, marketing, and financial analysis and loan packaging. Therefore, each regional MNSBDC plans to offer as its core services business assistance in these areas, including assisting its clients in the approval of a minimum of fifty (50) loan packages each program year. Since loan packaging requires a significant investment of counseling time, SBDCs will practice due diligence before offering this service.

QUALITY CONTROL

The Minnesota SBDC network takes pride in delivering high quality services that are responsive to the needs of both clients and major stakeholders. To this end, centers are monitored for client satisfaction and compliance with the requirements of the Cooperative Agreement.

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5 Adopted April 2002.
Client Satisfaction
The SBDC network, through the lead center, conducts an annual client satisfaction survey. The lead center enters the results of completed surveys in a database and mails copies of the returned surveys to the regional director for review and follow-up. Regional directors are expected to review all survey comments and take prompt and appropriate action in accordance with the SBDC Operations Manual. The lead center tabulates survey responses, conducts an analysis, and distributes it to regional directors and others as appropriate. Results of the client satisfaction survey are considered in determining funding allocations for the following year.

Training Seminar Evaluations
SBDCs are expected to collect evaluations from participants at the conclusion of every sponsored or cosponsored training event. Evaluations are entered into the client tracking system. Regional directors are expected to review survey results and comments to assess the value of the training event. The lead center reviews session results periodically and conducts an annual statewide analysis. State results are distributed to regional centers, SBA and others as appropriate.

Selection and Retention of Consultants
The Minnesota SBDC network has many excellent counselors, as demonstrated by the large number of clients who highly value their counseling experience. Staff counselors are selected using the host institution’s recruitment and selection processes. Outside consultants are selected on a competitive basis. Written contracts are required of all outside consultants. The regional director is responsible for assuring counselors are competent and appropriately trained.

Code of Ethics
All SBDC personnel must agree to comply with the SBDC Code of Ethics policy. To demonstrate understanding of the Code of Ethics, all SBDC employees, consultants, volunteers, and others who work with clients or client files must sign the Code of Ethics certification before working with any client. The certification must be filed with the lead center.

Lead Center Monitoring
Lead center personnel review counseling records on a regular basis, in accordance with the Operations Manual. The lead center also reviews reimbursement requests (i.e. invoices) as they are submitted for conformity to the budget and expenditure of match, and reviews expenditure detail annually to assure invoice expenditures are supported.

The lead center also conducts financial review of each regional center, applying the same criteria the SBA examiner uses. All centers are examined once a year, either by the SBA examiner or the lead center. During the review the lead center also conducts a programmatic
review to assure conformity with program standards established by policy and incorporated in the Operations Manual. A written report is prepared following the examination. Follow-up monitoring and conditions are applied as warranted.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Federally-Defined Role of SBDCs

The Small Business Development Center program was established by Congress in 1974 to further the federal government’s policy of assisting small businesses in order to foster their economic interests, enhance competition and competitiveness, offer access to capital, and provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and business growth. 15 U.S.C 631; 15 U.S.C. 648.

By operation of both statute and regulation the SBDC program has certain characteristics. These characteristics provide context for the SBDC program and delivery of services.

- Delivery of services to small businesses through institutions of higher education. 15 U.S.C. 648(a); 13 C.F.R 130.340.
- Delivery of services close to clients and meeting local needs. 15 U.S.C. 648(c)(2); 13 C.F.R 130.340.
- Delivery of general and specialized services. 15 U.S.C. 648(c); 13 C.F.R 130.340. In addition, SBDCs may be required by SBA to perform “special emphasis initiatives” directed toward portions of the general population targeted by SBA for assistance. 13 C.F.R 130.340(c).
- Use of program assessment and accreditation to promote national standards of quality in service delivery. 15 U.S.C. 648(k); 13 C.F.R 130.340(a).

In addition to federal law and regulations governing the SBDC program, the role and operating requirements of the SBDCs are further defined in the Cooperative Agreement negotiated annually between the SBDC lead center (Department of Employment and Economic Development) and policies announced from time to time by SBA.

SBA provides a significant amount of funding for the SBDC program, and accordingly is a key stakeholder.

SBDC Role in State Economic Development

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is the lead agency for state economic development activities. Pursuant to statutory authority, DEED enters into the Cooperative Agreement with SBA to administer the SBDC program in Minnesota. Minn. Stat. 116J, subd. 2(m).

The SBDC program is located organizationally within the Minnesota Small Business Assistance Office (MSBAO) of the Business Development Division of DEED. The division helps facilitate business start-up and growth by providing information and technical assistance, coordinating the state’s response to business expansion opportunities, and providing limited financing for new and expanding businesses. Other DEED divisions include the Minnesota Trade Office, which helps Minnesota companies interested in exporting by offering counseling, seminars, printed materials and other services; and Work Force Development which provides programs and resources that provide job skills training and financial assistance to businesses seeking to upgrade the skills of their workforce.

The MSBAO publishes and distributes publications of interest and concern to small businesses, offers workshops and seminars on small business related topics, and provides direct counsel and assistance to small businesses. While the MSBAO reserves some issues for counseling to itself (e.g., business licensing and environmental permitting under specific sections of Minnesota Statutes), the great majority of business planning, marketing, financial analysis and other management and operations assistance is delivered through the SBDC program.

The SBDC network’s affiliation with DEED offers a number of benefits that reflect the SBDC characteristics designed by Congress and discussed above. These include:

- Partnership with the DEED as part of the Minnesota Small Business Assistance Office. Minn. Stat. 116J.68(m).

- SBDC personnel have access to the information resources provided by DEED, including but not limited to *A Guide to Starting a Business in Minnesota* and other publications of the MSBAO, the regulatory expertise of MSBAO staff, and informational materials produced by DEED.

- DEED seeks a biennial appropriation of cash match for the SBDC program from the Legislature.

The SBDCs, in turn, contribute to accomplishment of DEED’s mission by:

- Assisting thousands of small companies to achieve positive business and economic outcomes.

- A performance measurement system that demonstrates significant economic impact.

- Coordination with DEED’s policy of regional service delivery.
• Collaboration with other DEED units (e.g. Trade Office and WorkForce Development) on projects important to the agency.

SBDC Role in Local Economic Development

The SBDC program in Minnesota envisions that SBDC services will be delivered through a network of local organizations. At the local level, service delivery is aligned with federal law and regulations establishing the SBDC program, and with state economic development policy, in the following ways:

• Services are delivered primarily through state higher education institutions. Because resources are limited, and the mission of higher education institutions is by statute directed toward classroom instruction, the SBDC also attempts to engage the active participation of other local organizations in delivering services. These include regional development commissions, private non-profit organizations, economic development groups, and other public and private sector entities.

• Services are delivered as close to clients as possible, within resource constraints. Geographically, all areas of the state are served. Eight of the nine regional centers are located outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area and serve rural areas.

• The SBDC delivers a mix of general and specialized services. Core competencies include business situation assessments, business planning, financial analysis and loan packaging, and marketing. Identified client needs are assessed, and where not offered by another available affordable resource, are retained by the SBDC through outside private sector consultants to the extent resources permit. Where competencies or resources aren’t available appropriate referrals are made to other private-sector organizations.

• Needs assessments of the small business community and of SBDC clients are conducted on a regular basis, using a variety of tools, including but not limited to analysis of responses to the annual client survey, formal needs assessments, advisory board opinions, anecdotal evidence, and research by third parties.

Participating centers provide both cash and non-cash match in the form of contributions by their host partner institutions and contributions from local economic development organizations and private sector sources. Host partner institutions are expected to maintain a vested position in the program by contributing significant cash match in proportion to the SBDC’s overall match budget.
CURRENT SITUATION

SBDC Needs

Common needs identified:

1. Funding
2. Human resources
3. Reputation
4. Operation/Administration
5. Business/Client needs

What are the three most pressing needs you see in the near future?

- Funding and securing match
- Maintaining program focus
- Knowledge sharing
- Cohesiveness of centers
- Balance approach to identifying needs of the business community
- Communication and marketing to stakeholders
- Measurement of stakeholders’ needs
- How we can address changing needs of businesses and show value for our efforts - measurements
- Reputation and awareness
- Human resources
- Coordination of all resources, clarity of roles

Identified by participants in strategic planning retreat October 13 and 14, 2004 and based on results of network-wide SWOT analysis conducted in the summer of 2002; needs identified by SBDC Advisory Board members in the spring of 2002, 2003 and 2004; needs identified by clients and small businesses participating in the annual client survey and needs assessment survey; and the experiences and judgment of SBDC regional directors and consultants.
What needs do you foresee in two to three years down the road?

- Long-term program funding – continued pressure
- Dealing with expansion and demand
- Keeping Minnesota “at the top” on national level
- Maintaining desired reputation
- Succession plan/professional development
- Creating own (program) income
- Existing business/impact
- Resource partnership maintenance
- Identifying client needs and services
- Accreditation reviews – program branding
- Expansion of services
- Alignment of missions with stakeholders
- Technology, Internet, knowledge, data mining
- Outsourcing, labor market, productivity

What needs have already been addressed or have systems in place to address?

- Credibility
- Administrative and operational enhancements
- Network communications
- Enhanced marketing tools
- High quality service
- National accreditation
- Program administration
- Marketing/Branding
- Organizational structure
- Process procedures streamlined
**SWOT Analysis Summary**

**Key Points**

- Counseling strength
- Our top resource is partnerships
- Continuing demand for our services
- Regional sharing of resources and/or expertise
- Funding is everything but not a strength (SWOT) – How can we get the story out? How do we communicate that we have inadequate funding?
- Need different marketing to get different and/or more certain funding. Need a marketing plan that communicates our strengths
- Uncertain funding
- Inadequate funding – other agencies refer but make no commitment
- Reliance on the Small Business Administration for funding – Could we exist without it?
- High administrative costs – Could we get by with less?
- We have endured and will continue within the variations and uncertainty in funding

**Issues**

- Funding
- Marketing
- Consultant retention
- Host institution concern about fund-raising committees going to same people

**Customer and Stakeholder Needs**

**Key Points**

- Needs of our customer base are consistent with the services we provide (common input from clients and non-clients)
- Funding is available - What question was asked on the survey? Were pre-venture responses mixed in with responses from existing businesses?
- Human Resources: recruiting and retaining is now less of an issue; in the current economy, business owners are back in control of whom they employ
- Technology changes require new skills to operate businesses
- Customer service means timely quality service and meeting basic business needs
Issues

- Human Resources
- Marketing
- Finance
- Need to keep on top of trends as economy changes

Constraints

A number of factors associated with the structure of the Small Business Development Center program (as described above) constrain the ability of the Minnesota SBDC network to deliver services and attract additional support.

- The SBDC program operates within a complex regulatory structure that includes statutes, regulations, Office of Management and Budget circulars, operating procedures established by the Small Business Administration, the annual Program Announcement and the annual Cooperative Agreement. These constraints are typical of government-funded programs and are necessary to assure accountability. They may, however, limit flexibility in planning and delivering services that meet local needs and direct resources away from service delivery. There is a need to balance administrative compliance and accomplishment of program goals.

- Under Minnesota law, no state agency may provide legal advice to, or serve as an agent of, a private firm in any regulatory, judicial, or administrative proceeding, nor may it advocate, promote, or advise any position adverse to the operation of state laws. This can constrain the kinds of assistance the SBDC can provide, for example, in responding to requests for regulatory compliance assistance.

- Funding for SBDC service centers that are sponsored by institutions of higher education is provided from the institutions’ general instructional budget and not from a specific line item. Credit-based classroom instruction has a priority claim for funding from the instructional budget. This policy, combined with difficult funding circumstances for both higher education and state agencies, results in continuing uncertainty about the availability and amounts of match funding.

- No state agency may initiate or take a budget position contrary to the budget proposed by the Governor. This means that if the lead center is unsuccessful in having continuing or new funding included in the Governor’s budget, neither DEED nor MnSCU as a state agency may seek additional funding from the legislature, either directly or through intermediaries.
• In comparison with many other organizations which seek contributed cash from local public and private sources, the SBDC is perceived as having substantial, stable funding from both the federal and state governments. Potential sources of funds often take the position that because the SBDC is sponsored by the state, the state should be willing to fully support it. As a result, the SBDC is at a disadvantage in seeking non-government funds for match.

• Limitations on using other federal funds as match for the SBDC program and the need to obtain prior SBA approval to sponsor other federally-funded projects constrain centers in obtaining additional resources to expand the SBDC program.

Trends
• Technology — reach more people quickly.
• Business operations are drastically altered and sophisticated — clients must keep up.
• More struggling businesses are being seen.
• It is difficult for customers to stay focused on the business, for example, they want to develop a web site vs. planning cash flow.
• Clients are demanding higher levels of customer service.
• Limited resources cause us to focus on businesses that create the most economic impact.
• SBDC provides an opportunity for partner institutions — helps keep them in public eye and deliver a valuable service.
• There is an increased ethnic minority population in the regions.
• Dislocated workers want to go into business.
• Clients are unclear about the kind of services they can receive from the SBDC.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

A. Program enhancement
   1. SBDTC certification
      • Provide technology assistance as a core service
      • Process you have to go through in being certified to obtain credibility of our program
   2. Develop counselor certification program
   3. Succession planning and training

B. Diversified funding
   1. Database: small business management database – using it as a tool to raise funds and credibility
      • Bankers
      • CPA’s accountants
   2. Self-sustaining funding
   3. Explore fundraising opportunities
   4. Eliminate federal funding dependence: Can we exist without SBAs financial support?!?
   5. $7 million program: Double program funding by 2007, including investment by state
   6. Stable, long-term funding foundation (sources)

C. Realistic growth
   1. Establish attainable goals – provide level of services that resources will adequately support
   2. Growth number – finding ongoing revenue stream
   3. Establishing (in)credible benchmarks
   4. Accomplish mission and vision as laid out

D. Enhance marketing
   1. More marketing – showcase client success! Toot our horn! Press releases – marketing plan
   2. Appropriate “keyword” for search engine (find our Website)
   3. Accessible and linked Website
   4. Communicating accomplishments to stakeholders
   5. Establish benchmarks

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8 Identified during strategic planning retreat, October 13 and 14, 2004.
E. Facilitate business success
1. Formal input from businesses on needs (advisory board/focus groups)
2. Client forums
3. Identifiable client needs
4. Perspectives – roundtable “discussion” with CEOs
5. World markets – SBDC needs to address (include trade office?)
6. Educating clients and/or businesses to stand on their own

F. Unified network
1. Structure: client has a single point of contact (i.e. bundle packages) (Most entrepreneurial)
2. Connect SBDC and economic development
   - Foster small business development through economic development organizations
   - Educate EDA’s on importance of fostering business development structure: education + growth = return on investment
3. Unified network – refer to experts: local, regional, state, national; “fuzzy” borders, statewide funding initiative
4. Technology-enabled network/knowledge base
5. Centralize training events and opportunities
6. Structure will look like it does now – “not broke, don’t fix it.”

**ISSUES TO REACHING OBJECTIVES**

**Funding**
- More secure/matching funds
- Limited options
- Greater need from business community
- ROI is positive (success not known)
- Not truly state agency – can get other sources of money – intermediary role
- Funding is constraint – need to focus services within available funding
- Force toward self-sufficiency

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9 Identified during strategic planning retreat, October 13 and 14, 2004.
Other issues identified

- Turf issues – no or limited access to knowledge and expertise – not consistent
- Geography – things operate differently in different regions
- Statewide structural constraint – focus on state
- Different missions of stakeholders – competition
- Reluctance of people to adapt to technology or the expense of technology
- Regulations – let us do our work (all levels); limits on what can do – can’t lobby
- How to make benchmarks attainable and useful – show that we obtained goal
- Limited talent available – regions: geography, diverse, technology
- Infrastructure of technology does not exist in parts of Minnesota
- Multiple points of contact
- Consistency of message
- What are customers’ needs – Do we know? Do they know?
- Banks don’t know who to go to for assistance

**ACTION PLANS** ¹⁰

Action plans were created to designate specific activities, time frames and responsible parties to accomplish each goal. Each action plan identifies the strategic objective that will be used to determine progress. The plan provides a summary of activities to be done and time frames for accomplishment. Development of these plans included concern for realistic, phased, coordinated action.

The action plans are followed by a calendar offering a big-picture plan that highlights the goals and their activities.

¹⁰ Adopted by participants in strategic planning retreat, October 13-14, 2004.
### ACTION PLAN - GOAL #1

**SHARING RESOURCES TO CREATE A UNIFIED NETWORK**

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To enhance and connect the skills and knowledge of the Minnesota SBDC network.

#### ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>TARGETS/DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop and publish SBDC consultant expertise database</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Define categories of consulting expertise</td>
<td>Complete: June 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Collect and categorize by region, by expertise, existing SBDC consultant information</td>
<td>2005; First Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Distribute database to centers</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop statewide pool of consultants</td>
<td>Complete: October 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Identify existing consultants with specialized expertise willing to contract with multiple regions</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Develop RFP process for new consultants willing to serve multiple regions in specific areas of expertise</td>
<td>2005; Third Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Investigate and solicit volunteer counselors or mentors</td>
<td>Complete: December 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Administer statewide professional development meetings</td>
<td>Complete: October 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Identify opportunities and dates for meeting as a statewide network</td>
<td>2005; First Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Identify topics of interest</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. Recruit internal and external presenters on topics of interest

d. Work with the lead center to organize overall meeting activities

5. Develop shared milestone credit program

   a. Review current milestones and measurement standards

   b. Develop recommendations for modification of existing standards for equitable milestone sharing, when applicable

6. Identify and assess opportunities for state centralized training and education

   a. Collect existing offerings and curriculum from regional centers

   b. Review and recommend statewide training delivery opportunities

   c. Develop recommendations/modifications to existing training curriculum for statewide delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Network and Communications Committee; Mike Ryan, Chair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ACTION PLAN - GOAL #2

### UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY TO EXPAND RESOURCES

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To seek, review and assess technological enhancements that assist in meeting the mission and vision of the program.

#### ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>TARGETS/DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Investigate North Carolina central “Call Center”</td>
<td>Complete: April 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Investigate opportunity to participate with DEED in travel and meetings</td>
<td>2005; First Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Prepare report and present findings to network, include proposal of costs and probable solutions</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Prepare proposal for unifying existing technology</td>
<td>Complete: April 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Prepare opportunities and threats of opening WebCATS for all center personnel to access</td>
<td>2005; First Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Make recommendations to regional directors</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expand NTHT Intranet for counselors</td>
<td>Complete: May 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Set-up counselor records and identify levels of permissions</td>
<td>2005; First Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Develop policies related to use, posting and sharing</td>
<td>2005; First Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Identify initial resources for posting</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Develop training on use of system</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Investigate possible resources for investment in or development of website/on-line tools</td>
<td>Complete: Continuous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Participate and make recommendations for continued funding for financial analysis management database, including pros and cons of mandatory requirement for entry of data into database

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Complete: April 2006</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Continue to work with Financial Analysis Advisory board to address necessary enhancements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Set standards, procedures and goals for database entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Rollout tool through network-wide meetings and regional training events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Continue to monitor use of tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Survey Counselors on tool; identify issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Asses tool for continued use and investment in future versions and/or enhancements</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology Committee; Greg Bergman, Chair</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## ACTION PLAN - GOAL #3

### EXPLORE DIVERSIFIED FUNDING

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To explore, identify and solicit additional funding partners in order to diversify and expand the Minnesota SBDC portfolio.

#### ACTION PLAN

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<td>1. Investigate possible conduits for contributions</td>
<td>Complete: June 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Investigate details regarding establishing DEED as a conduit for contributions (1b. if DEED is not able to serve as conduit)</td>
<td>2005; First Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Investigate details regarding establishing Minnesota State University Moorhead Foundation as a channel for contributions (1c. if MSUM is not able to serve as conduit)</td>
<td>2005; First Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Investigate legal requirements/restrictions in forming 501c3</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop a proposal for a statewide funding approach focused on associations</td>
<td>Complete: July 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Identify and prioritize statewide associations as potential future funding partners, including trade associations and sector organizations</td>
<td>2004; Fourth Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Complete analysis of types of businesses served by SBDC and level of service provided</td>
<td>2005; First Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Determine preliminary strategies, i.e. contact approach, donation request, rationale for donation request, statewide (top down) strategies, and regional (bottom up) strategies</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Investigate costs and benefits of hiring a grant writer
   a. Contact Kathy Sweeny (DEED) to identify to what extent if any of the grant writing assistance DEED can provide
   b. Examine the need to engage an outside grant writer and the costs associated with the hire

4. Research additional potential funding sources thoroughly (committee or possible grant writer)
   a. Identify what funding sources may be available and fit within the SBDC mission, including individuals, large and small family foundations, community foundations, and large and small corporations or corporate foundations
   b. Advantages and disadvantages of each potential funding source
   c. Gather SBDC state data and complete Minnesota Common Grant Application
      i. Verify each individual funder’s guidelines are being met and allow the use of common application
      ii. Revise application as necessary

5. Identify and explore “out-of-the-box” funding options
   a. Investigate establishment of a profit center
   b. Research SBA guidelines for SBDC program restrictions, allowability of alternatives

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<td>Funding Committee; Liz Struve, Chair</td>
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</table>

Complete: December 2005
2005; Second Quarter
2005; Third Quarter
Complete: December 2005
2005; Second Quarter
2005; Second Quarter
2005; Third Quarter
Complete: October 2005
2005; Third Quarter
2005; Third Quarter
### ACTION PLAN - GOAL #4

#### CREATE A FOCUSED MESSAGE THROUGH MARKETING AND AWARENESS

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
Facilitate increased awareness of the mission of the SBDC through a focused and targeted marketing approach.

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<td>1. Develop a banker’s guide to utilizing SBDC services</td>
<td>Complete: July 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Align the SBDC message to the mission of stakeholders</td>
<td>Complete: April 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Identify desired stakeholders</td>
<td>2005; Second Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Obtain their publications containing their mission and/or objectives</td>
<td>2005; Third Quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Deliver a message from SBDC to individual stakeholders showing alignment of SBDC with stakeholders</td>
<td>2006; First Quarter</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Develop lender or bank training through demonstration of program services, e.g. financial analysis management database</td>
<td>Complete: August 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Develop marketing materials and tools that delivers a consistent message throughout network</td>
<td>Complete: Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Implement state marketing plan, i.e. determine additional strategies including timing, message, media and stakeholder</td>
<td>Complete: September 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Develop a marketing plan or strategy to market SBDC to bankers (statewide and local effort)</td>
<td>Complete: April 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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#### RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Marketing Committee; Dawn Jensen, Chair
## ACTION PLAN - GOAL #5

### KEEP SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH NEEDS

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Assess the needs of the business and revise or implement changes in program services to meet the identified business assistance needs.

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<td>2. Investigate client forums, e.g. women in business, construction-based businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Determine if a need exist and if SBDC can fulfill need</td>
<td>2005; Third Quarter</td>
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<td>b. Assess the probability of success</td>
<td>2005; Fourth Quarter</td>
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<td>c. If need and probability of success exist, develop guidelines and policies relating to the formation and facilitation of forums</td>
<td>2006; First Quarter</td>
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<td>3. Assess client, consultant forum legends and champions</td>
<td>Complete: December 2005</td>
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<td>4. Identify and make recommendations of “credible performance benchmarks” that could be part of certification process for centers</td>
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<td>5. Identify and investigate current and new business needs assessment tools</td>
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<td>6. Increase surveys to Minnesota businesses on changing business needs and work with other organizations to share information gained</td>
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#### RESPONSIBLE PARTY

Services and Needs Committee; Dick Braun, Chair
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<td>Develop statewide pool of consultants</td>
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<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate and solicit volunteer counselors or mentors</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administer statewide professional development meetings</td>
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<td>Develop shared milestone credit program</td>
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<td>Expand NTHT Intranet for counselors</td>
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