



Best Practice: NYC Business Solutions System

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CITY: NEW YORK CITY

**POLICY AREA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

BEST PRACTICE

NYC Business Solutions is a set of services designed to help entrepreneurs start, operate, and expand in New York City. Services include: Launch, Financing, Recruitment, Legal, Government Navigation, Business Courses, Incentives, Training for Employees and Selling to Government. The services do not cost anything and are offered through the seven NYC Business Solutions Centers, eight NYC Business Solutions Industrial Providers, NYC Business Solutions FastTrac, and the NYC Business Solutions Outreach and Emergency Response Unit located throughout the five boroughs. The system is structured to provide scalable programs with a focus on comprehensive, quality service. The teams take a proactive approach to business service by determining what businesses and sectors have a demand and execute targeted marketing strategies to generate interest and address needs. Service delivery is focused on effectiveness and efficiency of service, as the Agency's and entrepreneurs' most valued resource is time.

ISSUE

The NYC Business Solutions system delivers comprehensive services that address the need for businesses to start, generate income, and grow their business. In turn, businesses will create new jobs and develop communities. Businesses often face barriers to increased income and growth, specifically resources, networking opportunities and education. These barriers and needs are considered in the development and implementation of all programs and services.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

System Objectives

1. Maximize opportunities to strategically sell services and re-engage business customers.
2. Improve the customer experience across all engagements.
3. Refine or enhance the services we currently provide in response to customer needs and Agency objectives.
4. Boost the number and quality of outcomes we help customers achieve.
5. Improve our ability to provide comprehensive business services by cultivating and leveraging partnerships.

NYC Business Solutions Centers

Objective: To provide the NYC Business Solutions set of services to small businesses throughout New York City with a focus on income generation and job creation.

Goals: number of loans awarded, number of businesses launched, number of courses completed, number of training applicants, number of open position recruited, percentage of high wage placements, and number correct and complete M/WBE (Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise) applications.

NYC Business Solutions Industrial Providers

Objective: To provide the NYC Business Solutions set of services to industrial businesses (defined as Manufacturing, Transportation and Construction, Wholesale trade) with a specific focus on the preservation and vibrancy of the Industrial Business Zones.

Goals: number of financing awards and number of employer commitments for training, number of qualified incentives referrals, and number of navigating government customers assisted. .



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NYC Business Solutions Outreach and Emergency Response Unit

Objectives:

- (1) To provide information about government programs and initiatives to small businesses in order to prevent loss of income.
- (2) To assist businesses that do not understand the government navigation process, i.e. licenses, permits, violations, street signs and fixtures, in order to minimize loss of income.
- (3) To respond to emergencies that have had a direct impact on businesses, i.e. structural damage, in order to assist with recovery and reopening.

Goals: number of service requests and number of outreach activities

IMPLEMENTATION

Successful implementation depends on ten key components:

- 1) Annual needs assessment and goal development/adjustment involving the key stakeholders of the system, including direct line staff, service delivery leadership, program management and administrators
- 2) Strategic Operating Plan designed to set expectations around quality and quantity in order to create consistency and accountability across the system
- 3) Monthly stakeholder leadership meetings to allow for an exchange of information and best practices across the system
- 4) Customer centric tracking by all direct service staff using technology (i.e. CRM database) that allows for status updates, reporting and data analysis
- 5) Monthly system performance reporting , including progress towards goals and trend analysis
- 6) Targeted business development strategies focused on productivity of activities
- 7) Targeted marketing strategies focused on long term customer engagement
- 8) Open lines of communication between stakeholders
- 9) Work observation and participation by program management staff and leadership
- 10) Continuous learning amongst all teams about the current economic environment, trends in small business and issues entrepreneurs face

COST

- The NYC Business Solutions Centers annual operating budget is approximately \$3.1 million
- The NYC Business Solutions Industrial Providers annual operating budget is approximately \$1.1 million
- The NYC Business Solutions Outreach and Emergency Response Unit's Annual budget is approximately \$400,000

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Over the past six years, the NYC Business Solutions system has seen consistent high growth in all areas of service.

In 2012, the system accomplished the following:

- Facilitated 671 financing awards and \$63 million in capital through financing assistance
- Educated over 4,400 customers through business courses
- Connected over 700 customers with pro bono legal assistance. -Assisted 250 businesses launch their business
- Assisted businesses recruit employees for 3,900 positions



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TIMELINE

The NYC Business Solutions system administers two year contracts with the option to renew for one year three times. The Strategic Operating Plan and goals are developed on an annual basis and are addendum to these contracts.

LEGISLATION

NYC Business Solution Industrial Providers

In January 2005, Mayor Bloomberg created the Office of Industrial and Manufacturing Businesses to retain and grow the sector's job base, execute the goals of the industrial policy, and serve as a single point of coordination for the industrial and manufacturing sector. The service areas for NYC Business Solutions Industrial Providers are informed by the Bloomberg Administration's designation in 2006 of sixteen of the most productive industrial areas in the City as Industrial Business Zones (IBZs), and several others as Industrial Ombudsmen Areas. These areas foster high-performing business districts by creating competitive advantages over locating in areas outside of New York City. The designation of these areas was led by the IBZ Boundary Commission, an entity comprised of local government officials and industrial business advocates convened by the NYC Department of Small Business Services that was authorized by the New York State Legislature. The State of New York also authorized the City to offer the IBZ Relocation Tax Credit, a benefit that reimburses industrial businesses for costs associated with relocating business operations to an IBZ.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The NYC Business Solutions system priorities are guided by objectives and principles that are determined by City, Agency and customer priorities. Those objectives and principles are referred to in every major decision around direction and goals.
- In the process of building scalable programs, both quality and quantity have to be balanced, monitored and measured.
- Simplicity, accountability and transparency are critical to the build out and success of scalable programs.
- Flexibility and innovation are key components of growth and success. These elements must be continuously balanced against structure and consistency.

TRANSFERABILITY

The NYC Business Solutions model has already proven transferability across multiple programs and communities. Standardized systems and tools have facilitated the ease of transfer and likeliness of success, including standardized trainings, strategic operating plans, performance dashboards, performance reports, CRM (Client Relationship Management), and job descriptions. These systems and tools have created consistency and a high standard of quality, without limiting innovation and flexibility across the system.

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