

# Entrepreneurship Tool Kit | Entrepreneurship Training Tools



<http://www.clusterhubs.org>

# The Entrepreneurship Tool Kit

Welcome to the Entrepreneurship Tool Kit. This tool kit is being developed for the purpose of providing community and technical colleges throughout the country with additional tools to assist entrepreneurs in their local area. The entrepreneurship training tools are among the components of an overall tool kit being developed from a Congressionally-directed funding grant (Business Cluster Hubs) through the U. S. Department of Education. These specific training tools are designed to address the challenges facing entrepreneurs as they start or expand their business ventures. In addition to the U. S. Department of Education, other partners instrumental in this overall project work include:

- Concurrent Technologies Corporation (CTC) – Largo, FL
- CTC Public Benefit Corporation – Washington, DC
- Regional Technology Strategies –  
Carrboro, NC
- St. Petersburg College, FL
- Central Virginia Community  
College, VA
- Augusta Tech College, GA
- Haywood Community College, NC
- North Dakota State College of Science, ND
- Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology, MT
- Kingsborough Community  
College, NY
- Gateway Community and Technical College, KY
- Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, WI
- Edmonds Community College, WA
- Shoreline Community College, WA

Special thanks for the support from Erik Pages of EntreWorks (VA) and Pat Dusenbury (GA).

For additional information visit our web site: <http://www.clusterhubs.org> and click “Cluster-Based Entrepreneurship.”

# Table of Contents

Cluster-based  
Entrepreneurship  
Entrepreneurship Training Tools

\* **NOTES:** The Entrepreneurship Tools Matrix, which appears on pages 2-7, provides a brief look at all 16 program overviews. The complete overviews appear after the matrix.

Entrepreneurship Tools Matrix*	4
Augusta Technical College & CTC Public Benefit Corp. overview	
<b>EnterprisePrep</b>	10
EntreWorks Consulting and Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. overview	
<b>REAL (Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning)</b>	12
Haywood Community College and CTC Public Benefit Corp. overview	
<b>FastTrac</b>	14
Haywood Community College and Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. overview	
<b>Mountain Microenterprise Foundations</b>	17
Kingsborough Community College at the City University of New York overview	
<b>Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE)</b>	19
Kingsborough Community College at the City University of New York and CTC Public Benefit Corp. overview	
<b>Virtual Enterprise</b>	21
Montana State Great Falls College of Technology and Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. overview	
<b>National FFA Organization</b>	25
Montana State Great Falls College of Technology and CTC Public Benefit Corp. overview	
<b>Planning the Entrepreneurial Venture (PEV)</b>	28
Montana State Great Falls College of Technology and Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. overview	
<b>On the Road to “Going To Market”</b>	30
North Dakota State College of Science and Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. overview	
<b>DECA/DEX</b>	32
North Dakota State College of Science and CTC Public Benefit Corp. overview	
<b>MarkEd</b>	35
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College and CTC Public Benefit Corp. overview	
<b>Edward Lowe Foundation “PeerSpectives”</b>	37
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College and CTC Public Benefit Corp. overview	
<b>“Something Ventured” Telecourse</b>	40
Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. overview	
<b>GoVenture</b>	43
Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. overview	
<b>BizTech/ National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)</b>	47
St. Petersburg College and CTC Public Benefit Corp. overview	
<b>NxLevel</b>	49

## CLUSTER-BASED ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

Description of entrepreneurship-related education and training tools reviewed by two-year college representatives that are participating in the Cluster Hubs project

Name of the Tool and the Vendor/Coordinator	Description Of the Tool	Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting	Evaluation Metrics	Costs Associated with Using the Tool
<p><b>EnterprisePrep</b> Small Business Training (SBT)</p>	<p>EnterprisePrep provides a hands-on learning experience for students who start and operate a business. With teacher guidance, students manage a kiosk-based business that resides within a school. These businesses market and sell a single product line. Instructional materials include a CEO Guide for teachers and Owner's Manual for students. SBT also provides instructor training and peer-learning networks to facilitate successful implementation.</p>	<p>EnterprisePrep focuses on teaching urban teens and adults how to start and manage a community-based in-school business. Either new or adapted curricula are needed to integrate this tool into academic or continuing education programs. It has been incorporated into a foundation course in business. It has also been used in continuing education programs for adults.</p>	<p>Current metrics evaluate attendance, school dropout rates among participants, and overall academic performance improvement.</p>	<p>Total costs for a typical group of 30 students and one teacher can reach approximately \$2,500.</p>
<p><b>REAL Enterprises</b> Corporation for Enterprise Development <a href="http://www.realenterprises.org">www.realenterprises.org</a></p>	<p>The REAL offers several entrepreneurship-related curricula, which are accompanied by workbooks and other resource materials. Courses include REAL, Spanish REAL, e-REAL, and Rapid Response Training (a module for displaced workers). The curricula cover issues related to starting and growing a business.</p>	<p>Initially, students complete a self-assessment and an evaluation of business opportunities within their region. Then, they develop a business plan as a part of an applied set of coursework. REAL was used primarily in high schools, but is now migrating to two-year colleges. The courses can be integrated into general business programs or offered independently. The Rapid Response Training course is offered to displaced workers.</p>	<p>The quality of a student business plan is typically the primary course deliverable evaluated by instructors. The REAL organization closely tracks issues related to supporting instructors and economic development outcomes.</p>	<p>A weeklong REAL instructor-training program costs \$1,000 to \$1,700. The REAL curriculum guide, first-year license, and research library licenses cost \$50 per year. The cost of student workbooks and other resource materials varies by course.</p>
<p><b>FastTrac</b> The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation <a href="http://www.fasttrac.org">http://www.fasttrac.org</a> The University of Southern California developed the tool.</p>	<p>FastTrac is a modular classroom-based curriculum with supporting resources that include a manual, workbook and CD-ROM. Curriculum is available for general audiences and some specific industry groups.</p>	<p>FastTrac's web site currently lists 48 post-secondary institutions certified to offer at least one of FastTrac's programs, including 16 technical and community colleges.</p>	<p>FastTrac keeps records of all graduates in their databases and communicates with them via printed and electronic newsletters and other communications. Facilitators and administrators have the responsibility of keeping in touch with the graduates to monitor success stories and pass the stories on to FastTrac and the Kauffman Foundation.</p>	<p>To become a provider of FastTrac, an institution must have certified Administrators and Facilitators. Training, held in Kansas City, costs \$100 for Administrator training and \$500 for Facilitator training. Training for the First Step FastTrac program is free.</p>

Entrepreneurship Training Tools: <http://www.clusterhubs.org>

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<p><b>Mountain Microenterprise Fund</b> The Mountain Microenterprise Fund (MMF) <a href="http://www.mtmicro.org">http://www.mtmicro.org</a></p>	<p>MMF is a micro-business incubation service targeted to low-income individuals. Services include client recruitment, training, peer networking, and access to micro-loan and savings assistance programs. Also included are technical assistance, reduced-cost CPA and attorney consulting services, and shared office equipment. Participant training is centered on a seven-week Foundations course and a three-week Quickbooks training course.</p>	<p>Two-year colleges could use MMF as a model for continuing education to support local community entrepreneurial efforts. It could also be used as a model for training students from a variety of disciplines who desire to start their own microenterprises, but who lack prior business experience or training.</p>	<p>The success of the MMF program is measured by the number of successful microenterprise startups.</p>	<p>The cost for participants is on a sliding scale depending on the number of people in the household, annual income, and education level. The range is from \$35-\$300.</p>
<p><b>Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE)</b> Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center <a href="http://www.sife.org">http://www.sife.org</a></p>	<p>The SIFE program conducts a series of regional, national and international events where college student teams present information on their service projects, and businessmen evaluate the quality of students' service activities and presentations. All service projects must advance the concepts of the free enterprise system.</p>	<p>Approximately 900 US colleges (1,500 worldwide) participate, including 250 US institutions that participate in the two-year college division. Student teams, mentored by faculty members, design and implement service projects and present their results in competitions. This is typically an extracurricular activity, but it can be integrated into academic coursework.</p>	<p>A very detailed set of rules and judging criteria are applied consistently in all competitions. A description of the rules and judging criteria are posted on the SIFE website.</p>	<p>The SIFE program does not charge any participation fees. Faculty mentors are typically given stipends, and individual colleges sometimes absorb the travel costs for student participants.</p>
<p><b>Virtual Enterprise (VE)</b> The Institute for Virtual Enterprise, The City University of New York <a href="http://www.ive.cuny.edu">http://www.ive.cuny.edu</a> The Institute operates one of three VE regional headquarters, or transaction centers, for US colleges.</p>	<p>VE provides students with access to a web-based simulation system that allows them to conduct business transactions with other student-run businesses located throughout the world. A regional headquarters, which maintains the simulation system, provides transactional services, banking services and other web-based resources.</p>	<p>The simulation system has been used both in academic entrepreneurship programs and as part of workforce development programs. Because it is typically integrated as a part of a course or training program, it can be customized to adapt to local conditions and to address cluster-specific issues.</p>	<p>An independent assessment indicated that VE covered the skill sets in the 21st Century Learning Outcomes, developed by the League for Innovation in the Community College. Also, VE addressed entrepreneurship, student-motivational, and faculty-facilitation skills.</p>	<p>The City University of New York provides access to the simulation system at no cost. Teacher salaries and curricular development expenses represent the only costs.</p>

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<p><b>National FFA Organization</b> <i>Collegiate Services Staff</i> <a href="http://www.ffa.org/collegiate/index.htm">www.ffa.org/collegiate/index.htm</a> <i>Agri-Entrepreneurship Program</i> <a href="http://www.ffa.org/programs/ag_ent/">www.ffa.org/programs/ag_ent/</a></p>	<p>FFA's Supervised Agricultural Experience Program offers the following two entrepreneurship-related initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ag-related entrepreneurship is one of the 49 career-skills proficiency areas where FFA presents annual student awards, and</li> <li>• The Agri-Entrepreneurship Program is a nationwide agriculture-related business plan competition for FFA members. (This program may not continue in 2005.)</li> </ul>	<p>These FFA programs have been primarily targeted towards high schools, but Collegiate FFA now supports college applications. In the past, only students majoring in an agriculture-related field could participate, but the program is now open to any interested student. Collegiate FFA is not directly involved in entrepreneurship training, but helps postsecondary students find internships.</p>	<p>The FFA has developed national proficiency award standards that are used in all of its competitions. Judges for the Agri-Entrepreneurship program evaluate business plans based on plan design and uniqueness. More details of evaluation metrics are available on the FFA website.</p>	<p>Annual dues for FFA membership are \$5 per year. There are no fees for student participation in FFA competitions. Local companies and others pay for local competitions, and various foundations fund national competitions.</p>
<p><b>Planning the Entrepreneurial Venture</b> The Kauffman Foundation <a href="http://www.kauffman.org">http://www.kauffman.org</a> This product is currently being beta tested.</p>	<p>Planning the Entrepreneurial Venture (PEV) provides Internet-based business planning content for use in conjunction with traditional classroom instruction. The instructor's manual and CD provides the following: comprehensive teaching notes with learning objectives, PowerPoint slide narratives, exercises for each chapter of the curriculum, a test bank, templates for exercises and activities, template for the business plan, and samples of business plans.</p>	<p>The curriculum can be used in two-year Associate of Applied Science degree programs in small business management or entrepreneurship. One college, which was testing the curriculum, used it for the capstone Entrepreneurship course, in which the students prepare business plans. Another school used it to introduce students to entrepreneurship possibilities in career selection and application to other technical concentrations.</p>	<p>Instructors using the curriculum are individualizing the metrics used to assess the outcome of course completers.</p>	<p>Pricing policies are being developed.</p>
<p><b>On the Road to Going to Market</b> Montana Department of Commerce (DOC) The training program's developer now works for the Montana DOC.</p>	<p>"On the Road to Going to Market" is a video-based training series designed for small retailers or manufacturers. It guides participants through the process of buying and selling goods. It also covers other topics such as the pitfalls of going into business, preparing a business plan, creating a marketing action plan, determining prices, and identifying common distribution channels.</p>	<p>Most course participants have been small business owners, age 30 and older, who are residents of rural Montana, and have a high school education or less. Approximately 35 percent were manufacturers and 55 percent were retailers. The training has been delivered in collaboration with economic development organizations, such as Small Business Development Centers, but several two-year colleges have integrated the training into more extensive courses.</p>	<p>The training course was started as a part of an economic development initiative. Consequently, outcomes are measured in terms of the survival rate of businesses and the number of jobs and income generated by on-going businesses.</p>	<p>A package of four videos and one workbook costs \$400. Individual workbooks can be purchased for \$25.</p>

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<p><b>Delta Epsilon Chi (DEX)</b> Delta Epsilon Chi <a href="http://www.delta-hq.org">http://www.delta-hq.org</a> DEX is a division of DECA Inc., an association of high school marketing students and teachers.</p>	<p>Local DEX chapters, comprising students and a faculty advisor, organize activities such as conferences, award competitions, and management institutes. They also have developed business-training resources. DEX sponsors an annual International Career Development Conference, which includes competitive events, seminars, weekend management institutes and networking sessions.</p>	<p>DEX was founded to provide business and leadership opportunities predominantly for two-year college students, although four-year college students are beginning to participate. Faculty advisors typically integrate DEX activities into academic programs. Community service, leadership development and interaction with local leaders are all components of local DEX programs. Student teams also compete in DEX-sponsored events and conferences.</p>	<p>Competitions are held in a number of business-related categories, including an Entrepreneurship Prepared Presentation Competition. A set of rules and judging criteria are applied consistently in all competitions. A description of the rules and judging criteria are posted on the DEX website.</p>	<p>DEX participants are required to pay a \$10 annual DECA membership fee. Dues to state or local chapters may also apply. Those students that participate in state, regional and national DEX events typically pay for their own conference registration fees and travel expenses.</p>
<p><b>MarkEd</b> The Marketing Education Resource Center <a href="http://www.mark-ed.com">http://www.mark-ed.com</a> MarkEd is a consortium of 41 state education departments and other organizations.</p>	<p>MarkEd sells more than 2,500 books, workbooks, software, videos and other resources, including over 250 Learning Activity Package (LAP) modules. These modules include handouts, lesson plans, transparencies, tests and activity guides on a broad spectrum of topics, including six specifically targeted toward entrepreneurship.</p>	<p>Intended primarily for use in traditional classroom settings, the materials can be adopted for web course delivery and distance learning applications. Of the six LAP modules for entrepreneurship, two are written for the post-secondary level. Instructors would need to augment the lesson plans of the other modules with appropriate content for the college setting.</p>	<p>MarkEd curriculum follows the national skills standards. MarkEd has partnered with the Institute for the Assessment of Skills and Knowledge for Business (A*S*K Business Institute) to provide exams and certificates based on performance indicators derived from MarkEd's continuing research of the business community.</p>	<p>Complete LAP modules, including those on entrepreneurship, are available for \$37 each (\$30 for consortium member states).</p>
<p><b>PeersPectives</b> The Edward Lowe Foundation <a href="http://peerspectives.org">http://peerspectives.org</a></p>	<p>PeersPectives provides CEO Roundtable discussions for owners of "second-stage" companies. Through a distinctive facilitation process, the group addresses current personal, family and business issues that affect firm-level performance.</p>	<p>Two-year colleges could use this model to improve collaboration with the local community of entrepreneurs. It can promote the development of a network of entrepreneurial leaders. Face-to-face roundtable discussions are suggested, at least for initial meetings. However, distance learning and web-based roundtable meetings could be piloted.</p>	<p>The Edward Lowe Foundation is in the process of creating systems to track each group's work and impact. Measurements for the process's success might include participant satisfaction and retention in the group, and increased business growth by companies involved in the network.</p>	<p>This program is new and is now being pilot tested. Pricing policies for use by institutions are still being developed.</p>

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<p><b>“Something Ventured” Telecourse</b> INTELECOM <a href="http://www.intelecom.org">http://www.intelecom.org</a></p>	<p>The “Something Ventured” Telecourse is comprises 26 half-hour video documentary sessions that highlight major themes presented in the companion textbook. A student guidebook correlates the video sessions with specific textbook chapters and provides content summaries and study questions. The video content is also available via streaming video, DVD, CD-ROM, and broadcast/cable.</p>	<p>Colleges can license or purchase the materials for use as a complete college-credit course for distance learning, complete course of study for adult basic and continuing education programs, or part of a public library or school media library video collection.</p>	<p>The instructor can evaluate the learners based on five exams included with the telecourse and an assessment of the quality of student business plans.</p>	<p>To purchase the entire series, including the videos in a traditional classroom setting or as part of a campus multimedia library, costs \$599. Individual videos can be purchased for \$49.95 each. Costs for distance learning licenses vary depending on the type of delivery method and number of users.</p>
<p><b>GoVenture</b> MediaSpark Inc. <a href="http://www.goventure.net">http://www.goventure.net</a></p>	<p>MediaSpark offers the following two GoVenture simulation-based software packages: (1) the Entrepreneur and (2) Small Business. A Micro Business software package is under development. The Entrepreneur tool focuses on business start-up activities, including the process of developing a detailed business plan. Small Business focuses on businesses strategy and issues related to running a business.</p>	<p>The GoVenture simulation products are used predominantly in high schools and post-secondary institutions. They are used both in academic and continuing education programs. The simulation products can be used either independently or as part of a larger course. MediaSparks is developing a manufacturing-related simulation package and may develop other industry-specific products.</p>	<p>The instructor’s manual covers student assessment issues. In addition, the software package includes test banks and student performance assessment tools, which aid the instructor in determining approaches for improving student achievement.</p>	<p>A one-seat license for the Entrepreneur or Small Business software costs \$300. Discount prices are available for volume purchases by academic institutions and other qualifying organizations.</p>

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<p><b>BizTech</b> National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) <a href="http://www.nfte.com">http://www.nfte.com</a></p>	<p>NFTE offers four versions of its “How to Start and Operate a Small Business” curriculum, including versions for middle school, high school, post-secondary schools and Internet-based programs. The course covers business topics, including the process of developing a business plan. NFTE also offers training, awards, and on-line forums and resources for instructors.</p>	<p>The initial BizTech curriculum was developed for low-income urban youth aged 11-18, but it has been expanded for post-secondary students. Instructors can integrate the curriculum into academic or continuing education courses. An instructor can adapt certain segments of the curriculum based on local needs. The process of developing a business plan is an important part of the curriculum.</p>	<p>Biztech provides pre- and post-tests for the three major components of the course. The tests are graded electronically and results are sent to both the instructor and the NFTE office. On average, the student’s subject-matter knowledge levels have risen by 15% between the start and completion of each course component.</p>	<p>The three-day instructor-training course costs \$850 per instructor, and the five-day course costs \$2,000. Student textbooks and workbooks cost \$65 per set. The Teacher Resource Guide costs \$45. Licenses for BizTech software are \$20 for students and \$50 per teacher.</p>
<p><b>NxLevel</b> NxLevel Education Foundation <a href="http://www.nxlevel.org">http://www.nxlevel.org</a></p>	<p>NxLevel offers eight entrepreneurship-training modules, including a Business Start-ups course. The 30-hour Business Start-ups curriculum, which is accompanied by related resource materials, covers the major concepts included in a business plan. It also guides students through the process of developing and then evaluating a business plan for a start-up venture.</p>	<p>The Business Start-ups course is typically offered within an adult education or continuing education framework. Approximately one-third of students have already earned a four-year degree and two-thirds have some college experience. Courses are often delivered by higher education institutions in collaboration with economic development organizations, such as Small Business Development Centers.</p>	<p>Student performance is measured by the instructor’s evaluation of his/her business plan. NxLevel also commissions an independent assessment of economic development-related program outcomes, which indicates that 40 % of the students participating in the course start a new venture within five years.</p>	<p>NxLevel instructors must complete a certification course. NxLevel trainers charge \$2,500 plus expenses for a two-day training session to multiple instructors. In the classroom, instructors need a manual (\$39) and each student needs resource materials (\$100).</p>

# EnterprisePrep

Program Overview by

Augusta Technical College & CTC  
Public Benefit Corp.



## Description of the Tool:

EnterprisePrep is a hands-on learning experience in which participants, with teacher assistance, start and operate a kiosk-based in-school single-product-line retail business. As owners, the students and the teacher purchase stock in the corporation and make decisions on what types of products to sell, prices to charge, promotional materials to use, hours of operation, and kiosk location. Wages are not paid to students to run the kiosk, but profits are distributed to stockholders as dividends. Participants experience ownership first-hand and learn how good decision-making can lead to higher profits.

In workshops, students develop SCANS-based communication, thinking, teamwork, and autonomy skills to complete increasingly complex tasks at growing levels of independence. Kiosk team members rotate roles; they use corporate contract standards to assess their own and peer performance, set improvement goals, and earn sweat equity for outstanding effort. The kiosk itself may be nothing more extravagant than a table set up at sporting events, a cafeteria or student lounge, or other venues.

EnterprisePrep creator Small Business Training (SBT) conducts an initial instructor-training workshop and meets with instructors three to four times a school year to provide additional technical assistance and professional development. Instructors are linked in groups for best practice sharing and problem solving. SBT provides two instructional materials, the *CEO Guide* for teachers and *Owner's Manual* for students, which concentrate on business startup, sales, keeping inventory and books, team management/working as a group, decision-making, problem-solving, and evaluation skills.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

Approximately 1,200 at-risk high school students in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania have participated in EnterprisePrep programs, but the methodology and materials could be easily adapted to the technical or community college environment. The program is designed for students with little or no business background. Because of the mode of the experience, the training is necessarily centered on the retail industry, but many of the lessons learned are transferable to entrepreneurship education and training programs related to other industries.

## Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:

Implementation of the program in a two-year college setting would be similar to the existing high school-based model. Instructors would need to develop or adopt existing curriculum to integrate with the start-up and operation of the kiosk business. The program might best be targeted towards students from a variety of disciplines desiring to build on a foundation of business experience for their entrepreneurial endeavors or as an introductory course for business students. It could also be incorporated into continuing education for adult learners seeking an introduction to entrepreneurship.

The schools themselves typically supplement student investment with small amounts of start-up capital by acquiring non-voting shares of the business.

In addition to the revenue generated from these shares, the institution can also charge rent and impose a net profit tax. These funds can pay for the operation and continued development of the program, as well as providing seed money to finance business startups by program graduates.

As the program matures, the program can support a “market” of kiosk businesses selling product lines that complement one another. In the “market” scenario, students present business plans to receive the start-up capital and approval of the institution.

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

SBT will work with institutions to design a program that integrates with the specific objectives of the instructors. Students involved with the program must identify local market needs to operate a successful kiosk business.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

Current metrics evaluate attendance (up 8 percent), school dropout rates among participants (none in schools with an 11 percent average annual dropout rate) and overall academic performance (up 4 percent). The students evaluated were among the lowest performers at seven of Philadelphia’s lowest-performing high schools.

### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

Total costs for a typical group of 30 students and one teacher can reach approximately \$2,500.00. The *CEO Guide* costs \$250.00 and the *Owner’s Manual*, required for each participant, is \$25.00. Additionally, participants invest in the class corporation by purchasing stock with students usually purchasing no more than 10 shares each to start the corporation. The amount and cost of available stock is determined by the individual school and teacher in charge of the program.

Monies from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the William Penn Foundation, National Mentoring Partnership, and the Philadelphia (PA) School District funded the development of program.

### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

Scott Reznick and Kathleen Weber, Partners  
Small Business Training (SBT)  
7A West 82nd Street  
Harvey Cedars, NJ 08008

609-361-7639

1-800-853-5010

Email: [scottreznick@comcast.net](mailto:scottreznick@comcast.net)

Scott and Kathleen Weber founded Small Business Training in 1990 to teach urban teens and adults how to start, manage, and grow school- and community-based enterprises.

# REAL (Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning)

Program Overview by

EntreWorks Consulting &  
Regional Technology Strategies, Inc.

## Description of the Tool:

REAL Enterprises, which recently merged with the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED), works to make entrepreneurial training accessible to underserved students. The program began in rural North Carolina with the aim of helping rural high school students contribute to the economic development of their communities. REAL now includes ten member organizations in different states and serves postsecondary students, younger students, Spanish-speakers, and adults in a range of communities.

The REAL Entrepreneur program is a training curriculum that addresses the central issues in starting and growing a business, such as marketing planning, accounting and bookkeeping basics, and time and stress management. Each topic is covered by textbook reading, instructor-led lectures and working sessions, expert presentations, and workbook assignments. Students first complete a self-assessment and evaluate community business opportunities. Next, students develop a business plan for a chosen enterprise, and are then introduced to other issues that accompany starting a business. The course is taught primarily through activities, including role-playing, group projects, competitions, web-based research, and using various computer programs. At the end of the course, the business plans are reviewed by a panel and students are then ready to approach a lender. Emphasis is placed on building ties with community business leaders by inviting them to speak in and advise the class.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

REAL provides entrepreneurship training for all ages, from elementary school to adulthood. The program is currently offered in 43 states and some foreign countries. Initially, REAL focused on high school students, but it is now widely used in community colleges. At present, 151 postsecondary institutions—largely community colleges—use REAL tools and curricula, representing roughly 15% of REAL's current market.

## Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:

REAL manages several programs relevant to the community college market:

- REAL: The basic entrepreneurship curriculum.
- Spanish REAL: The basic curriculum translated into Spanish.
- e-REAL: An online distance learning version of the curriculum.
- Rapid Response Training: A special module of classes designed for displaced workers.

Many community colleges and some four-year colleges have incorporated the program into their curricula, in several cases requiring the REAL course as part of general business or industry-specific concentrations.

## Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:

REAL's tools are adaptable for particular needs and priorities. The basic curriculum's components can be broken into discrete units, an approach used

by North Carolina's Rapid Response Training. REAL is used primarily in rural communities, and some special programs for agriculture-related businesses have been developed. The curriculum is local-specific in that students examine potential market opportunities in their community.

#### **Evaluation Metrics:**

REAL's work has been regularly studied and evaluated. In terms of program activity since the 1980s, REAL has trained 1,668 instructors and provided training to more than 10,000 students each year. REAL has also been shown to have a strong economic development impact. A study of North Carolina REAL found that, between 1992 and 1998, REAL graduates started 245 new businesses, and retained or expanded another 175 businesses. In addition, a 2001 Regional Technology Strategies report examines how several community colleges have used REAL tools in their program. To learn more, you can access *Cultivating Successful Rural Economies: Benchmark Practices at Community and Technical Colleges* at <http://www.rtsinc.org/benchmark>.

Evaluation of students during the course is determined by the instructor; because students are using local-specific examples and research, the program is not meant to have homogenous content. REAL is more interested in supporting course development by instructors, guiding their methodology, and collecting data on whether students start or retain businesses.

#### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

REAL's costs are reasonable with the primary expenses tied to training instructors and educators. This training is provided at a week-long REAL Institute which costs roughly \$1,000-\$1,700 (graduate credit is available). REAL provides a package of its curriculum guide, first-year license, and research library for \$800; subsequent licenses cost \$50 per year. Spanish REAL materials cost \$100, with student workbooks costing \$12-\$17. Finally, REAL provides special training for the rapid response modules. Training costs fall in the range of \$250-\$400.

Funds for these programs come from several sources, including state government agencies, colleges and universities, fees, and foundations. For example, most North Carolina community colleges use REAL materials, with funding generally provided via a mix of state grants, and student fees.

#### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

More information is available at the REAL website (<http://www.realenterprises.org>) or the CFED website (<http://www.cfed.org>).

CFED/REAL  
115 Market Street, Suite 221  
Durham, NC 27701

919-688-7325

FAX: 919-682-7621  
[info@realenterprises.org](mailto:info@realenterprises.org)

## **Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning Program Overview**

# FastTrac

Program Overview by  
Haywood Community College &  
CTC Public Benefit Corp.



## Description of the Tool:

FastTrac is a modular classroom-based curriculum with supporting resources that include a manual, workbook and CD-ROM. The curriculum is appropriate for general audiences and some specific industry groups. All of the programs contain modules in entrepreneurial character traits, business formation types, marketing, finance, customer relations, operations, and forming a management team. Some topics, such as marketing and finance, are covered in multiple-module sessions.

The number of modules per curriculum varies from 9 to 13. They are facilitator-delivered and can include business coaches. It is recommended that there be one coach for every eight participants. The coaches are available to help the students with the exercises. The exercises make up about half of the 3 to 3.5 hour sessions. The programs lend themselves to the use of guest speakers at each session. The speakers should be experts in that session's subject. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to arrange the speakers. The speakers tend to be one of the most popular parts of the program.

Each student receives a participant workbook, manual, and CD-ROM that contains templates for completing a business plan, tips and best practices, and video coaching. The students are responsible for a reading assignment (away from the classroom) and exercises that walk them through the business planning process (that are completed during the facilitated session).

Most programs contain the following subjects with supporting text and interactive exercises:

- Introduction and the Entrepreneurial Mindset
- The Management Team
- Legal Aspects
- Marketing: Purpose and Research
- Marketing: Analysis
- Marketing: Penetration Tactics
- Financials: The Foundation
- Financials: Management Tools
- Financials: Budgeting
- Operations and Managing Growth
- Money Sources

FastTrac New Venture, Planning, and Listening to Your Business are for all audiences and cover feasibility planning, writing a business plan, securing funding, and developing a three-year strategy. FastTrac also includes scheduled networking opportunities in each class.

### **Profile of Targeted Student User Population:**

The training programs are for start-ups, existing businesses, and college students, with content that focuses on all aspects of business planning.

### **Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:**

FastTrac training is provided by local intermediaries who are trained and certified by the national office; this training is presently offered in 41 states and 151 cities. A variety of organizations provide such training. In most cases, small business service providers, such as a Small Business Development Center, provide the training, but the program can be offered through a community or technical college system. FastTrac's web site currently lists 48 post-secondary institutions offering one of FastTrac's programs, including 16 technical and community colleges ([http://www.fastrac.org/search\\_event.cfm](http://www.fastrac.org/search_event.cfm)).

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

Because of the wide range of materials that are available, resources can be integrated into course curricula to help instructors meet the needs and priorities of specific groups and address industry or cluster-specific issues. Instructors can introduce topics that are more focused on a particular industry even when using FastTrac's generic course materials. FastTrac programs are also available in several industry-specific versions, such as information technology, manufacturing, and childcare. Participants network with each other, often forming alliances and strategic partnerships that promote cluster development. The generic programs can easily be adapted to focus on a specific business cluster by the facilitator.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

FastTrac keeps records of all graduates in their database and communicates with them via printed and electronic newsletters and other communiqués. Facilitators and administrators have the responsibility of keeping in touch with the graduates to monitor success stories and pass these stories on to FastTrac and the Kauffman Foundation.

### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

The University of Southern California originally developed the FastTrac Entrepreneurship Training Programs; beginning in the 1990s, the program has been refined and expanded under the auspices of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, MO.

The cost of the programs per student can vary widely across the country. Some are free via scholarship programs, while in high demand areas, prices can go up to \$1,000. In the past, the US Department of Veterans Affairs has provided scholarships for materials. A similar program has been available for those who were displaced from their jobs as a result of the fallout from the 9/11 disaster and ensuing recession.

No fees are predetermined or required by FastTrac for the delivery of training. Providers determine their own fees and costs to include marketing, facilities, refreshments, additional services, and other delivery expenses.

To become a provider of FastTrac, an institution must have certified Administrators and Facilitators. Administrator and Facilitator Orientation and Certification is conducted every March, July and November in Kansas City, Missouri.

## FastTrac Program Overview

- Administrator certification is a one-day event, and the cost is \$100. Each attendee will receive a FastTrac Administrator Manual including the FastTrac Administrative Tool-Kit CD-ROM.
- FastTrac, NewVenture, and FastTrac Planning Facilitator certification (a two-day event) costs \$500. Each attendee for Facilitator certification will receive a FastTrac Facilitator Manual and a set of participant materials.
- Separate training is provided to organizations launching a First Step FastTrac program. First Step FastTrac program Administrators receive first-hand knowledge of how to market the First Step FastTrac program, how to select participants for the program, how to select facilitators and business counselors for the program, and tips on how to build a coalition with other community organizations. There is no fee for this orientation.

Additional professional development and networking for best practices is provided at periodic FastTrac retreats and conferences. FastTrac also offers best practices, including marketing ideas, and tips for effective implementation.

Collateral materials and products for marketing, sponsorship development, and program implementation are also available for purchase through FastTrac. FastTrac materials are offered at wholesale cost to authorized providers. Participant sets include handbooks and workbooks, CD-ROM, scannable enrollment forms, and end-of-Program Overviews.

### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

FastTrac National Headquarters  
4747 Troost  
Kansas City, MO 64110

Phone: 1-800-689-1740  
Fax: 1-816-235-6216  
For orders/customer service: 1-877-450-9800

Email: [info@fasttrac.org](mailto:info@fasttrac.org)

# Mountain Microenterprise Foundations

Program Overview by  
Haywood Community College &  
Regional Technology Strategies, Inc.



## Description of the Tool:

The Mountain Microenterprise Fund (MMF) is a North Carolina-based program that provides micro-business incubation services targeted to low-income individuals. Services include client recruitment, training, peer networking, technical assistance, shared office equipment, access to micro-loan and savings assistance programs, and limited reduced-cost CPA and attorney consulting sessions. Participant training is centered on a seven-week *Foundations* course that covers the following topics:

- Marketing
- Cash flow
- Break-even analysis
- Budgeting
- Sales forecasting

A three-week program in QuickBooks is offered after the initial seven-week *Foundations* program. The *Foundations* course is instructor-led, but very interactive and fast-paced. The purpose of the course is to guide the entrepreneur toward completing a business plan. A typical class has a minimum of seven participants.

The MMF also incorporates peer group learning. Instead of working in isolation, MMF members get support and feedback from other entrepreneurs challenged by similar issues. Peer groups create a business network that can be tapped for feedback and advice. Group discussion allows the exploration of the feasibility of the business plans as they are developed.

Individual Development Accounts (IDA) are offered to graduates. These are income-based, and savings are matched 2:1 up to \$1,000 with no repayment. First loans are available from \$300 - \$2,500, progressing up to \$25,000. Lack of collateral, lack of business experience or poor credit do not disqualify clients from receiving a loan. Ongoing education and support is provided through one-on-one consultations, mentoring, specialized trainings, monthly networking meetings, a resource library, and legal and accounting referrals. The Mountain Microenterprise Fund is a one-stop shop for entrepreneurs, who are encouraged to become part of the larger community of the non-profit organization.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

The MMF program is designed primarily for low-income adults who are interested in starting a microenterprise. It caters to those exploring their business options, start-ups, those already operating, and businesses that want to expand. The program is currently limited in scope to Western North Carolina, but it can be tailored for other regions. A pre-*Foundations* course (3 hrs.) can be conducted for a specific targeted group (example: Department of Social Services clientele) to identify skills and survey interest in starting a business.

MMF has no particular cluster focus, but classes can be grouped and scheduled by specific industry groups. Often a group is started when a geographical location has seven or more people interested in starting a group, so there is usually a diverse business composition; conversely, a group with related interests could come together and request a course that responds to their particular issues.

#### **Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:**

MMF's training program is nationally recognized as a best practice for microenterprise training. Versions of the program are used by other microenterprise initiatives across the country. Two-year colleges could use it as a model for continuing education to support local community entrepreneurial efforts. It could also be used as a model for training students from a variety of disciplines who desire to start their own microenterprises but who lack prior business experience or training.

#### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

Since MMF is a regionalized resource, the *Foundations* program is designed with local needs in mind. It has scheduling and location flexibility to meet the needs of the participants. Resource offerings and peer groups can be tailored to meet local or industry-specific needs.

#### **Evaluation Metrics:**

The success of the MMF program is measured by the number of successful microenterprise startups. MMF has assisted more than 1,200 microentrepreneurs. Of those trained, nearly 500 individuals are operating businesses today that generate an estimated \$15 million that goes into the local economy.

#### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

The cost for participants is on a sliding scale depending on the number of people in the household, annual income, and education level. The range is from \$35-\$300.

#### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

Mountain Microenterprise Fund  
29 1/2 Page Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28801

Tel: 828/253-2834 or Toll-Free: 888/389-3089  
Fax: 828/255-7953

[info@mtnmicro.org](mailto:info@mtnmicro.org)  
<http://www.mtnmicro.org>

# Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE)

Program Overview by

Kingsborough Community College  
at the City University of New York



## Description of the Tool:

*Students in Free Enterprise* (SIFE) is a global organization dedicated to fostering free enterprise awareness and education. The SIFE program conducts a series of regional, national, and international events where student teams from colleges compete for cash prizes. At these events, representatives from the student teams present information related to their participation in service projects that promote free enterprise, and teams of business leaders evaluate the projects. The teams' faculty advisors, who receive the title Sam Walton Fellow along with a stipend, play an important role in mentoring the students and promoting student involvement.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

SIFE is a general business program targeted to two- and four-year college students. It can be adopted within a non-business discipline (engineering, liberal arts, sciences) or in a specific field within business (accounting, HR, economics, entrepreneurship). Ultimately, the team's individual project determines the focus.

SIFE initiatives are currently active on approximately 900 campuses in the US, and more than 1,500 worldwide. In the US, approximately 250 schools compete in the two-year division, and the remainder of the participating institutions are four-year colleges.

## Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:

This is not a didactic program. Student teams design and implement service projects and present their results in competitions. Two-year colleges compete in a separate category at the regional, national and global competitions, but the criteria for judging projects do not vary by category of institution.

Typically, a faculty member mentors student-run teams. The projects are largely face-to-face extracurricular activities. However, the projects can be coordinated via e-teams, and they can also be integrated into more traditional coursework.

Teams are required to incorporate business skills, such as communications, marketing, and finance, into their projects. The projects must also demonstrate an understanding of free enterprise system. Sample projects include a financial literacy education program targeted towards elementary school students, a program to teach seniors to avoid being victims of fraud, a consulting project with local entrepreneurs and emerging entrepreneurs, and an initiative to produce a video series on business ethics.

## Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:

Each project must be structured to meet a recognized local need. In addition, issues that concern participating faculty members and students often are important factors in defining individual projects.

The standardized format adopted for regional, national and global competitions limits the degree to which programmatic modifications are

## Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) Program Overview

practical, however. For example, if a faculty member wants to emphasize areas beyond the judging criteria, there is little incentive—and some challenges—in doing so.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

Students conduct their projects and present their results in a written report and in a live presentation in a competitive format. Projects are judged in the following areas:

- How well did the students teach free enterprise in their project?
- How well did their project meet a market need?
- Did the team have the business, management and communications skills necessary to carry out the project?
- Did the team display sound business ethics?
- How well did the team measure the effectiveness of their project?
- How well did the team use mass media to leverage their project?
- How well did they engage students in other disciplines and an advisory board?
- How well did they present their project?

Complete judging criteria and presentation rules can be found at [http://www.sife.org/united\\_states/sife\\_teams/competition\\_rules.asp](http://www.sife.org/united_states/sife_teams/competition_rules.asp).

### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

There are no fees paid to become involved in the SIFE program, and there are usually no equipment costs. Faculty mentors are typically given stipends, and winning teams earn cash prizes and travel subsidies. Additional travel costs for students who are attending competitions may need to be borne by participating institutions. Regional winners are awarded \$1,500, and at the national competition prizes range from \$750 - \$4000. In addition, teams may enter special competitions with awards ranging from \$500 - \$3000.

### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

More information is available at the SIFE web site (<http://www.sife.org>). Also, the SIFE faculty advisor at each campus receives incentives for signing on new teams, so advisors are often particularly supportive of new program participants. Further information is available by contacting SIFE World (and US) Headquarters at:

The Jack Shewmaker SIFE World Headquarters  
Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center  
Jack Kahl Entrepreneurship Center  
1959 East Kerr Street  
Springfield, MO USA 65803-4775

417-831-9505

Faculty members interested in enrolling their institutions in the SIFE program can submit an application through the following web site: [http://www.sife.org/united\\_states/sife\\_teams/faculty/fellow\\_application.asp](http://www.sife.org/united_states/sife_teams/faculty/fellow_application.asp).

# Virtual Enterprise

Program Overview by  
Kingsborough Community College  
at City University of New York  
& CTC Public Benefit Corp.



## Description of the Tool:

Virtual Enterprise (VE) is a web-based business simulation program that allows students to conceive, create and operate virtual enterprises. Students use the program to transact business with other student-run businesses that are located in the United States and thirty-nine other countries. In all, there are 3,300 “firms” operating on this virtual e-commerce network.

The program is supported by a transaction center that serves the multiple colleges involved in VE educational programs. The transaction center – or regional headquarters – offers electronic banking services, mail services, web page links, company resources, and network management services. The transaction center maintains all of the computer simulation programs and supporting software at its site, and students are provided with Internet access to the VE e-commerce network.

Currently, there are three regional headquarters in the United States that coordinate activities for their respective VE networks. These include the following organizations:

- The Institute for Virtual Enterprise, The City University of New York (CUNY),
- The Center for Simulated Business Services at Mercer County Community College, and
- The California Network Virtual Enterprises, International in Bakersfield, California (serves secondary schools).

The Kingsborough Community College VE program uses the transaction center based at CUNY.

The VE simulations are typically integrated into education and training courses. Within these courses, students create business plans and submit them to the investment bank at the transaction center for funding. Personnel at the transaction center evaluate the plan and either provide virtual financing or advise the student-run firm that their business plan should be revised and resubmitted. Companies then carry-on, semester to semester, or start up again with a new idea. It all depends on what the instructor is trying to accomplish.

One shortcoming of the VE program is that there is a limited range of printed materials to support the program. Instructors throughout the VE marketplace have frequently shared best practices content, but a full compendium of such practices does not exist. In the US, there is only one workbook about the history of VE and the methods used at Kingsborough Community College: Anthony Borgese, *Virtual Enterprise: A Resource for Student Success in the Real and Virtual World* (Kendall Hunt 2003).

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

VE is an appropriate tool for both secondary and post-secondary students, as it can be incorporated into classes at a wide range of levels. VE began

## Virtual Enterprise Program Overview

in Europe after WWII, and there are now more than 3,000 practice firms (as they are called outside the USA) in Europe, Canada, Australia, Asia, and Latin America. In 1994 and 1995, representatives from the New York City Board of Education first observed the success of the program on a visit to schools in Vienna, Austria, and decided to pioneer the concept in the United States. The first VE program in the United States was implemented in seven New York City high schools in September 1996. Currently, there are more than 250 practice firms operating in the United States at secondary and post-secondary levels. The institutions participating in VE include ten four-year colleges, 50 community colleges, and 100 high schools.

### **Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:**

VE is used predominantly in entrepreneurship training programs. The tool has been used both in an academic environment and as part of workforce development programs.

Traditionally, students follow the same meeting times as in traditional courses. However, some VE classes meet in three-hour blocks. Some of the virtual firms are not involved in inter-firm trading. Instead, they focus exclusively on writing a business plan. Again, the composition of course content and delivery approaches is dictated by the instructor's teaching goals and objectives.

Some instructors have let students become the administrators of the firm and take a facilitator's role. Other instructors have declared themselves the general manager of the firm and assign specific roles to students. Regardless of instructor preferences, all students must take a position within the firm.

Traditionally, students go into a firm and choose positions in a variety of departments, such as Administration, Human Resources, Marketing, Technology, or Accounting. Students may hold more than one position. They must perform the work for the position they choose. Most students do cross-training in different departments and truly focused students learn about the entire operation.

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

At Kingsborough Community College, the VE program has been integrated into a traditional classroom-based instructional setting. The tool is used most extensively in the Tourism and Hospitality Department, where students must integrate a virtual enterprise component into their curriculum. The tool is also being used in the Nursing, Art Broadcasting and Biology departments.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

The Center for Advanced Study in Education (CASE), which is a research organization based within CUNY, conducted an independent assessment of Kingsborough's VE program. They used the 21st Century Learning Outcomes, which were developed by the League for Innovation in the Community College, as a template for their assessment of Kingsborough's VE program. The following table compares the 21st Century Core Skills with the Kingsborough VE learning objectives.

## Virtual Enterprise Program Overview

21 <sup>st</sup> Century Core Skills	Kingsborough VE Learning Outcomes
<b>Communication Skills</b> (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)	<b>Communication Skills</b> (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)
<b>Community Skills</b> (citizenship; diversity/pluralism; local, community, global environmental awareness)	<b>Global Awareness</b> (understanding the global information and technology marketplace; culture and diversity)
<b>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills</b> (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, decision making, creative thinking)	<b>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills</b> (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, decision making, creative thinking)
<b>Information Management Skills</b> (collecting, analyzing, and organizing information from a variety of sources)	<b>Information Management Skills</b> (collecting, analyzing, and organizing information from a variety of sources)
<b>Technology Skills</b> (computer literacy, Internet skills, retrieving and managing information via technology)	<b>Technology Skills</b> (computer literacy, Internet skills, retrieving and managing information via technology)
<b>Personal Skills</b> (ability to understand and manage self, management of change, learning to learn, personal responsibility, aesthetic responsiveness, wellness)	<b>Inter and Intrapersonal Skills</b> (working with others, ability to understand and manage self, management of change, learning to learn, personal responsibility)
	<b>Entrepreneurship Outcomes</b> (developing organizational leadership and vision)
	<b>Motivational Outcomes</b> (understanding the connection between academic skills and attainment of career goals, career self-efficacy expectations)
	<b>Faculty Outcomes</b> (shifting roles from instructor to advisor-coach-facilitator, functioning in cross-disciplinary teams)

### Costs Associated with Using the Tool:

Other than the costs associated with the instructor's involvement, there are currently no costs associated with the original adoption of the Virtual Enterprise program. In the future, as more virtual companies are started and the existing banking software becomes strained, program operators may institute a small fee for the use of banking software. The main "costs" are finding a suitable place to conduct your virtual business. Most schools use existing computer labs to house virtual firms. VE firms can conduct meetings and general business in these labs.

While the VE program is free, many schools obtain support funds from private-sector contributors. Many companies who know about VE are interested in supporting virtual firms within their chosen industry niche. For instance, if your school starts up a travel agency, American Express might be interested in providing funding or other types of in-kind support. In addition, private foundations, such as the Kauffman Foundation, and government funders, such as the US Department of Education, have provided support for

## Virtual Enterprise Program Overview

VE efforts. Kingsborough Community College's VE program has received support from these sources.

### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

The Institute for Virtual Enterprise  
The City University of New York  
1114 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10036  
Phone 212.502.2945  
Fax 212.290.5666

E-mail: [cuny\\_ive@yahoo.com](mailto:cuny_ive@yahoo.com)

<http://www.ive.cuny.edu>

You may also attend one of the VE information sessions held at Kingsborough Community College. For more information on the sessions, you can e-mail Dr. Stuart Schulman or Dr. Jonathan Deutsch at [ssschulman@kingsborough.edu](mailto:ssschulman@kingsborough.edu) or [Jdeutsch@kingsborough.edu](mailto:Jdeutsch@kingsborough.edu).

### **Other Sources:**

Anthony Borgese, *Virtual Enterprise: A Resource for Student Success in the Real and Virtual World* (Kendall Hunt 2003).

# National FFA Organization

Program Overview by

Montana State Great Falls  
College of Technology &  
Regional Technology Strategies, Inc.



## Description of the Tool:

FFA has been working with rural youth in skills, leadership, and career training through agricultural education for over 75 years. Nationwide, FFA has about 460,000 members and over 7,000 local and state chapters that are governed by a national organization. Traditionally geared toward high school students, FFA has recently begun expanding their program for two- and four-year college students with a focus on recruiting and retaining students in agriculture-related fields, particularly agricultural education (<http://www.ffa.org/collegiate/index.html>). Collegiate members can attend the National FFA Convention and participate in targeted events, and in 2004 can attend the first Collegiate Career Expo.

FFA focuses on entrepreneurship through two aspects of the Supervised Agricultural Experience Program (<http://www.ffa.org/programs/sae/index.html>). Firstly, FFA members can enter to win annual awards for career skills and experience in 49 agriculture-related proficiency areas (<http://www.ffa.org/programs/proficiency/index.html>). Proficiency awards are given in two categories: "Placement," meaning the student is working for wages, or "Entrepreneurship," meaning that the student owns and operates the business (See "Evaluation Metrics," below for details). Secondly, the Agri-Entrepreneurship Program is a nationwide agriculture-related business plan competition for FFA members ([http://www.ffa.org/programs/ag\\_ent](http://www.ffa.org/programs/ag_ent)). Since 1996, local, state, and national winners have received cash and scholarship prizes funded by local sponsors and matching funds from the Kauffman Foundation. Winning businesses in 2003 included a pest removal business, a corn maze, and an exotic animal grooming company. Unfortunately, due to funding changes, 2004 will be the last year for this program, although it may resurface under a different name.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

As mentioned above, FFA works primarily with students in high school agriculture education programs — 91 percent of FFA members are in grades nine through twelve. Four percent of FFA members are in grades six through eight and only five percent of the nationally registered FFA members are postsecondary students. However, postsecondary involvement may grow as the collegiate program gains visibility.

## Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:

Collegiate FFA chapters can be founded at any two- or four-year postsecondary institution that offers agriculture-related courses. In the past, membership has only been open to students majoring in an agriculture-related field, but the program is now opening membership to any interested student. About 5,000 postsecondary students and 42 chapters are registered at the national level, but the program estimates that there are as many as 20,000 postsecondary students and 120 chapters that have not registered nationally. However, they predict this will change in coming years because of program expansion that will offer greater incentive to register. Community colleges make up about 40 percent of their postsecondary membership.

## FFA Program Overview

Collegiate FFA is not directly involved in entrepreneurship training, but helps postsecondary students find internships. This assistance is provided through their local chapters and through the Collegiate Career Expo, which will host 20 companies with historic FFA involvement. A sample of participating companies includes John Deere, Monsanto, Dupont, Chevy, and Toyota. The Expo will allow students to meet with company representatives and will ideally forge ties between the companies and local collegiate chapters. A new Collegiate FFA website also features an internship database. Postsecondary students are currently only eligible for one award, the American Degree, which is the highest award offered in FFA. This award is given to students after high school graduation based on their previous achievements.

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

One of FFA's most noted features, and one of the reasons for its long-standing reputation for success, is its ability to adapt to the needs of local student populations. The FFA program is sometimes integrated into state-level ag-related curricula. And, these curricula can be easily adapted to address agricultural topics as well as complementary business topics and ventures. Overall, the organization is focused on the food, fiber, and natural resources industry.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

Annual Proficiency Awards are selected on the state and national level based on a competitive application process according to the national proficiency standards established by FFA for each proficiency area. Winners receive a cash award (\$100 for state winners, \$250 for national finalists and the national winner). General criteria for judging proficiency awards is as follows:

- Skills and competencies learned that relate to an agricultural career field.
- Financial achievements, including growth in scope.
- Personal growth and development through FFA activities.
- Evidence of student accomplishments based on available resources and opportunities.
- Communication skills as demonstrated in the written portions of applications and clear, concise answers given during interviews.

The written application for an Entrepreneurship Award requires a detailed explanation of the financial setup and operation of the business. See the "Agricultural Proficiency Award Handbook" for detailed requirements and comprehensive metrics for these awards (download at <http://www.ffa.org/programs/proficiency/index.html>).

Judges for the Agri-Entrepreneurship program evaluate business plans based on plan design and uniqueness. The evaluation is meant to focus on the plan itself, but national awards often go to students who are already running their businesses.

### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

Annual dues for FFA membership are \$5 per year. There are typically no fees for student participation in FFA competitions. School districts typically host the local competitions,

and local FFA alumnae and local companies often fund them. Various foundations fund national competitions.

Funding responsibility for FFA programs lies primarily within each school district or campus. State FFA foundations provide funding for special FFA programs. Some funding is available from federal sources and foundations.

**Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

For more information about the Collegiate FFA Program, contact:

Collegiate Services Staff of the National FFA Organization  
317-802-4214 or 317-802-4220  
collegiate@ffa.org  
<http://www.ffa.org/collegiate/index.html>

For more information about the Agri-Entrepreneurship Program, contact:

Agri-Entrepreneurship Program of the National FFA Organization  
317-802-4255  
ag\_ent@ffa.org  
[http://www.ffa.org/programs/ag\\_ent/](http://www.ffa.org/programs/ag_ent/)

National FFA Center  
P.O. Box 68960, 6060 FFA Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960  
Phone: 317-802-6060

Fax: 317-802-6061

<http://www.ffa.org>

## FFA Program Overview

# Planning the Entrepreneurial Venture (PEV)

Program Overview by  
Montana State Great Falls  
College of Technology &  
CTC Public Benefit Corp.



## Description of the Tool:

The Kauffman Foundation's *Planning the Entrepreneurial Venture* (PEV) provides Internet-based business planning content for use in conjunction with traditional classroom instruction. The tool's blended-learning environment provides a dynamic, interactive experience that combines the flexibility of Internet-based e-learning with the benefits of face-to-face instruction. The content utilizes Virtuoso, a management and delivery system developed by the Cisco Learning Institute, to connect to the student via the Internet and/or face-to-face and includes exercises, templates, tests, business case studies and other resources. Students enter the content with an assigned identification number and password after the instructor has added them to the course.

The curriculum focuses on important issues related to start-ups and existing businesses, introduces the student to the characteristics of entrepreneurs and opportunity recognition, and moves the student to the finalization and presentation of a business plan. The *Planning the Entrepreneurial Venture* course is designed to teach students how to research, develop, and write detailed start-up business plans, which can be used to create successful businesses. The course centers on the business planning process: opportunity recognition, business concept development, feasibility testing, and the business plan. The practical, hands-on approach encourages students to immerse themselves in the vision, research, and planning aspects of a new venture. Marketing considerations are well represented in the curriculum, and processes to conduct marketing research are comprehensive.

The instructor's manual provides comprehensive teaching notes with learning objectives, PowerPoint slide narratives and exercises for each chapter of the curriculum. In addition, each instructor receives a CD with a "printed version" of the student content, instructor content, PowerPoint slides, test bank, templates for exercises and activities, template for the business plan, and samples of business plans.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

Students or entrepreneurs who are interested in growing an existing business through research and planning can benefit from the content. It can be used as an introduction to the construct of entrepreneurship to traditional and non-traditional students who lack personal and academic experience with business topics.

The curriculum is also being considered for high school-level students interested in starting their own businesses, with high school credits being articulated to the post-secondary two-year campus that has partnered with the high school.

## Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:

The curriculum can be used in two-year Associate of Applied Science degree programs in small business management or entrepreneurship, and is particularly user-friendly to instructors with a strong business, accounting, or marketing background or teaching credentials.

## Planning the Entrepreneurial Venture (PEV) Program Overview

The curriculum is in beta testing and has not been widely distributed to two-year campuses. The curriculum was first beta tested in fall of 2003 by nine campuses. Twenty-five campuses across the United States beta tested the curriculum spring 2004. The AAS degree in Business Management/Entrepreneurship at Montana State University Great Falls College of Technology uses the PEV curriculum for the capstone Entrepreneurship course, in which the students prepare business plans. It has also been used by Kingsborough Community College CUNY in New York City to introduce students to entrepreneurship possibilities in career selection and to get them thinking about how entrepreneurship could apply to other technical concentrations.

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

*Planning the Entrepreneurial Venture* meets the needs of a number of target audiences and can also be introduced in modules to meet the needs of students in need of “just in time” learning.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

In 2003 and May 2004, the Kauffman Foundation formed an advisory committee of instructors using the beta content in fall 2003 and spring 2004 courses. The committee worked to identify instructional content, technological features, and delivery methodology modifications for enhancement and improvement. The PEV development team has taken the committee’s suggestions under consideration and will implement the modifications where possible. Instructors using the curriculum are individualizing the metrics used to assess the outcome of course completers.

### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

The beta testing campuses are currently not paying for the web-based curriculum content or the instructor support materials. The Kauffman Foundation is developing a strategy to introduce the product to the larger entrepreneurship education market. Future costs of the program are in the development phase.

### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

Stefanie Weaver  
Manager Adult Entrepreneurship Education  
Kauffman Foundation  
4801 Rockhill Road  
Kansas City, Missouri 64110-2046

<http://www.kauffman.org>  
816-932-1000

and

Tina Sterling  
573.446.2673

[tmsterling@att.net](mailto:tmsterling@att.net)

# On the Road to “Going To Market”

Program Overview by  
Montana State Great Falls  
College of Technology &  
Regional Technology Strategies, Inc.



## Description of the Tool:

“On the Road to Going to Market” is a video and workbook training program designed for small-scale retail business owners or manufacturers to learn about the process of buying or selling goods at a wholesale retail market. The program was created in 1997 by Randy Hanson, then the director of a regional small business center in rural Montana, and his colleague Mike Flaherty, a businessman. Wholesale markets are often the best and most cost-efficient way for small rural retailers to stock their stores, but they have specific regulations, terminology, and practices that can set uninformed entrepreneurs at a disadvantage. The series is based on Hanson and Flaherty’s experience with the Billings Market in Montana, and fills a gap that they identified in entrepreneur education.

Each video is between 20 and 25 minutes long and is presented from one of four perspectives: a retailer, a wholesaler, a company representative, and a resource person (someone from a small business center, a manufacturing extension center, or a local educational institution). The workbook is closely linked to the video materials, with both following a step-by-step process of preparation leading to market day. Other general business skills are covered, such as the pitfalls of going into business, business plan worksheets, creating a marketing action plan, determining prices, and identifying common distribution channels. Selected groups of videos can be offered as part of a series or the videos can be offered independently, and parts of the program are often integrated into the marketing section of a business curriculum or presented in a workshop format at a local small business center or conference. Hanson and Flaherty encourage instructors who are using the tool to incorporate, where possible, a field trip to a local wholesale market.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

This program was developed for existing or potential retail business owners who need to buy inventory, manufacturers who want to sell wholesale, individuals interested in becoming sales representatives, and resource people who want to help their clients. The majority of participants to date have been age 30 and older, live in rural Montana, and have a high school education or less. Of the more than 250 participants that have gone to the Billings Market at the end of the course, about 35 percent were manufacturers looking for a company rep, 55 percent were retailers, and the rest were resource people. Typical participating businesses are very small and have included retail, clothing, food, gifts and light manufacturing.

## Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:

The target population for this program is older, local entrepreneurs in a rural setting, but it has been presented in several community college classes as part of a larger course. At present, this program is only operating in Montana, but it can be adapted for use in other communities. Randy Hanson, the program’s designer, teaches two to five classes per year, modifying the presentation depending on the needs of participants and the goal of the training sponsor. These classes have worked well with NxLevel training programs, Tribal College marketing classes, Tribal Business Information Centers (TBIC), SBDC workshops, and at local two- and four-year colleges.

## On the Road to “Going to Market” Program Overview

Only a few instructors in Montana, other than the program designers, have taught the material so far, although it has been presented in nearby states. There is no instructor’s manual or website, but the program designers feel that the materials are self-explanatory and should be used in conjunction with an instructor’s personal experience at a market.

### Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:

The program creators emphasize that the series works best if the instructor can make ties with a local market and arrange a field trip for students. There are about 5,000-6,000 markets in the US. While the Billings Market is the only “general” market (it sells a range of goods), there are many others that focus on clothing, toys, and other groups of products. The content, while focused on retail, is meant to be general. Instructors who have experience in specific areas are encouraged to interject personal experiences into the lessons.

### Evaluation Metrics:

More than 500 individuals have taken the course, and more than 250 have traveled to the Billings Market as part of the instruction. Of this latter group, 60 percent are still associated with the market either as business owners or sellers, and many of those who are not have opted to go to a more specialized market either as a buyer or a seller. A typical success story is that of a woman from a small town who began making pressed flower wall hangings, and found a niche with appropriate stores through the Billings Market. She has since expanded operations in her home, employing her family and five new employees.

### Costs Associated with Using the Tool:

The program can be purchased in two ways: workbooks can be purchased individually for \$25, or the package of one workbook and four videos is available for \$400. The program designers suggest that trainers or resource people buy the full set of videos and workbook. Individual workbooks can then be purchased for participants in a class or training session. The curriculum’s original design work was funded in part by contributions from local businesses, service providers, and the Montana Department of Agriculture. The Department now has an agreement that allows them to reproduce and sell course materials at a reduced cost.

### Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:

The program designers encourage interested instructors to contact them with questions about the material and their teaching methodology. For more information, contact:

Randy Hanson, Regional Development Officer  
Business Resources Division  
Montana Department of Commerce  
P.O. Box 311  
Havre, MT 59501-0311  
  
406-262-9579  
  
hanson@ibic4.ibic.org

Mike Flaherty  
P.O. Drawer 267  
Great Falls, MT 59403  
  
800-992-7671  
  
mike@gfpaper.com

# DECA/DEX

Program Overview by

North Dakota State  
College of Science &  
Regional Technology Strategies, Inc



## Description of the Tool:

Delta Epsilon Chi (DEX) is an international organization for postsecondary students that uses a project-oriented approach in teaching business skills, principles of free enterprise, leadership, and community service. DEX is the postsecondary division of DECA Inc., a large association of high school marketing students and teachers. Local DEX chapters are formed by a group of postsecondary students and a faculty advisor. Activities include conferences, competitive events, awards for community service and leadership, weekend management institutes, and resources for developing business skills. DEX sponsors an annual International Career Development Conference (ICDC), which attracts about 2,000 participants for competitive events, seminars, weekend management institutes, and networking.

Two activities focus specifically on entrepreneurship. First is the Entrepreneur competition in the Prepared Business Presentation category (See “Evaluation Metrics” below). The second is a new Entrepreneurship Academy, which is held over the ICDC weekend. Students participate in discussion sessions, a series of seminars led by entrepreneurs, and a group project to write and present a business plan.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

Delta Epsilon Chi has about 14,000 members and is organized into a system of local and state chapters. Its parent company, DECA Inc., has about 170,000 high school marketing student members and 4,500 marketing teachers. Membership is largely in the US, with a few chapters in US territories and in Canada.

DEX was founded to provide business and leadership opportunities for two-year college students and has only recently involved four-year institutions, whose presence has increased in the past five years. Currently, 65 percent of the 200 postsecondary member institutions are community colleges. About 2,000 participants annually attend the most prominent event, the International Career Development Conference (ICDC), including business people, advisors, and students. About 1,300 students participate in the annual ICDC competitive events.

## Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:

The organization’s activities are meant to be integrated into business curricula in postsecondary institutions. Competitive event projects often serve as term projects for students. Delta Epsilon Chi reports that their strongest ties are with community colleges, where students can earn four credits in some cases for their outside involvement with the organization, not including coursework that may be based on their activities. Students in the competitive events range from age 18-65 and are full-time and part-time students.

Teams from two-year and four-year colleges compete together in the competitive events. Judges do not know which institutions’ participants are attending, which reduces the possibility of bias. Winners are a mix of two-year and four-year institutions. Delta Epsilon Chi reasons that if the students will all be competing for jobs together, it is most appropriate for them to compete together in simulation events as well.

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

The local chapter system allows local faculty and students to determine most program content and activities, so it is adaptable to programs in marketing, management or business. Competitive events are continually reviewed, changed, deleted, or added as business and industry needs change. As mentioned above, leadership and community service activities necessarily involve interaction with local leaders and local issues, and many of the competitive event projects also focus on local issues. Students can even provide a service to local firms through their project, such as a marketing campaign for a local business that cannot afford to hire a professional firm. The entrepreneurship competition requires a business plan as the written entry, which is often based on local opportunities.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

Competitive events for 2004-05 are offered in three major categories: Business Simulations, Case Studies, and Prepared Business Presentations. Within these categories, there are competitions in many subject areas, such as marketing management, hospitality, business ethics, restaurant food service, and entrepreneurship. In the first round of competition, chapters may compete in their own state or in a neighboring state if there are too few teams. Based on state population, states send between 2 and 10 teams to the ICDC.

In these events, each category and sub-category require specialized guidelines. Business Simulation includes a written exam and a role-play situation (in written format); Case Studies include analysis and presentation of a particular case study; and Prepared Business Presentations include a written entry and a presentation/interview. Judges are real entrepreneurs and other industry-specific business people identified by local chapters and by a dedicated DEX staff person. They receive training and evaluation sheets with clearly explained criteria. All events are scored on a point system based on ratings of Poor, Fair, Good, and Excellent.

The Entrepreneurship Prepared Presentation Competition is evaluated on the following criteria:

- Written entry form checklist (correct format and documentation)
- Written entry content: Executive Summary, Description and Analysis of Business Simulation, Proposed Marketing/Promotion Plan, Proposed Financing Plan, and Overall Impression (maximum 50 points)
- Interview: Presentation and request, analysis of the business situation, planned operation of proposed business, financing (income/cash flow/balance sheet), financing, and overall impression (maximum 50 points)
- In this competition, 70 points will earn a Certificate of Excellence.

Please see <http://www.delta-hq.org/programs/stud1.html> for entry guidelines, suggestions, and judging criteria for all the competitive events.

### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

Each member pays \$10 in annual dues to belong to the DECA. Other state and local dues may apply. Additionally, students must fund their way to conferences paying for

## DECA/ DEX Program Overview

registration, travel, and hotel. For this reason, many local chapters will conduct sales projects to help defray student costs.

### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

More information is available at the Delta Epsilon Chi web site (<http://www.delta-hq.org>). For a list of chapters by state, please see <http://www.delta-hq.org/states/dex/index.html>.

Jeff Collins

Delta Epsilon Chi  
1908 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 20191

Phone: (703) 860-5000 Fax: (703) 860-4013

<http://www.delta-hq.org>

# MarkEd

## Program Overview by

North Dakota State  
College of Science &  
CTC Public Benefit Corp.



### Description of the Tool:

Marketing Education Resource Center (MarkEd) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the state of Ohio. It is a consortium of 41 state education departments and other organizations.

MarkEd's mission is to develop, disseminate, and evaluate marketing and marketing-related curricula. MarkEd provides marketing-related research, curriculum development and evaluation services, and professional development assistance to marketing instructors to enhance the quality of marketing education. MarkEd sells more than 2,500 books, workbooks, software, videos and other resources, including over 250 Learning Activity Package (LAP) modules. These modules include handouts, lesson plans, transparencies, tests, and activity guides on a broad spectrum of topics such as management, marketing, budgeting, finance, time management, goal setting, customer service, and risk management. New and revised additions of LAP modules are routinely introduced.

MarkEd offers the following six LAP modules specifically on the topic of entrepreneurship:

- **Business Ownership:** Complete instructional package on forms of business ownership, advantages/disadvantages of each, franchises, and factors affecting the choice of ownership type.
- **Own It Your Way:** Explores the forms of business ownership and start-up strategies.
- **Own Your Own:** Covers what it takes to be an entrepreneur – traits, skills, opportunities, professional development, and more.
- **Private Enterprise:** Complete instructional package on private enterprise, including the balance of economic freedoms and characteristics of a private enterprise economy.
- **Profit-and-Loss Statements:** Complete instructional package on profit-and-loss statements, including examples, using ratios, and monitoring statements.
- **Taking Care of Business:** Discusses how business owners select and legally implement appropriate ownership options.

MarkEd's full online catalogue can be viewed at <http://www.mark-ed.com>.

### Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

MarkEd's materials and services are predominantly used by high school instructors. Teachers at two-year colleges, however, can adapt LAP modules to the college setting as well as access the resources (books, videos, etc.) and services of MarkEd's staff. The broad-based content can support the instruction of students or adult learners, current or future entrepreneurs, depending on the materials selected and their application.

There is no accurate way of telling how many colleges currently use MarkEd materials, although the consortium estimates that about 150 use at least some

## MarkEd Program Overview

of these products. MarkEd staff members anticipate an increase in interest and involvement from college entrepreneurship programs through the development of a new Standards05 project that will have significant post-secondary involvement.

Most LAP modules target generalized business skills, though there are modules specifically relating to tourism/hospitality, retail and entrepreneurial development.

### **Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:**

MarkEd materials, including the LAP modules, provide curriculum design resources for post-secondary instructors. Intended primarily for use in traditional classroom settings, the materials can be adapted for web course delivery and distance learning applications. The LAP modules can reduce lesson preparation time and increase quality. Each LAP module includes an eight-page student handout and separate (50+ page) comprehensive lesson plan with discussion notes, transparency masters, practice and post-test with keys, and several different student activities. Of the six LAP modules for entrepreneurship, two are written for the post-secondary level. Instructors would need to augment the lesson plans of the other modules with appropriate content for the college setting.

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

Because of the wide range of materials that are available, these resources can be integrated into course materials to meet the needs of instructors. Most of the MarkEd course materials are not focused on any particular industry; even with this generic content, however, instructors can introduce topics that are more focused on a particular industry.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

MarkEd curriculum follows the national skills standards. Recently MarkEd has partnered with the Institute for the Assessment of Skills and Knowledge for Business (A\*S\*K Business Institute). It operates as a quasi-independent agency providing objective, industry-based proof of learning for students of business. A\*S\*K exams and certificates are based on performance indicators derived from MarkEd's continuing research of the business community. The Institute is administered by MarkEd with guidance from a variety of public and private organizations nationwide.

### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

The cost associated with utilizing MarkEd materials varies with the degree of adaptation. Complete LAP modules, including those on entrepreneurship, are available for \$37 each (\$30 for consortium member states).

The annual budget for MarkEd is approximately \$1.5 million. Revenue sources include membership fees (10 percent), contracted R&D services (10 – 20 percent), and sales of instructional materials (70 – 80 percent) on a cost-recovery basis.

### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

Dr. Jim Gleason, President  
MarkEd, 1375 King Avenue, P.O. Box 12279  
Columbus, OH 43212

800.448.0398

<http://www.mark-ed.com>

# Edward Lowe Foundation “PeerSpectives”

Program Overview by

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College  
& CTC Public Benefit Corp.



## Description of the Tool:

PeerSpectives is an initiative piloted by the Edward Lowe Foundation that hosts CEO roundtable discussions for owners of maturing (not startup) companies. The program helps build peer-to-peer learning networks that evolve with outside support and guidance. They play a critical role as an ongoing communication channel for exchanging information and building relationships. The foundation provides training in developing and facilitating the CEO roundtable discussions.

Participants, not the facilitator, develop the content and agenda for each group meeting discussion and can cover any topic of interest to the group, so any aspect of managing a growing company can be addressed. Topics can range from business issues such as cash flow management to personal issues such as work-life balance. While the discussions vary by peer group, most facilitators find that business owners ultimately wind up addressing six general topics:

- **Personal isolation:** Many CEOs of fast-growing companies feel alone at the top; when they talk with others in similar positions, they discover that they're not the only ones experiencing a sense of isolation.
- **Finance:** Participants often want to compare notes on setting financial controls, managing cash flow, securing bank loans, and finding other ways to raise capital.
- **Marketing and advertising:** Peer networks offer an ideal setting for CEOs to exchange ideas on how to develop public relations campaigns, invest in advertising, and develop and expand their brands or positioning in the marketplace.
- **Employee relations:** All CEOs must devise systems to recruit, train, and motivate their employees. In roundtable meetings, they often share best practices and acknowledge mistakes.
- **Legal compliance:** From employment law to government regulations, CEOs must navigate the maze of local, state and federal rules. They use the roundtable discussions to discuss measures they've developed to increase compliance and tighten oversight.
- **Productivity:** Almost every CEO wants to boost productivity. While specific steps may differ by industry, members of peer groups can share their experiences testing new ways to improve efficiency and cut costs.

Though topics and content may vary and are influenced by participants' interests, the discussion process itself is highly prescribed with step-by-step facilitation/participant activities. Through a distinctive facilitation process, the group addresses current personal, family and business issues in the CEOs' business or personal lives and generates ideas relating to each participant's particular issues. The CEOs' decisions are greatly enhanced by the perspective gained through peer learning – the regular sharing of experiences that assists in the pursuit of opportunities and solutions of business problems.

## Edward Lowe Foundation's "Peerspective" Program Overview

The Edward Lowe Foundation also offers participants an opportunity to join a PeerSpectives retreat. Conducted at the Foundation's rural retreat facility at Big Rock Valley in southwestern Michigan, the program is professionally facilitated and is based on the Foundation's core belief in the value of peer-to-peer learning among CEOs. Introspective questions, innovative individual and team exercises, and 2,500 beautiful acres of forests, hills and farmland create a valuable personal and professional experience. More information about the PeerSpective philosophy can be found on the PeerSpectives web site: <http://peerspectives.org>.

### **Profile of Targeted Student User Population:**

The target population is owners of second-stage companies, which have passed the startup stage and are entering a period of intended or actual rapid growth, with annual sales between \$1 million and \$50 million. Lowe Foundation officials believe that these firms are in a critical phase; they are highly driven by the personalities of their owners and founders, who have succeeded in building the business, but often need new skills to move to "the next level." Second-stage entrepreneurs need reliable and trustworthy sources of useful information, and they are especially attuned to learning from their entrepreneurial peers, who share similar responsibilities, stresses, opportunities, and passion for growth.

These CEO Roundtables cover a variety of industries, but program personnel do suggest that groups do not include firms that compete with one another. Most groups include owners from a diverse mix of industries.

### **Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:**

Two-year colleges could use this model to improve ties with local business communities and develop a leadership position by offering this program to local entrepreneurs.

Face-to-face delivery is suggested, at least for initial meetings, but Distance Learning delivery methods such as interactive television or online could be piloted. A structured confidential setting is needed, which could be in a classroom. Developing intra-group trust and communication is an essential part of this process, so it is likely that most group meetings will occur in a face-to-face setting.

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

As participants control the discussion topics, the content can be automatically adapted to local needs and participant interests.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

The Lowe Foundation is in the process of creating systems to track each group's work and impact. Measurements for the initiative's success might include participant satisfaction and retention in the group, and increased business growth by companies involved in the network.

### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

This program is quite new and is now being pilot tested through a relationship between the Lowe Foundation and the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center network. At this point, pricing policies for use by other institutions are still being developed. At present, the Foundation is offering "train-the-trainer" courses, but specific costs for the

training have not been determined.

Final costs for individual entrepreneurs are also being developed at this time. However, participants expect that annual costs for each entrepreneur would fall in the range of \$1,500 per year. In general, costs for CEO roundtable discussions of this nature depend on the group sponsors and can range from a nominal fee to a significant investment.

**Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

Edward Lowe Foundation  
58220 Decatur Road  
P.O. Box 8  
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031-0008

Phone: 269-445-4200

Fax: 269-445-4350

## Edward Lowe Foundation's "Peerspective" Program Overview

# “Something Ventured” Telecourse

Program Overview by

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College  
& CTC Public Benefit Corp.



## Description of the Tool:

The “Something Ventured” Telecourse comprises 26 half-hour video documentary sessions that highlight major themes presented in the companion textbook. A student guidebook correlates the video sessions with specific textbook chapters and provides content summaries and study questions. The telecourse provides a basic introduction to starting a business and business planning. The video content is also available via streaming video, DVD, CD-ROM, and broadcast/cable from creator INTELECOM. The instructional materials culminate in the development of a business plan, with non-industry-specific content. The following list gives examples of some of the video lesson titles and descriptions:

- *Finding A Niche* focuses on how a particular type of business can be selected for development.
- *The Buck Starts Here* evaluates the amount of capital a small business needs and where to get it.
- *Making It Legal* describes the three forms of small business ownership - proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations - and presents examples of each.
- *What the Market Will Bear* examines experiences small businesses have encountered and techniques that can be used to develop appropriate pricing structures.
- *Making the Pieces Fit* analyzes deficiencies related to the five management functions - planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling - that cause small business failure.
- *The Human Factor* conveys the importance of determining staffing and skills needs for your business in selecting the right employees.
- *Taking Stock* details how purchasing and inventory control are essential to the successful management of a small business.
- *Keeping Track* describes why developing a viable accounting system and knowing how to use its information can be the difference between success and failure.
- *The Money Flow* looks at strategies a small business can use to strengthen its cash position and maintain a sound financial footing.
- *It's the Law* examines the major federal, state, and local regulations that affect small businesses, as well as legal agreements and relationships that are a part of most small business operations.

Institutions that license the product also receive a faculty guide that includes access to an examination bank with answers to aid the preparation of tests and quizzes. INTELECOM also offers programs in business law, business math, and the principles of selling and management.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

The telecourse is designed with first-year undergraduate students in mind. The course has been adapted, however, for adult learners who plan to start a

business or who at least want to explore the idea. This course has also been incorporated into more advanced business curricula.

#### **Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:**

Adopting and implementing an INTELECOM telecourse for use as a college credit course can take a few months to a year, depending on the internal process of each institution. The three-credit course content can be offered in smaller credit- or non-credit-based elements in traditional classroom settings or through distance learning programs. The self-paced telecourse allows learners to complete the requirements over two consecutive semesters, with campus instructors or distance learning staff being available for support and clarification. An equivalent course is designed for traditional classroom settings, both in a semester (17-week, or 51-hour), or accelerated (6-week, or 24-hour), basis. Other distance learning delivery methods, including on-line and interactive television, are available.

INTELECOM recommends that colleges can license or purchase the course for use as:

- A complete college-credit course for distance learning,
- An adjunct to a traditional lecture-based or online courses,
- A complete course of study for adult basic and continuing education programs,
- Part of a public library or school media library video collection,
- An educational tool for community-based and special interest groups,
- Resources for workplace training and human resource development, or
- A resource for teacher in-service programs or for recruitment.

#### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

Instructors can adapt the telecourse's general content to a variety of audiences in terms of demographics, economic conditions, and specific industry sectors. The telecourse can be licensed as a stand-alone distance learning tool or classroom-based tool or specific video sections can be purchased to incorporate into various types of courses and programs.

#### **Evaluation Metrics:**

Colleges can evaluate the course based on enrollment, completion and learner satisfaction. The instructor can evaluate the learners based on five exams included with the telecourse and an assessment of the quality of student business plans.

#### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

Individual videos can be purchased for \$49.95 each, or the entire series can be purchased directly from INTELECOM for \$599. To offer the course through distance learning programs, institutions have a range of licensing operations. Costs vary depending on the type of delivery and number of users.

The Wisconsin Technical College District obtains these materials from the Southern California Consortium; pricing is negotiated by the Wisconsin Technical College System Foundation. Each College pays for the course through funds from Academic Programming

## **“Something Ventured” Telecourse Program Overview**

## “Something Ventured” Telecourse Program Overview

or the Learning Resource Center. At present, each individual college receives all course materials for a price of \$3,000 for a three-year period. A per-student fee of \$22 applies to all course Licenses.

Current course pricing for individual learners includes:

- Three-credit course fee of \$223.75
- Textbook cost of \$98.25 (*Small Business Management* (12th ed.), by Justin Longenecker, Carlos Moore, and J. William Petty, South-Western College Publishing, 2002)
- Telecourse Study Guide cost of \$28.50 (by Intelcom, 5th edition).

### Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:

INTELECOM Intelligent Telecommunications  
150 East Colorado Boulevard, Suite 300  
Pasadena, California 91105-1937

Phone: (626) 796-7300

Fax: (626) 577-4282

<http://www.intelecom.org>

# GoVenture

Program Overview by

Regional Technology  
Strategies, Inc. (RTS)

## Description of the Tool:

GoVenture's simulation software, created by MediaSpark, Inc., a Canada-based software development and new media production company, aims to teach a range of business skills. Current programs focus on entrepreneurship, small business, personal finance, and investing, and can be used in a variety of educational and organizational settings. As examples of experiential e-learning, the detailed simulations are meant to be similar to computer role-playing games that capture student attention while being realistic about day-to-day business planning and decision-making.

GoVenture currently has developed seven products, including Entrepreneur, Small Business, Micro Business (forthcoming), Personal Finance, Investment, Stock Market, and Point of Sale. Entrepreneur was their first product and was launched in 2000. While not developed using an evidence-based research process, the product development has benefited from the entrepreneurial and education experience of MediaSpark employees. GoVenture reports that more advanced software is being developed with some of their textbook publishing affiliates and their experts.

Entrepreneur focuses on business start-up activities (such as developing a business plan, selecting a type of business, securing financing, choosing equipment and location, legal structure and licensing, and designing a logo), personal activities (such as goal forming and self-evaluation, managing personal time and stress levels, and monitoring personal financial status), and daily business management (including products and inventory, staffing, finances, advertising, and management). For example, users who are playing simulations may access the main business screen and check on inventory, adjust prices, change their own or their employees' schedules, pay bills using a virtual checkbook and computer, and interact with customers who enter the store. They will also have to deal with random situations, such as spraining an ankle and having to miss work for two days or having an important piece of equipment break down, or they could work too hard, not get enough sleep, or get too stressed (as indicated in an on-screen stress monitor), and have to take time off. Entrepreneur's built-in scoring is based on user performance in six areas: cash revenue, employee morale, customer satisfaction, personal and family time, personal stress level, and overall happiness.

Small Business is similar in content to Entrepreneur, but is more strategy-focused and geared toward users with some business knowledge (it is also less graphic intensive and can be streamed from the web). Micro Business also focuses on running a business, but it is a simpler program with a more linear learning process aimed at users who are overwhelmed by the products detailed above. Personal Finance focuses on forming a financial life plan and carrying it into the future, while Investment and Stock Market allow the user to try various forms of investing in different market situations. Point of Sale is the simplest program available, allowing users to accept and record sales while teaching about the sales transaction process. The animation graphics appear convincing, and the format is relatively easy to understand and clear. A user should invest a significant amount of time in order to gain value from the software, which is probably most easily understood in a

## GoVenture Program Overview

structured learning situation. GoVenture simulations have won several awards, the most recent being bronze awards for Small Business and Personal Finance at the 2004 Omni Intermedia Awards in Lexington, KY and an Award of Excellence for Best Interactive, Instructional CD-ROM for Small Business by the Association for Media and Technology in Education in Canada (AMTEC) 2004 conference in Sudbury, Ontario.

The GoVenture products can be bought by an institution or organization and delivered by an educator or facilitator, or an individual could purchase a product and use the product without instruction. As mentioned above, many GoVenture software products are bundled with textbooks sold by their business affiliates.

### **Profile of Targeted Student User Population:**

GoVenture's simulation products are intended for a wide range of users. They are geared towards educational curricula in high school, post-secondary and continuing education settings; towards managers and employees in various organizations; towards workforce development professionals; and even towards individuals seeking a career change or personal financial and career development. GoVenture's market is currently about half in the United States and half in Canada, but the company is actively seeking expansion to other markets, including Asia. GoVenture reports that its products are currently in use by 500 organizations, the majority being high schools, followed by post-secondary settings, and a small number of nonprofits. They emphasize that the programs are not written specifically for a particular age level, but are all introductory and are intended to be appropriate for ages middle school and up. However, some of the programs are more complex and may be better suited for older or more advanced students. Additionally, younger users may find the programs more useful as a tool for career exploration, while older users may use them more for skill building and experiential exposure to business ownership. GoVenture software is also distributed in many business textbooks (See "Cost of Program" below for a list of affiliates). There is no corporate training use yet, but they are breaking into franchise employee training.

### **Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting**

The software simulations appear to be appropriate for many types of curricula and settings. For example, educators could use the Entrepreneur simulation as a capstone project in a high school or post-secondary class, or as an addition to a particular curriculum. Samples of how Entrepreneur can teach learning objectives in three select secondary curricula are provided on the GoVenture website (See Products and Services/Entrepreneur/Resources/Curriculum Outcomes). For example, in one of these samples GoVenture has taken course blueprints for particular business courses offered in grades 11 and 12 in North Carolina and correlated each course's learning principles with an activity in the simulation that teaches that principle. Case studies reporting success with younger users and with mid-career professionals are also available on the website (See "Delivery" below). Due to the nature of simulation software, there is an element of rigidity in that certain decisions will be met with programmed consequences. However, an instructor or user can adjust how various competencies are weighted within some of the programs' built-in performance evaluation tools (See "Metrics" below).

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions**

Without contracting with MediaSpark to customize the software, users can only slightly adapt the software. In the entrepreneurship programs, students can choose different types of businesses to run, such as a restaurant, a clothing store, or a sporting goods store. Custom

software can be developed if desired. GoVenture offers a range of customizability, from “tailoring” current products to reflect relatively small changes such as new graphics and some formula alterations to full customization that duplicates a specific business model, although they have not completed a full customization yet. Cost and time required reflect the scope of changes: tailoring and small customizations can cost as little as \$2,000 or in the tens of thousands of dollars, and can take from a few days to several weeks to complete. GoVenture appears to be less interested in developing fully customized software and more interested in building a large library of off-the-shelf simulations, so that a given customer can more or less match their needs, then ask for relatively simple modifications. The company reports that they are currently developing a manufacturing simulation.

### Evaluation Metrics

*Product Effectiveness:* GoVenture has compiled several case studies (although only three are currently available on their website) and has used limited surveys to benchmark program effectiveness.

*Student Assessment:* Many resources for educators assessing students come with the software, such as an instructional book aimed at the middle to high school level, an educational bundle, and test banks with about 100 true/false and multiple choice questions. Also each product has a built-in performance evaluation tool that a student or teacher could use to assess performance in various areas. This tool also provides a commentary on how a student could improve their performance. In the Entrepreneur program, which scores performance in six different areas (See “Content” above), instructors can adjust the weight of different areas so, for example, personal life balance could be more highly valued one week and revenues another.

### Costs Associated with Using the Tool:

MediaSpark Inc. is a privately controlled company with several business affiliates (including IBM, Houghton Mifflin, Pearson Canada, MarkEd, Amazon.com, Hewlett Packard, and InBusiness Solutions, Inc., as reported on their website) and private investors. Another potential source of revenue for the company might be incorporating advertising into the simulations. Although currently there is no advertising present in any of the simulations, GoVenture is exploring a new marketing strategy to incorporate logos and product images into the programs, which could be part of future products.

The cost for their simulation programs varies: a one-seat license for Small Business, Entrepreneur, Personal Finance, Investment, and Stock Market costs \$300, Point of Sale costs \$100 for a one-seat license, while Micro Business costs \$500 for a five-seat license. Discount prices are available for volume purchases, accredited K-12 schools, post-secondary educational institutions, home schooling, non-profit organizations, and government agencies and affiliates. A one-year “Value Option” subscription is available for \$200 (with various discounts for the above groups), which includes free customer support, some free software upgrades, expanded access to resources on the GoVenture website, software discounts, and other benefits.

Free resources available through the GoVenture website include a monthly newsletter for business educators and facilitators called Live the Learning and the GoVenture.NETwork, a website for students and educators that includes business-related games, business tools for potential entrepreneurs, short presentations on various

## GoVenture Program Overview

business topics, and related web links. Demos of the simulation products and small sample simulations are also available through the website.

### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

MediaSpark Inc.  
PO Box 975  
Sydney, Nova Scotia  
Canada B1P 6J4

Phone: 1-800-331-2282 or 902-562-0042  
Fax: 902-562-1252

<http://www.goventure.net/>

<http://www.mediaspark.com/>

# BizTech/National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)

Program Overview by

Regional Technology  
Strategies (RTS)

## Description of the Tool:

The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) is a New York-based nonprofit organization that teaches entrepreneurship, along with business, technology, and academic skills, to low-income youth. NFTE offers four versions of its “How to Start and Operate a Small Business” curriculum, including versions for middle and high school students (50-200 hours), a new advanced post-secondary curriculum (70 hours), and the Internet-based BizTech (14-50 hours). NFTE reports it has worked with over 96,000 youth in the US and internationally through public schools, after-school programs, community-based organizations, and business summer camps. NFTE also offers training, awards, and online forums and resources for instructors.

BizTech is intended for beginning entrepreneurs of any age. The course provides students with a detailed template that allows them to create their own 30-page business plan and contains a glossary, chapter quizzes, “cyber fieldtrips,” case studies, worksheets, chapter summaries, additional reading and resources, and “business plan creation exercises.” It also contains a parallel teachers’ site so teachers can track student performance, create lesson plans, view class planning suggestions, view automatically graded chapter quizzes and answers, and access additional activities and resources. Students can earn up to three college credits from the State University of New York after passing the final exam.

## Profile of Targeted Student User Population:

The NFTE program has traditionally focused on serving low-income urban youth aged 11-18, but the program has been used in a wide variety of communities and educational settings. At present, the program is mostly limited to secondary schools, but the postsecondary curriculum is being used by at least one university in a general introductory business course.

## Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:

Instructors can adapt the general curriculum, the postsecondary curriculum, or BizTech for use in a community college setting to teach general and more advanced business skills. The courses could also be offered as continuing education, as they are by many community-based organizations.

## Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:

The curricula are general but also flexible, so an instructor could select certain sections and modify others according to local economic conditions or supplement the material with locally specific case studies. Additionally, the business plans that students write are based on their own original and locally-specific ideas. Finally, at the beginning of the BizTech curriculum, students can choose the setting of their business (urban or rural) and the type of business (manufacturing, service, retail, or wholesale). These choices affect the graphics in the program and some of the course content.

## Evaluation Metrics:

The NFTE program uses a variety of metrics. BizTech has been assessed using independent evaluation of classroom sites, student focus group interviews,

## **BizTech/NFTE**

### **Program**

### **Overview**

and self-reported alumni surveys. Detailed independent evaluations of NFTE have been positive, showing that the program not only teaches business skills, but also improves overall student performance and outlook. To view a summary of this research, visit [www.nfte.com/about/research](http://www.nfte.com/about/research).

Student evaluation in Biztech consists of three pre- and post-tests, one for each section of the course, that are automatically graded and sent to both the instructor and the NFTE office for their own data collection. Results have shown that students have 15 percent more knowledge at the end of each section.

#### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

The NFTE student text and workbook set costs \$65. The workbook can be purchased separately for \$15, and the Teacher Resource Guide for \$45. Licenses for BizTech software are \$20 for students and \$50 per teacher. Teachers who attend NFTE training receive 20 percent off retail prices for materials (See “NFTE University,” [www.nfte.com/educators](http://www.nfte.com/educators)). Instructor training takes place across the country, based on demand. The three-day session costs \$850, while the five-day sessions are held in the summer at various university campuses (two were held in 2004) and cost \$2,000 for training and a full set of NFTE instructional materials, including a BizTech license. Scholarships are available on a competitive basis.

#### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

NFTE National Headquarters  
120 Wall St, 29th Floor  
New York, NY 10005

Tel: 212.232.3333  
Fax: 212.232.2244  
Toll Free: 800.367.6383

<http://www.nfte.com>

# NxLevelL

## Program Overview by

St. Petersburg College  
& CTC Public Benefit Corp.

St. Petersburg College

**SPC**

Excellence in education since 1927

### Description of the Tool:

NxLevelL Entrepreneurial Training Programs provide a set of curricula and a framework for delivering entrepreneurship training that is standardized on a national basis, but flexible enough to be adapted to an individual community's needs.

NxLevelL offers eight training modules, which are typically offered as stand-alone products that are often integrated into more extensive education and training programs. A summary on each of the training modules is provided in the following paragraphs:

- *Business Start-ups*: This is a 10-session, 30-hour course. Participants develop a start-up business plan during the course to test the feasibility of their business concept and to act as the blueprint for their start-up venture.
- *Existing Businesses*: This is a 12-session, 36-hour course. It is designed to provide entrepreneurs with the skills needed to manage a growing business. Participants develop a comprehensive business plan during the course to act as the road map for future growth.
- *Enterprising Youth*: The curriculum was designed to complement classroom-based instruction. It guides young entrepreneurs through the process of starting and growing a business. This 11-chapter curriculum can be offered within an academic program or as part of an extracurricular program.
- *Microenterprises*: This small business program promotes self-sufficiency through self-employment. The 15-session course can be integrated into academic course work or offered as an independent training program.
- *Alternative Agriculture*: The course is targeted to enhance the business skills of entrepreneurs who have started or are planning to start an agriculture-related venture. The course is not suitable, however, for entrepreneurs involved in large scale, commodity-based production enterprises. This 10-session course is often delivered over a 12-week period.
- *E-business*: This course teaches students how to build a web site, how to use web-related technologies, and how to do business on the Internet. This is a one-session course that is typically added as a supplemental component to any of the other seven modules.
- *“Going Global” Guide to International Trade*: The course is designed for students who have an interest in starting or growing an export or import business. It is an 11-session course that can be delivered either in an intensive multi-week or two-day workshop format.
- *“Doing Business in the USA”*: This is a 10-session program that can be delivered either in an intensive multi-week or two-day workshop format. The curriculum is designed expressly for individual overseas business people or companies interested in the American market, and guides them in the preparation of a marketing plan tailored for the US market.

## NxLevelL Program Overview

On the national level, the NxLevelL requires that instructors who teach the Business Start-ups, Existing Businesses and Alternative Agriculture modules must successfully complete a certification course. Instructor certification is not required for the Enterprising Youth and Microenterprises courses, though individual state administrators may impose their own requirements regarding instructor certification.

### **Profile of Targeted Student User Population:**

The courses are typically offered within adult education and continuing education programs. Approximately one-third of students participating in NxLevelL training modules already have earned a four-year degree, and two-thirds have some college experience. Most students have limited experience in managing an enterprise.

NxLevelL courses are often delivered by higher education institutions in collaboration with economic development organizations, such as Small Business Development Centers. Approximately 60 percent of the courses are offered by four-year institutions and 30 percent by two-year schools.

St. Petersburg College markets the entrepreneurship training program in collaboration with the Pinellas County Business Development Center (PCBDC). In order to reach prospective entrepreneurs, PCBDC sends marketing materials to 7,000 individuals who have indicated that they have an interest in promoting economic development in the county. The list includes local business and government leaders as well as representatives from media outlets and business organizations, such as the 14 different chambers of commerce in Pinellas County.

### **Approaches for Using the Tool in a Two-Year College Setting:**

St. Petersburg College offers the Business Start-ups course, but does not offer any of the seven other NxLevelL course offerings. The Business Start-ups course curriculum emphasizes the development of an eight-section business plan. NxLevelL curricula are developed and ultimately refined using input from both instructors and participants to create effective, practical, and participant-based entrepreneurial materials. Classroom sessions are organized around the following topics to aid in the completion of a business plan and provide the requisite knowledge to get started in business:

- Fundamental entrepreneurship concepts and assessments of entrepreneurship strengths and weaknesses
- Concept development for new ventures
- Business start-up options and requirements
- Market research and analysis
- Legal issues, governmental regulations, and risk management
- Marketing strategies
- Budgets and financial statements
- Financing options and raising money
- Managing the future, overcoming barriers, and avoiding common pitfalls

The content is extremely comprehensive for a 10-12 week course. Because there is so much information provided in each of the eight business plan subject areas, the instructor typically needs to identify high-priority subject areas for each class of students and reallocate the amount of time devoted to each segment based on the students' needs.

All NxLevelL curricula include three sets of teaching aids: (1) participant materials, including a workbook and resource guide; (2) an instructor's manual with session-by-session teaching guides, complete overheads, and other classroom and instructional aids, and (3) a program manager's manual with a complete guide to developing, marketing, and operating the NxLevelL entrepreneurial programs. Additionally, password-protected resources are available on the web for instructors, participants, and program managers.

St. Petersburg College uses a conference room with a large conference table to encourage group interaction and create a more professional environment. The instructor communicates with students outside of class regularly by e-mail, phone, and in person. Also, NxLevelL web resources are incorporated into multimedia lecture/presentations to the class.

### **Capacity to Adapt the Tool Based on Local Conditions:**

The curriculum provides the instructors with significant flexibility in adapting the program based on the makeup of the class. Consequently, if the majority of course participants are focusing on a particular industry or cluster, the curriculum can be structured to emphasize entrepreneurship issues that are specific to that industry.

The Business Start-ups curriculum is easily revised and adapted to meet local needs. A large portion of the instructor certification class time is spent learning how to adapt the materials to the needs of individual classes and communities. As a course focused on the development of business plans, the categories of the course content are not particularly flexible. However, the order in which the units are taught is flexible, and instructors are encouraged to adapt materials to meet the needs of participating students. In fact, a huge variety of business examples and resources are provided as part of the teacher and student instructional materials to assist instructors in dealing with student's specific needs.

### **Evaluation Metrics:**

Each instructor is required to turn in student registration information, class summary reports, and evaluation forms which measure success in two primary ways: (1) the number of participants that successfully completed the program's graduation requirements of writing a start-up business plan or comprehensive business plan, and (2) the number of people who attended all of the course sessions. The average graduation rate is 65 percent, and approximately 85 to 90 percent faithfully attend the courses.

To date, more than 65,000 people have participated in the entrepreneurial training programs, and more than 3,000 training sessions have been conducted in 48 states and seven countries.

Moreover, independent economic impact assessments have indicated that, on average, graduates with existing businesses experience a 28 percent increase in sales and create 1.3 additional jobs within the first year after graduation. In addition, graduates managing firms with less than \$200,000 in sales experienced a 200 percent increase in gross sales within the first year of graduating. Further, of those graduates who were not currently in business when they participated in the course, 40 percent go on to start a new venture.

## NxLevelL Program Overview

### **Costs Associated with Using the Tool:**

The cost of implementing NxLevelL entrepreneurial training programs is reasonable for a pre-packaged program. The largest expense associated with offering NxLevelL curricula is the cost of certifying instructors. NxLevelL certified master trainers charge about \$2,500 plus travel expenses to deliver a two-day training session to certify an unlimited but reasonable number of instructors. Often a host institution will open its instructor certification training session to instructors from other institutions, which reduces the unit costs for all participating schools.

Instructor's manuals cost each \$39, and additional instructor support materials are available online at <http://www.nxlevel.org> for free. Student textbooks and workbooks are available in two-piece sets for \$39 to \$65 each, depending on the curriculum selected. Individual colleges and nonprofit organizations offering the curriculum are free to set their prices to students according to the needs and goals of the sponsor organization. Student fees are \$149 at St. Petersburg College, but organizations in other parts of the country have charged as much as \$595 per student.

St. Petersburg College's NxLevelL training program was funded under a joint agreement between the College and Pinellas County Economic Development with a trainer/counselor position and the necessary meeting space funded by the agreement. Although St. Petersburg College has chosen to offer the course to the community at a very low price, the level of course fees is sufficient to recover the cost of student books and instructor certification. Additionally, a budget for food should be considered, as the busy schedule of entrepreneurs requires this course to meet from 5:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

### **Contact Information to Learn More About the Tool:**

Allen Anderson, National Executive Director  
NxLevelL Education Foundation  
63 East 11400 South #332  
Sandy, UT 84070

800-873-9378 • 800-860-0522 (fax)

<http://www.nxlevel.org/>

In addition, NxLevelL has established state coordinators in all 50 states and two US territories. More information on state contacts can be accessed at the following website: <http://www.nxlevel.org/Pages/states.html>