

## **Market Vendor Incubation Program (MVIP)**

### **Training**

Workshops will assist participant businesses with the development of a business and marketing plan, customer satisfaction feedback, booth design and appearance, market definition and customer outreach. One of the primary benefits of co-location in a marketplace model is the advantage of collective marketing and critical mass of “people attracting” events, food and products.

**Fall and spring vendor training – 2005-2006 and 2006-2007** 10 Workshops (twice weekly for five weeks). These are two-hour workshops with an additional 30 minutes of networking time for participants. Project goal is to enroll 20 participants in each of the four series. This is a large class size, but manageable with two trainers and a format that includes breakout sessions. The training curriculum includes:

- Clarifying Your Business Idea—craft three business goals
- Designing Your Business— starting budget and work plan
- Testing Your Idea—market research for a best customer profile
- Retailing Skills—best vendor practices and booth design
- Money Management—break-even, recordkeeping & budgeting
- Pricing & Negotiating—price and buy confidently
- Promoting Your Business—cards, databases & reps
- Finding the Best Market Venues—Selecting best markets, packing & travel tips
- Start-up Check List—legal steps & risk management
- Next Steps—Rolling Three Year Plan & SBDC referral

The Portland area workshops will be held at the AVITA & Associates office on Interstate Avenue and Albina, a centralized location, with easy access via public transportation. The office maintains a fully equipped training center. Workshops will be held from 6 to 8:30 PM on weeknights, the time most participants have stated they prefer.

### **Training Videos**

Three topic-specific training videos will be developed to facilitate distance learning and expansion of the workshops statewide. The specialty areas for these video training tools are: Food Vendor businesses, Farmer’s Market – Produce and Ag business, and a General Guide to Retail Sales at Local Markets. Note: both vendors and market managers will find the videos excellent resources for conducting market research and crafting their promotional efforts.

### **Guided Research and Experiential Learning**

Two field trips will be conducted to do on-site education and research. “Testing Your Idea,” teaches market research techniques, but conducting a guided field trip will insure that participants learn how their potential customer buys and the practices used by

successful retailers and market vendors. Participants will be given digital cameras and a directive to explore markets and find examples of the “good, the bad and the ugly” and bring these lessons back to a workshop for discussion.

### **Specialized “Booster Shot” Training**

Five weeks is too short a timeframe to absorb all of the issues of creating a stable business. In particular, food vendors, farmers, and retailers have unique challenges. Therefore, we will sponsor eight booster shot training sessions that will be open to any vendor business; whether or not they have gone through the 10 session workshop series. Topics for the booster shot training sessions will include two sessions (one each year) on each of the following: Food vendors, Farmer’s Market vendors, E-retail and Advance Marketing. When possible, these workshops will be held at SBDC centers and other locations throughout the state.

### **Oregon Market Vendor Conference:**

MVIP will host a two-day conference in the spring of 2006. The conference will feature statewide resources available to vendor businesses as well as specialized training, networking and support for persons wanting to grow their businesses beyond the marketplace venues. The conference will be held in a central area with relatively equal access to persons living anywhere in Oregon.

### **Business Support Services:**

#### **Advocacy:**

Participant outcomes will be enhanced through one-on-one advocacy and support services from members of the project team. Support services will include intervention with regulatory groups; getting appointments with other services and directing clients to important resources; finding the right person within a support group to work with the participant, etc.

As an example, Project Manager, Joan Pasco was able to successfully change the Multnomah County Health Department fees for food vendors at markets from individual licenses to a blanket market license, saving individual food vendors over \$500 a year in county fees. Markets may now purchase a single license and serve as the umbrella “food pavilion” for the entire market. Don King has helped numerous clients prepare business plans and successfully secure capital. Of note Don took an autistic client through the process of business design, feasibility, marketing research, and finally launch. This included persuading the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs) to reinstate her as a client and eventually provide her with initial grant capital. The success of this client caused many OVRs counselors to overcome their prejudice of ownership as a viable alternative for unsuccessful job seekers with disabilities.

### **Mentoring and Networking for Participants:**

Each MVIP team member has been both business assistance providers and business owners. They share the unique perspective of knowing the obstacles and resources available. Busy, struggling small business owners simply do not have the time to find the resources they need to solve real time problems as they occur almost daily. Lacking the time and networks to find answers and resources often results in making costly business decisions, that get compounded rather than corrected. Left to their own, small businesses often ask the wrong questions or spend too much time on small issues at a sacrifice to tackling the important big ticket items, i.e., getting enough customers. Therefore it is an important goal of the MVIP to create individual plans, and provide the linkages that will ensure access to resources far beyond the confines of the two-year time frame. With this in mind we have built in content that includes field trips, mentoring exchanges, email access, distance learning videos, supplemental workshops, and friendly SBDC business assistance referrals to enable vendors to have life-long assistance while they grow successfully over time.

Participants will be linked with area networking opportunities that include the weekly programs at local chambers of commerce, OAME and other organizations doing regular “meet and greet” business exchanges.