

Meeting Summary
Marketing Your Agency
January 12, 2005
Lyon County Courthouse, Room 3
Marshall

Present:

Pat Thomas – Southwest Adult Basic Education (ABE)
Denise Myhrberg, MN DEED/Work Force Center (WFC)
Bonnie Ludeman, Extension Regional Center – Marshall
Tracy Veglahn – Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce
Chris Harris, Lyon County Enterprise Development Corporation

Purpose:

The participants in this meeting informally discussed the purpose of these marketing meetings. It was felt that the primary purpose is to develop a system by which public agencies desiring to provide their services to the private sector could connect more effectively with interested businesses. At this time it would appear Marshall Chamber and DEED staff in their charges to assess regional business needs are critical to this effort.

Tracy (Marshall Chamber Initiative) and Denise (DEED Initiative) will be the point people for sharing needs of the employers/businesses with services from those within the marketing group. Each agency is responsible for defining their marketing message as it pertains to their agency and its benefit to employers/business. Pat suggested that we develop a model/structure for marketing and then develop our individual plans from that structure. A review of the differences of those in the group illustrates the unique needs of group members. ABE is a unique educational institution in that it will target specific needs of a business and wraps around the system already in place. MNWest does more customized training and may offer a broader perspective with their programs.

Pat reiterated the need for a communication system by which Denise and Tracy can deliver the message to businesses regarding resources available to them by the market group agencies. Tracy then asked clarifying questions of Bonnie regarding U of M Extension. Bonnie spoke specifically to her grant program, Nutrition Education, and said that although the program is no cost, a cost recovery fee of some proportion is welcome. Most Extension programs involve a cost recovery fee.

Pat requested that the marketing group get feedback from Denise and Tracy after they meet with businesses. Denise will check on this as issues of confidentiality may be involved.

Tracy reviewed the marketing presentation she had given for the monthly Networking Meeting. Marketing our agencies is a new concept for many of us. The marketing plan proposed by the SMSU Marketing Department was reviewed. It was decided that it would be tabled at this time and money is not the issue. It may be a tool that some in the

group would choose to use but is not a “one size fits all” for everyone in the group. It was decided to table this proposal for the time being.

A brainstorming session ensued to consider other ways that information about our agencies might be shared with businesses. Some ideas included: brochures, web links on the Chamber website as Resources for Businesses, newsletters, and talking to other community groups. It was suggested that the agency develop a short paragraph about what it can provide and then it could be published in MN DEED’s local quarterly newsletter and/or in the Chamber newsletter.

Chris offered her services to assist in the creation of an ABE marketing plan. It was generally agreed that ABE staff should have input into the plan. Chris is very willing to meet with staff to help generate the plan.

It was mentioned that another good place to network is Business After Hours. Pat was invited to collaborate with Tracy for the lead article in the next Chamber newsletter. Another way to get our message out might be through Brown Bag Lunch sessions and Lois has mentioned to Pat that there is a successful turnout of Willmar businesses during lunch sessions. Pat will check more with Lois about this possibility to share information with Tracy.

It was suggested we have a follow-up meeting after at least a month. Come with suggestions of people that should be on the business resource list.

Next lunch meeting:
Wednesday, March 2, 2005
12 noon – 1:00
Lyon County Govt. Center, Room 3
Lunch Provided by SW ABE
RSVP to: pthomas38@hotmail.com
Or call 537-7046

Please Note: Due to the low number of people that were able to attend this meeting, all Marketing Group Members are requested to send their comments about what transpired at this meeting to Pat at pthomas38@hotmail.com or marshallabe@starpoint.net