

Role of Libraries in Serving Entrepreneurs

CEC Conference

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What is a Business Librarian?

- My Background
- Provide service to small business/ entrepreneur community in CADL service area.
 - Primarily market research...
 - Market/ Industry Profiles
 - Customer Profiles
 - Competitors Profiles
 - Business programming including entrepreneur club

MARC/MTEAM project

- Public/Private partnership between Meridian Twp, Capital Area District Library, Meridian Area Business Association and the local SBTDC office to help stimulate and sustain entrepreneurial efforts within Meridian Twp.
- One-stop shop for small and start-up businesses in Meridian Twp.
 - Guidelines/ Applications/ Forms
 - Research resources – sample business plans, market research, etc...
 - One-on-one counseling

MARC/MTEAM project

➤ Two Key Roles for the Library

- Select resources for MARC/ Library business collection
- Provide research/ consultation for entrepreneurs in the beginning stages of market investigation

MARC/MTEAM project

➤ Current status:

- MARC was unveiled to community in April
- Usage dropped off during summer months
- Working on more concerted promotional effort/ outreach

Economic Gardening project

➤ What is Economic Gardening?

- Based on Littleton, CO efforts
- Different from traditional economic development efforts
- Focus on existing small businesses within a community
- Link them with counseling & market research to help them grow

Economic Gardening project

Objectives:

- Accelerate and enhance the success of rural, growth-oriented, small and emerging private business enterprises within **Tuscola County** and the **Keweenaw Peninsula**.
- Provide participating entrepreneurs with high value market research and related technical assistance that will substantially help them identify, qualify, contact, and connect with potential customers.

Economic Gardening project

Project partners:

- Small Business Association of Michigan
- MSU Business Library
- MSU CEC
- Library of Michigan/ Michigan eLibrary
- Michigan Library Association
- Shepherd Advisors
- Representatives from project communities
 - EDCs, SBTDCs, Chambers, Libraries, etc...

Economic Gardening project

Current status:

- 6-7 businesses have been identified in each area that are positioned to and interested in growing.
- Extensive interviews being conducted to identify research needs/questions.
- Shepherd Advisors, Library team and local representatives working on how to best meet research needs.

Economic Gardening project

Role of Libraries/Librarians:

- Local libraries serve as a **connection point** to high value resources – databases containing market information
- Librarians are trained in:
 - How to effectively research
 - Where to find quality information
- Liaison between business coach and business owner

Economic Gardening project

Expected outcomes:

- A process that successfully **integrates** local economic development organizations, libraries, MSU, and SBAM in an economic gardening program that is **scalable**, **replicable**, and **drives down cost** to local communities.
- Gain additional insight into the challenges of small companies in rural communities, and the ways EG can provide additional value to ensure their success.

Free Resources

➤ Michigan eLibrary

- www.mel.org

➤ Growing Local Economies

- www.growinglocaleconomies.com
- Free white papers
 - *10 Tips for Implementing an Economic Gardening Project*
 - *Free and Low-Cost Information Resources for Supporting Local Entrepreneurs*

Questions?

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