

Celebrate #SBDCDay at UH Bauer SBDC



Jacqueline Taylor, Deputy Director, Strategic Operations, Texas Gulf Coast Small Business Development Center Network, shares her expert business advice in her bi-weekly column seen in the Houston Chronicle.

Q. I just attended a marketing workshop at the University of Houston Bauer College SBDC. It was my first time there and I was so impressed! What a great facility! Can you tell me more about the SBDC?

A. Gladly! The UH Bauer College SBDC is one of thousands of Small Business Development Centers around the country that all play the same role in the communities they serve: that is, to help entrepreneurs and small business owners get started and grow. They do that by holding affordable classes like the one you took and by providing free advising services customized to a small business's particular needs.

Classes are on all sorts of topics of interest and value to a small business – everything from whether or not you're really cut out to be a small business owner, to learning what it takes to position your business for growth. You'll also find all the current hot topics; a quick scroll through the SBDC's calendar shows classes on cybersecurity, building relationships with millennials and Gen Xers, and the latest social media tools. The idea is to provide real-world information, typically in short three- to four-hour sessions, that participants can put to immediate and practical use.

But it's the business advisory services that can make a real difference in a business owner's ability to avoid costly mistakes, get on the right track, and begin to grow. The SBDC's expert advisors can help clients with all kinds of business startup, management and growth issues, such as getting a loan, working on cash flow, developing a marketing plan, acquiring equipment, hiring new employees, exploring the government market, looking into exporting -- or whatever issues the business is currently facing. And advising sessions are always hands-on, confidential and totally free of charge.

On Wednesday, March 22, the UH Bauer College SBDC is going to join with all the other SBDCs around the country to celebrate the first ever #SBDCDay, a national proclamation of the work SBDCs do and the successes their clients have experienced as a result of their efforts. Join the conversation at #SBDCDay and #UHSBDC, but also plan to attend a live event from 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. at the SBDC's midtown Houston facility at 2302 Fannin Street.

The #SBDCDay event will feature an opportunity for networking with SBDC staff and other participants, as well as a presentation on effective networking, both in person and online, by Michelle LeBlanc of Blue Sky Marketing. As an added bonus, a photographer will be on hand taking free headshots of participants for use on their social media accounts. The #SBDCDay event costs just \$22 and includes a box lunch. Register at www.sbdc.uh.edu/sbdcday.



The Texas Gulf Coast Small Business Development Center (TGC SBDC) Network serves 32 counties in Southeast Texas. The program is anchored by a vibrant office facility in midtown Houston and supported by fourteen centers located with or sponsored by colleges and universities and economic development organizations throughout the Gulf Coast. The TGC SBDC Network focuses on providing business training and advising to start-up entrepreneurs, emerging businesses, and firms needing strategies for high growth. Professional business advisors work with client companies to assess feasibility of ideas and business models, develop business plans, identify funding opportunities, prepare loan and financing packages, and analyze financial results. Business advising is supplemented by a wide range of training classes and seminars concentrating on growing a successful business. Workshops are taught by experienced businessmen and women who blend formal learning and real-world experiences into practical curriculum.

The TGC SBDC Network is a program of the UH CT Bauer College of Business and a resource partner of the US Small Business Administration, and is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the US Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. SBDC programs are nondiscriminatory and available to individuals with disabilities. The University of Houston is an EEO/AA institution. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Contact the SBDC at 713/752-8488 for accommodations.