



ASBDC  
NATIONAL IMPACT SURVEY

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

# HISTORY OF THE IMPACT SURVEY

- Original study in 1982 – Georgia SBDC clients only and results presented to Congress to secure permanent funding for SBDC program
- First national study – 1992
- Annual studies conducted thru 1994
- Bi-annual thru 2004
- Annual since 2005

# HOW THE SURVEY WORKS

- ASBDC contracts with an independent researcher to conduct the study
- The universe for the study is SBDC clients with 5+ hours of contact and preparation time within the selected calendar year
- The survey is conducted annually – the 2008 survey which we just completed measured success factors for 2006 calendar year eligible clients



# HOW THE SURVEY WORKS

- Survey measures new and retained jobs, new capital, satisfaction, comparison with state/region wide trends, and return on investment
- Researcher will calculate special metrics or perform special studies if contracted by state/region
- Annual report with ASBDC network results published annually in the fall and used for PR and information to financial stakeholders

# How State/Region SBDC can help!

- Success factors for annual impact study
  1. Strategies that attract impact clients to SBDCs and produce impact measured in jobs, capital, and sales
  2. Quality client relationships which create loyalty to return impact surveys
  3. Sufficient number of clients and surveys to support statistical validity
  4. Long-term improvement in results

# How can this help me?

- Original funding for the program was partially based on independent verification of SBDC client impact
- Full participation in the annual study will position your state/region to contract for a separate study for a nominal fee
- Third party substantiation of SBDC impact can be a powerful tool to support current and increased future funding



# How Does a Separate State/Region Study Work?

- State/Region Director contacts researcher and contracts for a separate study
- A separate study will measure the same core results as in the national study and/or more specific factors for your state/region
- Researcher will issue a separate report on impact from your state/region SBDC
- Currently, approximately 40 of the 63 SBDC programs have asked for a separate report

# Tips For a Successful Separate Report

- Work hard at long-term strategies to attract and provide key services to long term clients with high impact potential
- Incorporate a distinct strategy for your SBDC which focuses on creating customer loyalty which results in a high rate of return of impact surveys
- Don't settle for mediocrity – aim for at least a 30% return of surveys



# How to Create Customer Loyalty

- Make sure the customer understands early in the SBDC relationship the value of returning the surveys
- Don't lose touch with your long-term clients who create measurable impact – communicate regularly
- Target long-term clients with special mailings, events, training opportunities, networking events, and other promotions to let them know they are important to the SBDC

# How Impact Surveys Become a SBDC Network Priority

- Make sure a key strategy focuses on the impact survey
- State/Region Director should personally manage this activity
- Involve everyone in the Network with a key role – done right, every staff member contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Develop metrics for each service center
- Include high performance survey results (number of impact clients, surveys returned, job created as examples) as key components of employee recognition and compensation

# Pro-active Survey Tactical Actions

- Communicate at least quarterly with long-term clients for upcoming survey
- Update mailing/email addresses
- Use email, letter, and/or telephone to alert clients of upcoming survey and importance
- Draft cover letters for surveys with a clear message of clients' responsibility to complete and return promptly – don't be timid
- Follow-up with non-responding clients for second mailing
- Remind clients of their promise to participate!



# Key Phrases for a cover letter

- ***Thank you*** for using the services of the \_\_\_\_\_ Small Business Development Center. We hope our consulting assistance played an important role in your business success.
- Now, we need ***your help***. Each year, we survey our clients to determine how our assistance has had a positive impact on the economy. You may have completed an Impact Study Questionnaire for us before – and we thank you for that – but ***we need your feedback again***.

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# Key Phrases for a cover letter

- **Your Response is Critical!**
- **P.S. Survey responses are compiled and analyzed by an independent researcher. *In no circumstance* will your individual response be singled out or appear in any report or publication that results from the research**
- ***Thank you!* We appreciate your time and your support.**

# What Does a Separate Report Cost?

- First time - \$1900
- Second time - \$1750
- Third time - \$1600
- Thereafter - \$1500