

As the Training Coordinator for the Angelo State University - Small Business Development Center (ASU -SBDC), I am constantly searching for ways to provide our small business community with practical business training topics and to create convenient methods of learning.

The SBDC has developed the “Small Business Management Certificate” program, targeted to small business owners or aspiring entrepreneurs. This program will award and/or recognize (with permission only) program participants with a certificate upon completion. In order to successfully obtain the Small Business Management Certificate participants must attend all seven seminars and must have received counseling with an advisor within a year. Participants will also receive valuable resource tools such as “Starting a New Business in San Angelo” guide book, QuickBooks “Simple Start” software, business start-up and tax seminar CDs, business magazines, and a program notebook for easy access to all the training handouts and presentations.

The required seminars were selected by the SBDC business advisors and are considered to be a good foundation for starting a successful business. A 2001 Chrisman study shows that SBDC long-term counseling helped Small business survival and growth rate as compared to enterprises as a whole. We hope that by launching this program we can reach out to more aspiring entrepreneurs and help grow more business start-ups in our ten county area. This program is specifically for people who want to start a business or who have been in business for less than two years. The program starts off with evaluating your personal skills, characteristics and experience –to determine your readiness for starting a business.

At completion of the program participants will understand the importance of preparing a business plan, exploring financing options, keeping good records, marketing their product and complying with sales and IRS tax requirements.

The first group of participants will start in October and will complete the program by September of 2008. You must register for the certificate program to be eligible. Some of the benefits from participating in the program and receiving the certificate include:

- Improved management skills
- Good starting foundation for growth
- A credible document to attach to a business plan
- Increased chances for success

If your schedule conflicts with the SBDC seminar schedule an on-line training session maybe considered to satisfy a course requirement for completion of the program. A similar certificate program maybe offered for entrepreneurs of existing companies with advance training seminars in the future upon the success of the Small Business Management Certificate Program for business startups. If you would like more information about this initiative, please call Grace Garcia at the Small Business Development Center at (325) 942-2019. After all, starting a new business is a risky adventure. You want to plan it carefully, seek expert advice and enhance your management skills to successfully start, grow and succeed.

“Business Tips” was written by Ms. Grace Garcia, Training Coordinator of Angelo State University’s Small Business Development Center. For more information on the topic of this article or the services of the ASU • SBDC, contact her at Grace.Garcia@angelo.edu.