Each year, the SBDC assists more than 10,000 small businesses with comprehensive services that include training, resource development and individualized consulting. The network, a partnership among the U.S. Small Business Administration, the state of Maryland and the University of Maryland, College Park, links private enterprise, government, higher education and local economic development organizations to provide management, training and technical assistance to Maryland’s small businesses. Despite the challenges brought about by the changing economy, opportunities still exist for small businesses, and the SBDC stands ready to assist.

Our mission is to provide quality services and innovative programs to help small businesses grow, survive and thrive— in any economy.

Renée C. Sprow, State Director

“...”

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The Big Bad Woof
Essentials for the Socially Conscious Pet

Julie Paez and Penney Jones-Napier, co-owners of The Big Bad Woof, an independent specialty pet supply store that carries holistic, organic and raw foods, are devoted to providing the best in healthy and socially conscious products. Paez and Jones-Napier believe in “doing well by doing good,” and The Big Bad Woof currently serves as D.C. metro area’s largest eco-friendly and fair trade pet product supplier.

After the demand for their services increased, they decided to move their business to a physical location. In 2003, they met with Lester “Casey” Wilson, a consultant and Retail/Restaurant specialist at the Maryland Small Business Development Center. He developed their business plan, reviewed lease agreements, and refined cash flow projections, store layout and inventory. Paez and Jones-Napier were able to secure funding and in April of 2005 opened their first retail location in Takoma Park. The Big Bad Woof proved wildly successful, and, in addition to hiring extra staff, they began a physical expansion of their current location.

As Maryland’s first certified Benefit Corporation, The Big Bad Woof is deeply committed to sustainable practices concerning food and the environment. In addition, through partnerships with local businesses, they serve as a community resource. In 2014, Paez and Jones-Napier utilized the online funding platform Cloest to raise the funds necessary to open a third location in Silver Springs, MD. The Big Bad Woof hopes to bring their passion for pets and the people who love them to a wider community.

For more information, contact The Big Bad Woof at (202) 747-3434, or visit online at www.thebigbadwoof.com.
For those who have lost jobs recently, things are tough. But for those who have survived cutbacks and are still collecting a regular paycheck, the workplace may nonetheless be a place of insecurity and gloom. Not surprisingly, keeping morale up in the office can be a challenge, but there are steps that can be taken to keep things in perspective.

“Lots of businesses are still staying open, even though times are lean, and those who are nimble will see opportunities in spite of the recession.”

-Says former Joanne Saltzberg, executive director of Women Entrepreneurs of Baltimore (WEB). And, Saltzberg points out, there are social and public support options for those who are experiencing financial troubles.

“People need a more balanced picture of the economy.”

Similarly, says Sharon Keys Seal, an executive coach and owner of Coaching Concepts Inc., “This is not the time to let fear take over. This economy is not a blip on the radar screen … it heralds a new way in the business world. Most of my clients are ‘striving’ rather than ‘thriving.’” Seal advises her clients not to think of themselves as victims, but rather to look at where they do have control over their professional lives.” “Here are the attributes I have and here are my strengths’ is what people should be thinking,” she says. For management, open communication and honesty — a rumor mill can be misleading and upsetting — are key to employee morale.

In spite of everything, keeping a positive attitude is critical. “Understand what you can control and take steps to improve in those areas,” says Seal.

CEO Accelerator
Accelerate Your Million Dollar Business

Designed for owners with $500,000 in revenue or less, this six-session (18-hour) program helps business owners develop a “Roadmap” to build a million dollar business.

- Peer learning in a diverse, non-competitive group
- Confidential, trusted executive training and development with seasoned advisors;
- Unprecedented access to award winning coaching, mentoring and business development tools

Participants will come away with a strategic growth plan customized to their specific business and based on their newly acquired knowledge.

Increase Your Chance of Business Success

The Maryland Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network provides training, confidential consulting and market and industry research to help Maryland’s small businesses find practical solutions to business needs. If you are new to entrepreneurship, or a seasoned small business owner, our instructors and small business consultants share their real-world experience and expertise to help you broaden your business knowledge and skill, and increase your chances for success.

- Training - A variety of comprehensive training classes are available to help you gain a better understanding of what it will take to establish and operate a successful business.
- Consulting – We provide excellent no-cost confidential consulting to prospective and existing small business owners interested in achieving growth and profitability.
- Information You Can Use – Hundreds of research resources on print, video and electronic media where you can obtain the information you need to start, manage and grow your small business.

Visit www.marylandsbdc.org to learn more

Our staff of consultants assist more than 12,000 Maryland businesses each year. How can we help you?