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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPANTS

IN UW-EXTENSION PROGRAMS

FOUR YEARS LATER

A STUDY BY

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With such fine staff support, it gives this author the confidence to offer the following paper and information to those who would be seeking a model of program development for the small business entrepreneur in any Wisconsin community.

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## I. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY RESULTS

The Area Business Agent for UW-Extension in Southeast Wisconsin has been programming for small businesses (less than 25 employees) since 1981. In order to assess the effectiveness of this effort, business people who participated in these educational programs in 1986 were asked to react to a series of questions. The questions were presented by telephone by trained interviewers of the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory during March and April of 1990.

The goal of the Study was to gather client information necessary to assess past effectiveness, to improve present activities and to formulate future directions. Specifically, the Study was designed:

- 1) to review and examine the nature of the small businesses who used the Management Enrichment Program Workshops (MEP) or counseling services.
- 2) to determine whether Extension's help to these businesses affected the labor market either in terms of opening new jobs, or in preventing small businesses from hiring and then having to release employees because the businesses did not succeed.
- 3) to determine the extent to which small business people have found the courses and consulting helpful.
- 4) to determine how they may have used the information from the courses and consultations.
- 5) to provide ideas for strengthening and improving the Extension Service to small businesses.

From an original 455 participants, a final random sample of 191 participants were selected - 85 from the MEP Workshops, 85 from the Counseling and 21 who were in both programs. The over all response rate was 88%, resulting in completed interviews for 64 who had attended workshops, 69 who had been counseled, and 21 people in both activities.

The major findings of this research are broken down under the broad headings of the Study as described in Section IV:

### Description of the Participants

The characteristics of the respondents were as follows:

<u>Workshops</u>	*	82% of this sample were operating as managers when they took the MEP Workshops. Eighteen percent were working in some other capacity.
	*	93% had some management experience, from one year upward to 15 years of experience.
	*	41% were in service-type businesses, 26% in retail, 12% in manufacturing and 8% in wholesaling.
	*	63% were male, 37% were female.
	*	Most had some schooling beyond high school; 44% completed college.
	*	Thirteen percent had no schooling beyond high school. Nine percent did not respond.

## Counseling

- \*
  - 38% of the counselees were engaged as managers. Thirty-eight percent were non-managers, 12% were unemployed and 12% employed in some other way.
- \*
  - 26% had no management experience. Fifty-four percent had less than five years of experience. Twenty percent had from 6 upward to 40 years of experience.
  - 80% wanted information on business start-up; consequently, the type of business could not be categorized. The remaining 20% contained a smattering of all business types.
  - 43% were male; 57% were female.
  - A third had some schooling beyond high school. A third had completed their college education. A third had a high school education or less.
- \*
  - 43% of this sample identified themselves as managers, while another 38% considered themselves owners as well. Nineteen percent were not in management at the time.

## Both

- \*
  - 100% of this sample had experience in management from two to over fifteen years. Forty-three percent had under five years of experience.
  - 52% were males, 48% were females.
  - 29% completed high school with another 48% taking classes beyond high school. Twenty-three percent more either finished college or took advanced degree work.

## Reasons for Participating

The participants in all three situations expressed a need for new ideas. Eighty-three percent of those in workshops, 71% of the counselees and 52% in both activities were seeking new ideas. The counselees expressed concern about a specific problem where those in the workshops wanted a more objective view from an outsider. Since most of the workshop participants were already in business, they reflected a low percentage (16%) of those thinking about starting a business. On the other hand, 80% of the counselees were thinking about a new enterprise.

## Usefulness of the Educational Experience

### Workshops

Of the respondents, 23% said they were not sufficiently involved with a business to be able to use the information. From the remainder of the respondents, 56% indicated that the workshops were of some use; 33% said they were quite useful, and 10% said they were very useful. Only 1% were not sure of their worth or felt they were not at all useful.

It is well to note also that the question on "usefulness of the information" was asked early in the interview; so a lower response from the participant might be expected. However, from the eight possible choices, 73% of the workshop participants rated five or more responses in a positive way; 46% of those counseled rated five or more positively; and 56% in both experiences rated five or more as a positive result.

### Counseling

It is significant to note that 55% of those counseled have not been sufficiently involved with a business to use the information gained in the interview. Even so, 41% rated the counseling as of some use, 24% rated it quite useful and 21% rated it very useful. Fourteen per cent were not sure it was helpful at all.

### Both

Of this sample, 85% have been sufficiently involved with a business to be able to use the information. These business people tended to rate these experiences somewhat higher. Nineteen per cent rated their experience as very helpful, 24% rated them quite useful, 43% of some use and 14% were not sure of their value.

## Impact on the Participants

The participants rated very high "understanding some aspect of business" with well over 80% listing this as a chief gain. Over three-fourths felt more confident in their decision making. Over half felt they were operating their businesses more efficiently.

Seventeen percent of those in counseling and those in both experiences indicated that they were kept from starting up before they were ready. Only 3% of those in workshops said that they did not start up before they were ready, primarily because most of them were in business already.

Both the counseling and the MEP Workshops had a positive effect on the income of the businesses of several of these participants. Over half in all three situations indicated that their gross income increased and their net income increased.

Half of the workshop respondents felt more comfortable taking a salary or more profit for themselves. This percentage dropped to 32% for the counselees and dropped even more for those in both experiences.

### Effect on Jobs

From the data, it can be determined that there was a net increase in jobs from 1986 to the present. Those businesses which were established and which participated in the MEP workshops reported that 57% increased positions, adding from one to seventy-five additional jobs per business.

Twenty percent of those people in counseling, who were considering new operations, added from 1 up to 22 new positions.

Of those who took both experiences, 47% added people to their workforce  
- from 1 up to 60 new people per business

### Decision About Starting or Changing a Business

Because most of the workshop participants were already in business, the question of starting up was not really relevant to them; however, 32% felt some influence on their decisions from the workshops and 2% did move ahead on a new idea.

Half of the counselees indicated that they were influenced by the counseling as they wrestled with the idea of starting up. Thirty-two percent of the sample decided to begin or change their business operations.

Over half of the respondents in both activities said the counseling and the MEP Workshops contributed to their decisions; 43% actually moved ahead with their projects.

### Program Logistics

Promotion of these two activities to these micro businesses was basically focused in the newspaper and in brochures which were mailed to their businesses. Consequently, a high percentage (68%) of the workshop participants learned about the programs from the brochure and 59% of the counselees received this information through the newspaper. It is significant to note that about a third of the respondents came by referrals from a bank, D.V.R., Job Service, and/or a friend.

Workshops The range of cost for a ten-hour workshop that was deemed acceptable by the participants ranged from \$1 to \$100. Eighteen percent said \$40; 28% said \$60; 16% said \$80. Twenty-six percent would go as high as \$100.

Should the workshop participants desire counseling, 1% said \$5 an hour; 28% said \$10; 28% said \$20; 14% said \$30; and 6% went as high as \$50 an hour.

Counseling Should the counsees engage themselves in a ten-hour workshop, 26% would pay \$40; 23% would pay \$60; 9% would pay \$80; 19% would pay \$100. Seven percent would pay nothing and 16% were not interested or did not know.

For the counseling, 15% would pay nothing; 12% would pay \$5; 32% would pay \$10; 16% would pay \$20; 3% would pay \$30; 2% would pay \$40. Nineteen percent were not interested or did not know.

Both Twenty-three percent would pay nothing for the workshops; 19% would pay \$40; 10% would pay \$60; 14% would pay \$80; and 24% would pay \$100.

For counseling, a quarter of the respondents considered \$20 to be a maximum for an hour of counseling; 10% fell into the \$5, \$10, and \$30 categories. Five percent would pay \$50 and 40% said nothing or did not know.

### Negative Comments

In a sample of 191 respondents, it is expected that there would be some bad experiences and bad reactions. All of the negative reactions have been recorded in Section IV. The main areas of concern center on:

- too many evaluations
- frustration with the system
- inaccessibility of the service
- experiences that did not meet the participants' expectations insensitivity of the instructors/counselor

### Suggestions for Improvement

The entire sample was asked for suggestions to improve the services from U.W.-Extension and the S.B.D.C. Suggestions included providing more information in financing, in understanding the tax system, in business feasibility, and giving more attention to networking and advertising/ promotion. It was suggested by many that faculty/staff could be more helpful in preparing people to meet the pitfalls of business start-up.

## II. BACKGROUND

### The History

In 1975, the University established a joint position with UW-Whitewater and UW-Extension to create a statewide program in support of business growth and development. The new Director, Dr. Russell Jones, began the organization of Small Business Outreach offices, hired staff and set up the training and orientation of the SBO Coordinators.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Robert Pricer was engaged to raise the funding for this budding organization and, with much political savvy, attracted money through the Small Business Administration to fund the new Small Business Development Center Network, the eleventh such network in the Country.

Concomitant to all of this development, Dr. Jones commissioned G. M. Naidu of the College of Business and Economics at UW-Whitewater in 1977 to do a Survey of Small Business Problems and Perceptions in Wisconsin 2, which was subsequently published in December of that year. In June 1978, another monograph by G. M. Naidu was published entitled A Profile of the Small Business Owner/Manager in Ten-County Area (3).

There were several reasons why Naidu's work was important to the development of this new outreach program. First, we knew very little about the business community, specifically the educational needs and attitudes of the small business managers. Secondly, we were not sure what our marketing strategies should be.

Several significant findings came out of these monographs that laid the foundation for the development and promotion of the SBDC Network.

- 1) The lack of business experience in this clientele was very high, resulting in problems of cash flow, pricing and labor relations.
- 2) From the perception of the business people, they identified problem areas in credit and collections, competition, sales, customer service, training, employee motivation, planning and forecasting, and control.
- 3) When seeking outside advice, small business entrepreneurs turned to professional consulting firms, financial and business associations. Educational institutions were mentioned only by one third of the respondents. '
- 4) When pursuing this education, over two thirds of the respondents preferred the classroom instruction, followed by independent study and individual consultation.
- 5) These small business people also had some preference for the timing of their seminars because of their very full days:
  - a) The midweek (Wed., Tues., and Thurs. - in that order)
  - b) Weekday evenings after 6:00p, with some interest in weekday mornings before 9:00a
  - c) The median distance for travel is about 25 miles. Distance is directly proportional to the perceived benefit.
  - d) Two choices for course duration include one-day seminars or four two-hour weekly sessions.

Psychologically, there were a couple of other factors at work as well. First, inasmuch as many of the participants in the Naidu Study had only completed a high school education, an element of fear was felt when thinking about attending a class at the University. They were not at all sure of the expectancies to be placed on them by the University System. And second, as a business person operating a successful business, it seemed like an indictment of their management ability to have to seek additional education in subject matter that they used daily.

As the SBDC network evolved, its ties became stronger with the four-year campuses; and in fact, SBDC Coordinators were created and placed on all of the four-year campuses. Their work in counseling and workshop development would become stronger in the years ahead.

At the same time, the Division of Cooperative Extension Service deemed it useful to place Area Business Agents in the various regions of the State to augment the services of the SBDC and to create a stronger presence within the local community and county. This position then was created in June of 1981 to do some very specific things:

1. Identify needs of the business community and provide leadership in planning and implementing business programs and projects.
2. Develop and offer business programs in cooperation with the designated Business Program Coordinators at Milwaukee and Oshkosh.
3. Perform one-on-one counseling and referral within the SBDC network.
4. Conduct public service learning experiences, provide current information on business conditions and trends, and initiate relationships with agencies and organizations in need of business management programs.
5. Teach business continuing education programs, workshops and seminars.
6. Assist in identifying and conducting research related to small business.
7. Advise and assist in the development of the tourism industry in Southeast Wisconsin.
8. Provide support for county Cooperative Extension Faculty-sponsored programs, requiring business expertise.

This Area Business Agent was assigned the counties of Washington, Ozaukee and Sheboygan. Another Area Business Agent would be assigned to cover the other counties in the Southeast CES District, inasmuch as "supporting small business development" (4) was becoming a major program focus for the University and the State at large (5). Program Development began taking shape in the Fall of 1981, providing an important linkage between the academic institutions and the local citizenry. Emphasis also was focused on the needs of the micro-businesses (25 or less employees) in the creation of this new delivery system.

With the special needs of these micro businesses in mind and with some idea of how to market these services, two major program thrusts were developed: The Management Enrichment Program (MEP) and the one-on-one counseling.

## The MEP Series

The Management Enrichment Program is made available to all types of small businesses (defined primarily as those with 25 employees or less). It offers an opportunity for certification and recognition for individuals who desire to improve their positions in the industry, be it service, retail, wholesale or manufacturing.

The MEP Series has been designed as a fast-paced well-structured learning experience with emphasis on practical training as well as the theoretical. Thus, owner/operators who carry management and decision-making responsibilities are encouraged to enroll.

The objectives of this Series of Workshops are:

- 1) To assist in maintaining or increasing professional competence.
- 2) To help the individual to gain confidence in performing business activities.
- 3) To provide basic business information for more effective decision making.
- 4) To increase the ability of the individual to cope with a changing market place.

There are six basic workshops, held annually:

- Unit 1 - Starting a NEW Small Business
- Unit 2 - Personnel Management
- Unit 3 - Financial Management
- Unit 4 - Planning and Forecasting
- Unit 5 - Managing: A Key Role
- Unit 6 - Marketing Strategy

The workshops are scheduled during the week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. They consist of three to five sessions, with the most of them being four sessions in length. They are held on the Center Campuses in West Bend and in Sheboygan, to serve basically the counties of Washington, Ozaukee, and Sheboygan.

The instructors engaged are from the business world with a specialty in the subject matter to be taught. Their practical experience as well as their knowledge offers a great deal of credibility to the students; and indeed it is these attributes of leadership that they seek in their educational pursuits.

A certificate is presented at the close of each Unit for recognition of the 10-15 hours of instruction completed. An additional certificate is given to those who "graduate" from the Series, having completed Units 2 through 6.

## Counseling

As the MEP Series grew, the requests from the participants for help in specific areas of management increased; and in order to make best use of Extension's time and resources, special days were established for one-on-one meetings with those who needed special assistance or to meet those who were just starting new operations.

Specific days were then established in each of the three counties of Washington, Ozaukee, and Sheboygan to hold confidential counseling sessions upon request. One and one-half hour time slots were scheduled for the original encounter. Should more time be needed, another day could be arranged.

An additional element in this counseling service was the strength offered through the Small Business Development Centers of Milwaukee and Oshkosh. When clients needed extended periods of time or specialized consulting to meet specific problems, they were referred to the SBDC. The SBDC would then seek the special consultant from the business or educational world, assign the consultant to the small business, and ultimately, carry the cost of the consultation.

Additional assistance has been received from the SBDCs at UW-Green Bay and UW-Whitewater.

Since the inception of these two program thrusts in 1981, numerical growth and development have been continuous as demonstrated in the chart below.

### TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN BOTH PROGRAMS

	1981	82	83	84	85	86	87.	88	89
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS:	40	64	105	126	223	258	270	243	173
COUNSELING CLIENTS	15	11	12	55	169	197	232	249	255

NOTE: The dip in Workshop enrollment in 1989 was due largely to a 40% increase in the charge for the Workshops.

Now that these program services have had a history of nine years, it seemed that this was an appropriate time to determine if anything significant really happened in business development; and if so, what it was. What information was used, how was it used, and to what extent was it useful?

### III. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

#### The Instruments

Two different forms of inquiry were used in assessing the effect of the workshops and counseling on the participants: a telephone survey and a mailed questionnaire.

The telephone survey form consisted of 73 questions, including direct, multiple choice and open ended inquiries. The instrument was originally drafted by Dr. Sara Steele and the author. The developmental process went through a number of steps:

- the first draft was designed to cover the three groups of participants: those in the workshops, those in counseling and those in both.
- reactions to this draft were solicited from other Area Business Agents in the Extension Division.
- the second draft went to the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory and was reworked slightly by Ms. Mary Lou Brady in order to computerize it.
- a briefing was held with the pilot interviewers for a test run, followed by a de-briefing of the results.
- a final briefing was held with the interviewers who would complete the telephone survey.

The mail questionnaire was composed of 19 questions, consisting of direct and open ended questions. The questionnaire repeated many of the major questions made in the telephone survey to see if there would be any reinforcement of the information gained through the telephone interviews.

These particular instruments were used in order to meet the original objectives of this Study and to get as clear a response as possible from those who participated. The objectives of the Study were five-fold:

- 1) to review and examine the nature of the small businesses who used the MEP
- 2) Workshops or counseling services in the last four years. to determine whether Extension's help to these businesses affected the labor market either in terms of opening new jobs, or in preventing small businesses from hiring and then having to release employees because the business did not succeed.
- 3) to determine the extent to which small business people have found the courses and consulting helpful.
- 4) to determine how they may have used information from the courses and consultations.
- 5) to provide ideas for strengthening and improving the Extension Service to small businesses.

## The Sample

Even though the MEP Series was begun in 1981, it has taken time, patience, and a lot of work to establish the workshops as a viable means of serving the small business clientele. However, because of the regularity of the workshops and the quality of instruction, enrollment has grown annually as well as the credibility of the total program.

As the Study developed, it was determined that one year's participants would yield a sufficient sample to determine if the counseling and the MEP Workshops were making any difference in the way small business people operate their businesses. The year chosen was 1986, allowing three complete years for the development or use of the ideas acquired during these educational experiences.

In 1986, there were 163 people in workshops, 110 in counseling and 22 in both activities at West Bend. There were 95 people in workshops, 87 in counseling, and 10 in both activities at Sheboygan.

After a quick check of addresses and phone numbers, the original 455 were reduced to 349, due primarily to the movement and dislocation of people. It was from this revised number that the W.S.R.L. randomly selected 191 participants - 85 from the workshops, 85 from the counseling and 21 who were in both programs.

From the sample of 191, 2 were ineligible and 16 had no telephone number available or were unable to be located. Twelve persons refused, and the remaining seven were never available to be interviewed. The overall response rate was 81% or 88% if those with no telephone number available are considered as ineligible to have been in the sample in the first place. Thus the number ultimately interviewed and completed were 64 in workshops, 69 in counseling and 21 in both.

A total of 158 were contacted with the mail questionnaire, in order for all of the 1986 participants to have the opportunity to reflect on the results of the programs and to make suggestions for improvement.

From this mailing, 37 were returned as undeliverable with only 25 returned completed. With a response rate of only 21%, it would be inappropriate to generalize from so limited a rate of response.

## IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### Introduction

According to Arden Grotelueschen (6), there are three major reasons for evaluation: 1) to justify the program, 2) to improve the program or 3) to plan future programs. It is hopeful that this Study may do all three, ultimately placing UW-Extension programs in a stronger position of support in the development of small business entrepreneurs.

Findings will be discussed under the following topical headings: Description of the Participants, Reasons for Participating, Usefulness of the Educational Experience, Impact on the Participants, Effect on Income, Effect on Jobs, Decisions About Starting or Changing a Business, Additional Benefits to the Participants, Program Logistics, Negative Comments, and Suggestions for Improvement.

Under each heading, the reader will find a break-out for the three types of participants; i.e., those in the workshops, those in counseling and those in both activities.

### Description of the Participants

Who has taken part in UW-Extension programs and what characteristics do they possess? Were they managers already and what experience did they have? How did they feel about education and what was their participation level?

#### Workshops

**Position:** Generally speaking, the likelihood of the respondents who participated in the MEP Workshops of being business managers or expected to be in a very short time was quite high. We found that 82% of the respondents were managers already, while another 18% indicated they were working in some other capacity in 1986.

**Experience:** Seven percent of the respondents had no management experience and 21% had less than 5 years. Thirty-six percent had ten years or less; 24% had fifteen years or less and 12% had over fifteen years of experience.

**Types of Business:** With the recent growth of service type businesses in Wisconsin, it is not surprising to find 41% of the workshop participants from that business sector. Following the service businesses came retailers at 26%, manufacturing/construction at 12% and wholesalers at 8%. Thirteen per cent could not be identified from their class enrollment forms.

**Sex:** The sex of the workshop respondents were 63% male and 37% female.

Education: About half had completed high school and either had some additional courses or had completed college (22%). Only 13% had no schooling beyond high school. Nine percent did not respond.

Continuing Education: The respondents indicated that they do seek additional continuing education, which comes from a variety of sources: Trade Associations (31%), Private Consultants (26%), VoTech System (19%), Business Schools (16%), Franchises (8%).

MEP Workshop Participation: Over three fourths attended one MEP Workshop (77%), 14% attended two, 6% attended three, and the last 1% attended four. Two per- cent attended all five workshops.

Counseling This profile of the respondents who were engaged in counseling looks much different both in managerial experience and in educational background.

Position: The percentage of managers and non-managers was the same (38%), 12% were unemployed and 12% were employed in other ways in 1986.

Experience: Experience in business management was quite low with 26% having no experience in management and another 54% with five years or less. Four per cent had six to ten years; and sixteen per cent from eleven up to forty years of experience. Twelve per cent had over fifteen years in business management.

Types of Business: The data indicates that 80% of the counselees wanted information on starting up a new business; consequently, a large number of these people came with no clear concept about their new business idea, making it very difficult to classify them. The remaining 20% contained a smattering of all business sectors with some emphasis on the service type.

Sex: Those seeking counseling included males at 57% and females at 43%. There were many husband and wife teams in counseling; however, the sex count was based on the one that responded to the survey.

Education: Almost two-thirds, 62%, had either taken some courses beyond high school or had graduated from college (23%). A third had had a high school education or less.

Continuing Education: What business training the respondents received came from the VoTech System (26%), Private Consultants (23%), Trade Associations (19%), and Business Schools (15%). Thirty-two per cent included a variety of other sources in their educational pursuits.

UWEX Counseling Participation: Of the people who sought counseling from UW-Extension in 1986, 78% of them needed only one session, 14% needed a follow-up meeting, 6% came three times and only 2% came to four sessions. Generally, clients that take more indepth guidance are referred to the Small Business Development Center nearest to their residence.

### Both

Position: For those who experienced both the MEP Workshops and the one-on-one counseling, 43% were managers in 1986 while another 38% considered themselves owners as well. Nineteen per cent were not in management at the time.

Experience: In terms of management experience, this sample showed that 43% had from two to five years in management, with 29% between six to ten years. Twenty-eight percent had 15 years or more experience under their belt.

Sex: This sample was comprised of 52% males and 48% females.

Education: Even though 29% only claimed a high school diploma, another 48% indicated that classes were taken beyond high school. Eighteen per cent finished college with an additional 5% taking advanced degree work.

Continuing Education: From the list of sources of education, over a fourth of the people (29%) indicate using Trade Associations. Others depended on Private Consultants (14%) and their high schools (14%) for their formal training. Ten per cent identified business schools. less than half, 48%, named other sources including the VoTech System and Franchises.

MEP Workshops and Counseling Participation: Of this sample, over 52% had one counseling session, 29% engaged in two and 10% in three sessions. Nine percent could not remember the incidents of contact. Of course, 100% attended at least one workshop; however, it is not possible to determine from the sample the percentage of those who took multiple workshops.

### Reasons for Participating

The participants were given eight reasons why people approach UW-Extension for business education. About three fourths or 73% in the MEP Workshops gave five or more reasons for participating. Of those clients in counseling, 46% listed five or more reasons and over half (56%) that were in both experiences gave five or more responses.

People took part in the MEP Workshops according to these percentages:

- 83% were looking for new ideas for their business operation
- 61% wanted the objective view of an outsider
- 33% wanted to expand their business
- 30% had a specific problem
- 23% wanted to change their business but not expand
- 11% were thinking of becoming a manager of an existing business
- 16% were thinking of starting a business

The reasons why people came for counseling differed considerably from those who participated in the MEP Workshops:

- 71% were looking for new ideas
- 68% had a specific problem
- 56% wanted the objective view of an outsider
- 17% wanted to expand their business
- 10% wanted to change their business but not expand
- 7% were thinking of becoming a manager of an existing business
- 80% were thinking of starting a new business

The people in both activities identified their reasons for attending by these percentages:

- 62% had a specific problem
- 52% were looking for new ideas
- 48% wanted to expand
- 43% wanted the objective view of an outsider
- 10% wanted to change their business but not expand
- 10% were thinking of becoming a manager of an existing business
- 48% were thinking of starting a business

Only three people, two in counseling and one in both activities; were unable to identify any reason for their participation.

**Workshops** In the sample of the workshop attendees, 39% could identify five reasons for assistance, 24% six reasons, and 16% gave four reasons. Ten per cent gave less than four reasons for participating.

Counseling Two thirds of these clients (66%) gave three to five reasons for coming to the UW-Extension office for counseling. Thirteen per cent- gave six and 10% gave more than six.

Both The highest percentage given for this sample was 28% with five positive responses. Thirty-nine per cent gave less than five and 28% gave more than five.

Were there additional reasons for those in both activities to want to seek not only the theoretical classroom experience, but also the very specific one-on-one practical counseling approach? Some of their reasons follow:

- Improve the bottom line
- Curiosity; to see if we could learn anything; any pointers we could pick up. We had a business before.
- Get more direction from a managerial perspective.
- To advance my education as far as business itself.
- More of a simplex type of thing - ground floor type thing.
- I wanted to know what would be a good way to market my skills. Time chart for how to start a business -- what steps to follow.
- I had been involved with University Extension, and I know they've always been really helpful. This was the first time we've participated with the business sector of University Extension. Before it was horticulture; the agents were always really helpful there.
- Just to learn more about managing and organization.
- Heard he was a good person to talk to if you wanted to start a business.
- Just to have some idea, after the loss of work, what we were going to do, and where we were going. It was a matter of trying to start over.
- Cost more reasonable than a private workshop.
- At the time, there was a downswing in business and I wanted to know what we could do to get out of it.

#### Usefulness of the Educational EXDerience

It is not surprising to find that people attend educational experiences for different reasons. Much depends on their experience and background and at what point they may be in the development of the business. The usefulness of the information then is directly related to the practicality of the subject matter and its application at that point in time.

When asked to identify examples of how the information was used, the workshop attendees broke down their thoughts into basically five areas: finance, personnel, marketing, planning, and management. Some of the statements made by the respondents were:

- It helped me out with long-term planning.
- Tips on organizing my business plan were used.
- Interaction with other people and how they ran their businesses.
- I set up an evaluation procedure for my employees after taking the course.
- Was able to apply information from the course to strengthen employer/employee relationships within the business.
- We used the information given to us about how to delegate responsibilities among the workers.
- Developed a marketing plan which helped my practice, a mental health service.
- The marketing info helped you speak the language.
- The marketing info was very interesting. Since that time my business has increased 40%.
- Informational as far as organizational skills go.
- Basically satisfied my need to know about financial packaging, such as how to get financing from banks for business.
- Bookkeeping, using financial statements. Able to better understand financial statement from our accountant.

When the counselees were asked, "what were the most important things you feel you gained through the contacts with Mr. Wise", they identified some of these ideas:

- Confidence, step-by-step organization of the business.
- Reinforcement that the direction taking was right.
- Marketability study was the largest, the key to the future. Personal conference helped me stop a bad decision.
- It's nice to know that there's a place to go if I should pursue my interest of starting a new business. He was very impressed with what I had to propose to him.
- Not being afraid about asking him questions. He made us feel that we had the qualifications, and he was very encouraging.
- A place where you can get an answer if you need it. He also turned us on to a guy in Manitowoc who was in marketing who helped us out a lot.

- Being able to go over the financial statements.
- He opened us up. He put it on paper for what all was involved and what you had to look for.
- Learning about profitability and how to make an extra dollar.
- The main thing we went in there for was to get an explanation of a partnership and he explained it to us very nicely.
- I think his moral support was the biggest of anything.

The topics of discussion were as varied as the people who brought in their concerns. Some of the major topics centered on:

- Product development
- Business liquidation/sale
- Computer systems
- Personnel
- Inventory control
- International trade
- Regulatory compliance
- Financial analysis and management
- Accounting and accounting procedures
- Government procurement
- Marketing and sales
- Sources of capital and preparing loan requests
- Business start-up and feasibility
- Specific ideas; i.e., house sitting, desk top publishing, pet store, computers, day care, motel, independent living housing, bait shop, taxidermy, electrical contracting, insurance adjuster, architecture, wild bird/wild game products, furniture store, furniture manufacturing, locksmith, sport fishing, athletic footwear, Austrian imports, antique shop, horse boarding, ambulance/fire truck sales, bar/hotel, photography, laser engraving, fast food, metal fabricating, cheese factory, orchard, hearing aids, dental office, brewery, lawn maintenance, ceramics, etc., etc., etc.

The respondents were asked to give examples of the information that was used and how it was used. Some of their comments follow:

- The information on advertising helped us keep our advertising low.
- We, in fact, did hire more people who are retired from their paid jobs. This was done at low cost.
- We decided to reduce our inventory and decided to specialize.
- Information on how to get a small business loan. Found out that it was too hard to get the loan.

- Used publication by SBA-and followed headings. Business plan successful.
- Followed advice completely and it worked. I just took a gamble and worked at it. Have five people working for me now and doing well.
- Knowing beforehand what was required from the State. I had everything I needed for tax purposes.
- The information he gave us on insurance and different aspects of pricing. We learned about pricing.
- He helped me set up a bookkeeping system which I'm still using today.
- I read over the information he gave me, and I didn't start my own business.

#### Impact on the Participants

#### Workshops

The heart of the survey dealt with the affect of the programs on the participants and the business as well. Did the workshops affect the manner in which the participants acted, and if they did, in what ways? Just as there were a variety of reasons for attending the workshops, so were there a variety in terms of what people felt they gained from taking part. The percentages indicating various types of benefits follow.

Confidence seemed to be a large gain for a number of respondents as well as better understanding of what doing business really means. The following responses indicate the impact of the MEP Workshops:

- 81% better understood some aspect of business
- 78% found more confidence for decision making
- 72% re-examined their business operation
- 66% operated their business more efficiently
- 53% found solutions to specific problems
- 45% increased the image and stature of the business
- 26% realized that the problem wasn't what they thought
- 3% were kept from starting up before they were ready

#### Counseling

The percentages indicating gain from the one-on-one relationship were as follows:

- 93% better understood some aspect of business
- 87% found more confidence for decision making
- 63% found solutions to specific problems
- 53% operate their businesses more efficiently
- 53% re-examined their business operation
- 43% increased the image and stature of their business
- 23% realized that the problem wasn't what they thought
- 17% were kept from starting up before they were ready

Both

When those who participated in the workshops and counseling were asked about the effect of these programs on their business operations, the following responses were given:

- 100% better understood some aspect of business
- 78% found more confidence for decision making
- 67% operate their businesses more efficiently
- 67% found solutions to specific problems
- 50% realized that the problem wasn't what they thought
- 44% increased the image and stature of their business
- 28% re-examined their business operation
- 17% were kept from starting up before they were ready

Effect on Income

Workshops

A tangible, although subjective, evaluation of the effect of the MEP Workshops is indicated by the financial health of the business. Did the workshops help to increase the gross income of the business? Sixty-nine per cent said yes. The same percentage also indicated a net increase in income. Sixty percent felt that the information helped prevent a loss in income and business activity. Half of these respondents said they felt more comfortable in taking a salary or more profit for themselves.

Counseling

The counselees presented a somewhat different picture. Over half (57%) indicated an increase both in the gross and the net income of the business; another 43% felt that the information prevented a loss in income, either within the present operation or in the loss of the investment toward a new business start-up. Eleven per cent felt the counseling was not helpful and even experienced a decline in income. Thirty-two per cent felt more comfortable taking more profit or a salary from the business for themselves.

Both

Workshop participants who were also counseled saw an increase in their gross profit as reported by 53% of the respondents. A net increase was reported by 47%. There was no decline in business activity; as a matter of fact, 41% indicated that the counseling prevented a loss of income. Twelve per cent of these managers were able to take a greater profit or salary for themselves.

Effect on Jobs

Workshops

Growth in business health is seen not only in the financial structure but in the human side of the enterprise. For those in workshops, 79% reported that jobs were kept secure. Fifty-seven percent increased the positions of employment and 48% increased the pay given their employees. Thirty-eight percent also increased the fringe benefits for their staff.

But was there an actual difference in employment numbers from 1986 until now? The responses show that 57% did in fact increase employees in the three year period. Thirty-one percent stayed the same and 12% lost positions. The range of new hires was one to seventy-five. Fourteen percent employed 1-2 people; 19% employed 3-5 persons; 8% employed 6-10 additional people; and 16% employed over 11 and upward to 75.

### Counseling

Inasmuch as many of the counselees were just beginning in business, it is fair to assume that their workforce was very young. The jobs held secure would most likely be the owner/manager at 32%. Twenty per cent also increased the number of people working for them, which probably were new positions. Eighteen percent increased the pay scale for their employees, of which 4% provided some additional fringe benefits.

The employment picture for the counselees showed that 51% stayed the same or did not employ any additional people; however, 20% of these new or possible start-ups added people to their business operations. Sixteen percent retrenched and reduced their work force. Of the 20% that added people, 16% employed 1-2 persons; 3% employed 3-5 people; and 1% went from 6 up to 22.

### Both

Those who had both experiences have a different configuration. The counseling and the workshops helped 35% keep jobs secure. Forty-seven per cent increased the number of employees and 18% increased the remuneration for them. Twentyfour per cent increased the fringe benefits for their workers.

Of this sample, 47% added people to their work force. The percentages included: 10% employing 1-2 people, 19% employing 3-5 people; 9% engaging 6-10 persons; and 9% employing upward to 60 additional people. Only 10% lost employees while 43% remained the same.

## Decisions About Starting or Changing a Business

### Workshops

When the workshop attendees were asked if their participation helped them make a decision related to starting or changing a business, 32% felt that it had contributed to their decision but 2% moved ahead on a new idea. Inasmuch as most of these people were already in business, the question about starting a business was less appropriate.

### Counseling

However, the picture changed considerably for the counselees. Half of this sample were influenced by the counseling to make a decision about starting or dropping a business idea. Thirty-two per cent did decide to begin or change their business operation.

## Both

In considering the decision to start or change a business, 52% of the students from both experiences said the counseling and the MEP Workshops contributed to their decision and 43% actually decided to go ahead with their business idea.

The reasons for deciding as they did; i.e., to go ahead or drop the idea were very clear to the respondents:

- Started as a landscape consultant after retiring.
- To improve profitability.
- Course reaffirmed that I had a good idea.
- Not prepared financially to tackle what had to be done. Make money at home.
- Confidence and the belief that we could do it.
  
- Because of his recommendations.
- What I learned from class seemed to support that.
- Do something on my own.
- I had a buyer.
- I didn't want to relocate.
- I needed a career change.
- We felt the information at the classes viable.
- Betterment of my future.
- His advice and just something we needed to do.

### Additional Benefits to the Participants

And were there any additional benefits received by those participating in these programs? Some had more to say:

- I would say it reinforced the fact that we were heading in the right direction.
- I improved my managerial skills.
- Connections in Madison for tax information.
- Met a couple of people in class and did business for them.

One thing I might mention: he's familiar with people in the business community and in the past had directed me to people who were involved in advertising and were capable of laying out material. He has additional resources that small business persons could find beneficial if he was aware of them, lots of valuable contacts.

- Gave you a lot of confidence.
- I was able to communicate' better with employees.
- I developed a technique of more sophisticated problem-solving. I'm glad it was there.
- It was very in-depth.
- Good program. It should continue. Even though Rudy didn't start a business, he feels that it is good for people who do because the program takes a lot of fear out of the people and it deals specifically with starting a business, whereas college may not do this.
- The fact that the instructors and participation was very good; his availability good.
- It was a good experience. I am in the process of organizing a completely different type of business now. It has given me many good guidelines that I can apply to this as well.
- Good program; needs to be kept available to be useful. Too much for one agent to handle.
- I was happy with it; very exceptional.
- He was an excellent communicator. He was kind and pleasant. I would not hesitate to call him again.
- Very enjoyable and very informative. We had a good teacher.

#### Program logistics

#### Workshops

The right kind of promotion is important to reach this small business clientele. For those attending the MEP Workshops, the majority or 68% learned about the programs from the mailed brochure which is mailed to their place of business. Another 9% picked up the information from the local newspaper while the last 23% were encouraged to attend by a friend or by a community agency (DVR, Job Service, etc.).

### Counseling

Those seeking counseling heard about it primarily through the local newspaper, so 59% came from that source. Twelve percent of the clients came through the encouragement of a friend or word-of-mouth and apparently a third of the people (29%) came from a variety of other sources or just did not remember how they got the information.

### Both

When considering the sample from both activities, 52% came from the newspaper, almost 20% came from the MEP brochures and another third of the sample from a variety of referrals; i.e., friends, bankers, Job Service, DVR, etc.

### Workshops

The workshop participants were also asked how much they would pay for a ten hour workshop if they were to take another in the future. Two percent said nothing, 18% said \$40, 28% said \$60, 16% said \$80, and a quarter of the sample, or 26%, said \$100. Ten per cent were unsure or did not respond.

There was no charge for counseling, but if it were necessary to charge, what would a workshop participant be willing to pay per hour for counseling? Twenty-one per cent said nothing, 1% said \$5, 28% said \$10, 28% said \$20, 14% said \$30 and 6% went as high as \$50. Two percent did not respond.

### Counseling

The counselees responded as follows: 7% said they would pay nothing for the workshops, 26% would pay \$40, 23% would pay \$60, 9% would pay \$80, and 19% would pay \$100. However, 6% said they were not interested in any courses, and 10% said they did not know..

In regard to counseling, 15% would not pay anything, 12% would pay \$5, 32% would pay \$10, 16% would pay \$20, 3% would pay \$30 and another 2% would pay \$40. Three percent were not interested and 16% did not know.

### Both

Those in both activities responded this way: 23% would pay nothing for the workshops, 19% would pay \$40, 10% would go for \$60, 14% would pay \$80 and 24% would pay \$100. Ten percent said they did not know.

A quarter of these respondents considered \$20 to be a maximum amount for counseling services. Ten per cent fell into the \$5, \$10, and \$30 categories. Five per cent thought \$50 was a fair figure. Twenty-two percent said nothing and 18% said they did not know.

## Negative Comments

It is important to be true to the responses of the participants and to include both sides of the picture. Thus, all of the negative comments have been itemized below.

In evaluating the negative comments of the respondents, one may find clues to better improve the experiences or one may find additional reasons for motivating the potential student.

Negative reactions are listed here as given by the respondents:

- He has too many evaluations of his programs; don't need so many; you over evaluate.
- Specialized situation. A lot of material that was there did not apply. He is mainly in a consulting basis.
- The one course that I took left me total void. If I had better instruction, I might have been able to forego some of the pitfalls that I have experienced.
- Just an insight into how things worked at the UW and they were all negative.
- I can't really say I gained anything at all. Nothing really worked out.
- Get more with it. I already knew what was given. Wise learned from me. They're always kind of there the day after. They are idealistic.
- I think Chuck Wise needs to listen more closely to the problems of the persons coming in rather than assuming they're coming in from point zero.
- Felt people at classes too varied and kind of business too varied. Their image of small was too wide. More individual counseling.
- Better availability. He didn't have a permanent set up. No office, just in the Courthouse.
- No information was received that I could really use.
- Poor teacher, good concept. I had a marginal instructor, it wasn't Mr. Wise, it was some other person.
- Just that I hope it's terminated because it's a waste of the taxpayer's money.
- Unsatisfied that there wasn't any follow-up.

- No comments really. Didn't learn anything from him. He told me not to buy customer lift. I did the opposite and it's worked for me. General knowledge, but doesn't include specific business opposite his theories.
- More specifics should have been given - too general.
- Maybe it would be more helpful if the session had been paid for. I felt very rushed. He wanted me in and out of there. He was not very helpful at all. He should teach the classes that he has the brochures out about, the management classes. He has other instructors teaching them.
- It's probably a two-headed sword--it's difficult to know people's backgrounds. They should put out flyers to ask about backgrounds. I got nothing out of the bookkeeping information. Nobody told me to promote myself. It was all hit and miss.

#### Suggestions for Improvement

In trying to increase the value of these programs and be more sensitive to the needs of small businesses, the entire sample was asked what suggestions they might make to Extension and the S.B.D.C. for being more helpful to small businesses. A strong plea was made by many to do a better job of advertising and promoting these services. And then these additional comments were made:

- Work as close as they can with small business officers of banks the closer the better. If the bank knows about a prospective small business trying to start, the bank should tell Chuck and vice versa.
- I think they can use control groups to get more specific market researching information, i.e., less generalization and more specifics. '
- Some way to help starting out to finance a business or ways to get help financing.
- I would like to know the extent of what services are offered. Looking in near future for investment capitalists/sources of money to do this.
- Knowledge of things that might happen in a small business that one should be prepared for.
- Let people know this facility exists if they need it. For someone starting a business, this is an excellent resource.
- Giving personal advice as to tax matters and deadlines for filling out government forms, and how to fill them out.

- I wish there was more information given to small businesses in regard to the vultures out there. We had tremendous losses. We were not warned of the possibility of this happening. There should be more warning of how small businesses can be taken by vultures.
- Help in using the tax information. What is taxable and what is not. Use of tax number. When to charge sales tax.
- I think they should advertise more about it.
- Maybe they could provide a tax service for people to learn about all the different taxes, unemployment, fica, federal, state-- a good overview of what th~ forms are and what's required.
- The one area that I don't think we're able to "connect on" were actual sources of financing. Since going through the program, I've become more aware of financing available through small business administration, loans through farming. In that area, they weren't as helpful as I thought they could be. It was too generic. They did stress projects, etc., but not really where to put it to the best use.
- I suppose just to make it more known where to find these guys. We live in a rural area and their kind of help is hard to find out here.
- At that time, they didn't have a lot of the feasibility studies. They should have more of those.
- Keep the rates low (the cost of the course) and the topics practical, and bring people together of like interest, for example, people in human services should have courses on marketing. Should be such a course. Don't mix professions.
- What I'd like to see is people teaching who have actually experienced. There are a lot of retired managers who are looking for something to do. The Extension could place such a person in a struggling business to help. There are a lot of retired managers or other managers who could help. Probably a thousand people would love to do it.
- To give people more connections, more networking. To give people contacts of others who are having the same problems. Even if they are in different industries.

## V. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### General Statements

In a study such as this, one can find the basis for many conclusions and recommendations, depending on the reader's perspective. So that the following thoughts are, in no way, complete or exhaustive in number. From the data, it may be possible for many to reach their own conclusions either in concurrence with what is written or in some other fashion.

It might be well to remind the reader that this sample came from two S.B.D.C. Districts. The Washington/Ozaukee people tend to be influenced by the impact of Milwaukee events, whereby Sheboygan creates a leadership style that influences a very rural county and is oblivious to the effect of a metropolitan center. If the samples from these Districts had been separated, the results might have been different; however, the consistency of the delivery mechanism tended to attract a common business type; e.g., the micro businesses of these counties, so that county boundaries per se became unimportant.

As an overriding impression, one can sense the very positive feelings of many of the small business clientele toward the University of Wisconsin and the services provided. Many expressed their appreciation often and gave tangible evidence of its usefulness to them.

### Discussion

In looking at the characteristics of the people who participated, twenty-eight per cent of the workshop attendees had less than five years experience while eighty per cent of the counselees had less than five years in management. It appears then, that the MEP Workshops, designed for management level people, are actually attracting them, while most of the counselees have yet to taste the joys of managing. It also shows that these programs are attracting more of the people who have had some education beyond high school and appreciate the value of education as an important ingredient for their success.

Because of their involvement in the Workshops, fifty-seven per cent did increase jobs while another seventy-nine per cent kept their jobs secure. And although only twenty per cent of the counselees increased jobs, these would have been new positions. 50 jobs did increase, were strengthened, and were even garnished with limited fringe benefits.

One would hope that the degree of usefulness might have been rated higher; however, with the reaction given, it would indicate the need for continued refining of these services. Fifty-six per cent of the workshop participants indicated that the MEP workshops were of some use while only forty-one per cent of the counselees rated the counseling of some use. Ten per cent of the workshop attendees gave a superior rating; twenty-one percent of the counselees rated the experience as very useful.

So what were people seeking from these programs and how was the information used? Naturally, all came with their individual concerns, but over three-fourths said they were looking for new ideas to supplement their present knowledge or to gain new insights into the management of a business. From this benefit listed by both types of participants, the second reason breaks down differently: those in workshops seeking answers to specific problems and the counselees looking for an objective view from an outsider. Because of the moderate use of the information, it would seem that again the University is only one of several sources of information.

The participants were most generous in their suggestions for improvement. And though only a few of their suggestions are listed in the Study, the reactions of all should be combed for similarities and differences in order to really improve the basic nature of these University Extension programs.

There are several programmatical conditions that could use attention in the development of these educational experiences for business people as well. First, it is important to convey to the participants that they are valued as individuals who have unique questions, concerns, and needs. Time must be given to help people clarify their problems and to help them identify the next steps in their development.

Secondly, more attention could be given to the encouragement of the participants in using multiple educational experiences to heighten their business expertise. That is to say, when these business people attended both the workshops and the counseling, greater confidence was gained, 'doing business' was better understood, and they became more efficient in their operations. Obviously, an additional experience has the effect of enforcing the knowledge gained from the first exposure when the goal is basically the same; i.e., strengthening small business.

Thirdly, the objectives of each workshop need to be carefully identified for learner-results in order for the potential student to understand the expected outcomes. It then becomes important to mesh the program objectives with the individual's objectives for maximum learning. When this is not done, people feel unfulfilled and critical of the program.

Some participants felt so good about the results of their participation that they often railed against the University for not doing a better job of promotion. They insisted that the University should be doing much more in letting the small business community know about the services of U.W. Extension.

Funding is a major concern for micro businesses. Finding start-up capital and then struggling to handle the large debt service with an exceedingly small margin of profit can be a crippling factor in their early survival. Some participants have suggested that there be a closer working relationship with the banking community, by interpreting their needs to the funding sources, as well as being aware of all the funding programs available to small businesses.

Many participants spoke of the concern and knowledge of the workshop instructors and spoke often of the value of the instructors' experiences. These instructors were people with whom they could identify, which gave a lot of credibility to what was taught. Continued use of this type of instructor is important to the effectiveness of these programs. Though it may be valuable to integrate campus-based faculty in the teaching role, it needs to be done with an eye to their background and experience in the business world.

More networking with local businesses in their own communities was a suggestion made. This is easier said than done due to the irregular schedules and heavy time commitments of these young entrepreneurs. It is a useful thing to do if one can discover the right pattern that meets the life-styles of these people. A suggestion made by a few participants is that workshops be designed for special business segments; e.g., for retailers, for service businesses, for manufacturers, etc. Such a method of organization might enlarge attendance and convey the idea that the workshop was designed specifically for the needs of specific business-types.

Since about half of the workshop participants felt that the \$40-\$60 range was acceptable, it would complicate the promotional effort to go much beyond this figure in pricing the workshops. Only twenty per cent were willing to go higher on the workshop fees. Also, about half the participants thought that \$10-\$20 an hour for counseling was acceptable, should there be a charge. A little more than one-fifth were not willing to pay anything for the service. Any charge for this service, then, would no doubt, reduce the demand. .

Small business people use a lot of different sources for their continuing education and to them University Extension may not be any more important than any other source. Could there be a better way to position our University programs in the market place?

It is the intent to present basic beginning information to the participants in the MEP Workshops and in the counseling sessions. Most participants appreciated this approach and spoke of the value of an interested instructor or counselor. When appropriate concern was not felt, the criticism was voiced by the students. A continuous effort needs to be made to evaluate and re-design the course content and the counseling methods to meet the variety of changing needs.

## Recommendations

With these thoughts before us, the author offers the following recommendations:

1. **ESTABLISH BY INTENT A CLOSER WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ASSOCIATIONS and INSTITUTIONS.** Such networking should result in greater resources, greater image awareness, and additional quality offerings to the people of our State. As an example: if business people turn to Trade Associations for their continuing education, should not the University be seeking to serve these associations as educational consultants and purveyors?
2. **CREATE A UNIFIED APPROACH FOR COOPERATIVE EXTENSION IN WORKING WITH THE SMALL BUSINESS CLIENTELE (MICRO BUSINESSES).** U.W.-Extension could serve as the first point of contact for business information; U.W.-Extension could provide one-on-one counseling; U.W.-Extension could offer basic business workshops. With coordinated promotional efforts, University programs would become more visible to the community.
3. **DEVELOP A BETTER, MORE COMPLETE DATA BASE FOR COMPUTERIZED REFERRAL;** i.e., threshold figures, location quotients, operating ratios, etc. Such information would be extremely helpful in determining the feasibility of a given project and assist the budding entrepreneur in making a qualified decision about business start-up.
4. **PROVIDE MORE COORDINATION IN PROGRAM PLANNING** between Extension Divisions and Departments. Although this recommendation is not based solely on the data from the Study, it still remains that roles need clearer definition and authority needs to be better understood. Such understanding would lead to a higher level of cooperation and effectiveness in serving the clientele.
5. **DIRECT MORE EFFORT IN HELPING SMALL BUSINESS BE MORE SENSITIVE TO A CHANGING WORLD.** With the intensesness of daily activity, small businesses may not be looking at the forces beyond their work which will affect their very survival in the days ahead. Important issues include a)the international market, b)the impact of environmen~al laws, c)service marketing d)family succession, e) personnel planning, f) support for ethnocentric business, etc., etc. These issues could become the cutting edge of University leadership.
6. **CONTINUE TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE** to assure the highest quality of service possible. Attention should be given to those who register dissatisfaction, even though the dissatisfaction may be rooted in a low level of expectation or a lack of definable objectives by the student. Their objections may become grounds for improvement.

## Beyond the Study

The following points may be only slightly related to the data within the Study; however, the author would like to make a few additional suggestions.

There needs to be a clearer definition of the business clientele and a clearer understanding of the market segmentation as Coop Extension and General Extension mount their strategies for service delivery, pricing and promotion. The business people who are not used to assessing "program descriptions" find the myriad of program offerings confusing and generally uncoordinated, and they may take workshops that do not serve their needs.

Because of the pervading influence business and economics has upon us in all walks of life, it could be to the advantage of Cooperative Extension to create more interplay and inter-disciplinary planning among its various divisions. For instance, a good horticulturist needs to operate with successful business practices, the success of family businesses may be directly related to the dynamics in the nuclear family, and our youth need an appreciation and understanding of the enterprise system.

There is a distinctly different way in which Cooperative Extension works from the way General Extension operates. The two methods of delivery described in this Study; e.g., the MEP Workshops and the One-on-One Counseling, were devised to address the educational needs of the micro businesses (employees under 25) by an Area Business Agent (Coop Extension). The programs developed by the S.B.D.C. (General Extension) are developed for the revenue they can return and are basically directed to small businesses with 50 employees or more. These and other differences need to be understood, accepted, and used as strengths in the program planning process.

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## **VII APPENDIX**

Letter to Telephone Sample

Survey Questions

Letter to Mail Sample

Mail Questionnaire

MEP Brochure

Certificate



**Area Recreation/Small Business Agent**  
400 University Drive  
West Bend, WI 53095  
(414) 338-5204

Dear

Do you remember back in 1986 when you either took part in an Extension business management workshop or we talked about a concern you had about business? Sufficient time has elapsed now for you to have done quite a few things with your business. I've thought about you and wondered how things went.

We will be better able to help other business people, if you will share with us what's happened since then and what use our contact was to you.

To make it easier for you, an interviewer from Wisconsin Survey Research will be calling you within the next three weeks. The interview will take between 10 and 15 minutes. If the call reaches you at a bad time, he or she will make an appointment for a time which is more convenient. He or she will ask you specific questions about why you contacted us and how you have used the information. In addition, there will be a point at the end of the interview where you can make additional comments.

Your name will never be associated with your responses. Survey Research does not identify respondents. I will receive a summary of your responses but will not know who said what.

I am very interested in hearing what's happened in relation to the people and businesses who contacted me in 1986. I will greatly appreciate your taking time to respond to the questions.

Sincerely,

A. Charles Wise,  
Area Business Agent

ACW:sr

### SURVEY QUESTIONS (Project 2001)

Below are the questions presented to the participants of the telephone survey. The original survey instrument will be furnished upon request.

1. What connection do you presently have with a business? Are you an owner, manager, or employee?
2. What kind of business is it? Would it be a retail business, a wholesale business, construction, service, manufacturing, consulting, or something else?
3. In general, how useful was the information from the workshop or workshops you took? Would you say that it was not at all useful, of some use, quite useful, or very useful?
4. Please give examples of information used, and how it was use.
5. How many counseling sessions or discussions have you had with the University Extension Business Agent, Chuck Wise?
6. What did you discuss with him?
7. In general, how useful was the counseling? Would you say that it was not at all useful, of some use, quite useful, or very useful?
8. Please give examples of information you used and how you used it.
9. What was your employment status in 1986? That is, were you employed by someone else, did you manage you own business, were you farming, or what?
10. I will read some reasons why people sometimes take part in University Extension Business programs. Please indicate whether or not each of the following was one of the reasons for your own participation:
  - I wanted help with specific problems.
  - I wanted some new ideas.
  - I wanted to expand my business.
  - I wanted to change my business but not to expand.
  - I was thinking of becoming a manager of an existing business.
  - I wanted an overview of my business from an objective observer.
  - Any other reasons for your participation?
11. Where did you learn about the program? Newspaper, Radio, Flyer, City/County Official, Community Agency, Banker, Someone who participated, Friend, Other.
12. Did participation help you make a decision related to starting or changing a business or taking a management position?
13. Did you decide to go ahead, change your ideas, or drop your ideas?
14. Why did you decide as you did?

willing to pay per hour if you wanted to confer with him? Would it be nothing, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$30, \$40, or \$50?

26. Currently, do you own or manage a business?
27. In total, how many years have you owned or managed a business?
28. Would you please briefly describe the business with which you are associated?
29. How many people did it employ in 1986? How many people are currently employed?
30. What is the highest amount of schooling you have completed? Would it be less than high school, high school, some courses after high school, college, or college graduate courses?
31. Have you received formal training related to managing a business from any of the following: high school, vocational school, business school, trade association, franchise, private consultant, any other source?
32. Is there anything else you would like to say about your participation in Mr. Wise's programs?
  - Did it help you re-examine your operations?
  - did it keep you from starting a business before you were ready?
17. During the past four years, were you sufficiently involved in the decision making process of a business to affect the level of income and the number of employees?
18. What effect, if any, did your participation have on the amount of business activity:
  - Did participation cause the business to decline?
  - Did it help increase gross income?
  - Did it help prevent you from a loss in gross income:
  - Did it help increase net income?
  - Did it help you feel comfortable taking more profit or salary for yourself?
19. What effect, if any, did your participation have on jobs?
  - Did it keep the jobs you had more secure?
  - Did it help you increase the number of people employed?
  - did it help you increase the amount you paid employees?
  - Did it help you increase fringe benefits available to employees?

20. Did you benefit from the contact with Mr. Wise's program in any way we haven't talked about?
21. How did you benefit?
22. In summary, what - if anything - were the most important things you feel you gained through the contacts with Mr. Wise?
23. What suggestions do you have for how Extension on the Small Business Development Center can be of more help to small business?
24. If you wanted to take an Extension Business Management course in the future, what would you be willing to pay for ten hours of workshop from Extension? Would it be nothing, \$40, \$60, \$80, or \$100?
25. Currently there is no charge for counseling services from the UW-Extension Business Agent. If it were necessary to charge, how much would you be willing to pay per hour if you wanted to confer with him? Would it be nothing, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$30, \$40, or \$50?
26. Currently, do you own or manage a business?
27. In total, how many years have you owned or managed a business?
28. Would you please briefly describe the business with which you are associated?
29. How many people did it employ in 1986? How many people are currently employed?
30. What is the highest amount of schooling you have completed? Would it be less than high school, high school, some courses after high school, college, or college graduate courses?
31. Have you received formal training related to managing a business from any of the following: high school, vocational school, business school, trade association, franchise, private consultant, any other source?
32. Is there anything else you would like to say about your participation in Mr. Wise's programs?



**Area Recreation/Small Business Agent**  
400 University Drive  
West Bend, WI 53095  
(414) 338-5204

Dear

Do you remember back in 1986 when you either took part in an Extension business management workshop or we talked about a concern you had about business? Sufficient time has elapsed now for you to have done quite a few things with your business. I've thought about you and wondered how things went.

We will be better able to help other business people if you will share with us what's happened since then and what use our contact was to you.

Will you please take a few minutes and fill out the enclosed questionnaire, keeping in mind our counseling session and/or your participation in the MEP Workshops? Return it to me by June 29, or as soon thereafter as possible.

Your name will never be associated with your responses. The Survey has no special coding; a simple summary will be made of all responses with no individual identification.

I am very interested in hearing what's happened in relation to the people and businesses who contacted me in 1986. I will greatly appreciate your taking time to respond to the questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'A. Charles Wise'.

A. Charles Wise,  
Area Business Agent

ACW:sr

Enclosures

What Did You Do After????

1. Please check any of the Management Enrichment Courses you have taken through UW-Extension.

- Unit 1 Starting a NEW Small Business
- Unit 2 Personnel Management
- Unit 3 Financial Management
- Unit 4 Planning and Forecasting
- Unit 5 Managing--A Key Role
- Unit 6 Marketing Strategy
- Don't remember
- Didn't attend any of the Management Enrichment courses (If you did not take courses, please go to Question 4).

2. In general, how useful was the information from the course(s) you took?  
 not  of some use  quite useful  very useful

3. Please give examples of information you used.

4. About how many times in 1986 did you discuss a business question or problem with Chuck Wise, Extension Area Business Agent?  (If you did not consult with Chuck, please skip to Question 7).

5. In general, how useful was the counseling?  
 not  of some use  quite useful  very useful

6. Please give examples of information you used.

7. Since that time, have you been sufficiently involved with a business to be able to use the information gained from the program?

yes  no (If no, please go to Question 12).

8. Did the courses and/or counseling have any affect on you or your business? (Check items where your answer is yes).

- helped make the business operate more efficiently
- increased the image and positive stature of the business
- made me more confident in my decisions
- helped me solve some specific problems
- helped me better understand some aspect of business.
- showed me that the problem wasn't what I thought it was
- helped me re-examine my operations.
- other, please indicate:  

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9. During the past four years have you been sufficiently involved in the decision making of the business to affect the level of income and number of employees?  Yes  No (If no, please go to Question 12).
10. Did your participation in the courses and/or counseling have any affect on income or profit? (Check items where your answer is yes.)
- caused it to decline
  - helped increase gross income
  - helped prevent a loss in gross income
  - helped increase net income
  - helped me feel comfortable taking more profit or salary for myself
  - other, please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Did your participation in the courses and/or counseling have on those employed? (Check items where your answer is yes).
- kept me from starting a business before I was ready
  - kept people's jobs more secure
  - helped me employ more people
  - helped me increase the amount I paid employees.
  - helped me increase fringe benefits available to employees.
  - other, please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_
12. What suggestions do you have for how Extension or the Small Business Development Center can be of more help to small businesses like yours.
13. Please check the response below which best indicates your occupational status at the present time.
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> employed by someone else. | <input type="checkbox"/> have my own business         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> farming                   | <input type="checkbox"/> full time homemaker          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unemployed                | <input type="checkbox"/> other, please indicate _____ |
14. What is your role with that business?  
 manager       owner       employee
15. In total, how many years of business management experience have you had? \_\_\_\_
16. What is the highest amount of schooling you have completed?  
 high school or less       some courses past high school  
 college graduate       some graduate courses
17. Gender:  Male  Female
18. Check the category below which best describes the business.
- |                                       |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> retail       | <input type="checkbox"/> service       | <input type="checkbox"/> other (please indicate) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wholesale    | <input type="checkbox"/> manufacturing | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> construction | <input type="checkbox"/> consulting    | _____  |
19. How many people did it employ in 1986? \_\_\_\_  
How many people are currently employed? \_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!!

## MEP SEMINARS OFFERED

Each Unit consists of 10-15 hours of class time.

- Unit 1 - Starting a NEW Small Business
- Unit 2 - Personnel Management
- Unit 3 - Financial Management
- Unit 4 - Planning and Forecasting
- Unit 5 - Managing - A Key Role
- Unit 6 - Marketing Strategy

## PLAN AHEAD

All six units will be offered by UW-Extension on a rotation basis in order for the participant to receive certification in a 3-year period.



Return the INTEREST INDICATOR to:

A. Charles Wise  
Area Small Business Agent  
UW-Extension  
400 University Drive  
West Bend, WI 53095  
(414) 338-5204

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

## 1985-86 SCHEDULE

FALL	Units 2 & 3
WINTER	Units 1 & 4
SPRING	Units 5 & 6

### Unit 1 Starting a NEW Small Business

- Introduction to the Business World
- Legal Aspects of Business
- Marketing Research
- Merchandise Inventory Cycle
- Estimating Cash Flow

### Unit 2 Personnel Management

- Getting and Keeping Superior Employees
- Building An Effective Team
- Rewarding Employee Performance
- Management/Labor Relations

### Unit 3 Financial Management

- What comprises the "financial picture" of My Business
- How Do You Sense The Problems Before They Become Overwhelming
- What Basic Documents Do I Need For Financial Planning
- What Critical Decisions Will I Have To Make To Keep Healthy

### Unit 4 Planning and Forecasting

- Elements of Sound Planning
- Coping With Problems and Obstacles
- Balancing People and Productivity
- Making Your Plan Come Alive

### Unit 5 Managing: A Key Role

- The Manager's World
- Management and Motivation
- Useful Management Systems
- Managing Change In Your Business

### Unit 6 Marketing Strategy

- Marketing Concepts
- The Managerial Approach
- Marketing Strategies
- The Marketing Mix
- The Promotional Process

# MEMBER

*pay 2 off*

SMALL BUSINESS  
OWNER/OPERATORS  
can get

- ▶ increased personal confidence
- ▶ increased productivity
- ▶ greater information
- ▶ up-to-date information
- ▶ more control of the business
- ▶ improved productivity
- ▶ improved efficiency
- ▶ increased managerial skills
- ▶ new managerial skills
- ▶ enhance the return-on-investment

**UWEX**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EXTENSION  
Ozaukee, and Washington Counties  
and the  
Small Business Development Center

UW-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming including Title IX requirements.



The Management Enrichment Program (MEP), now available for the owner/operators of all types of small business, offers an opportunity for certification and recognition for the individual who has a desire to improve his/her position in the industry.

MEP has been developed by UW-Extension and the Small Business Development Centers of Wisconsin. The content of the Program is designed specifically for Small Business clientele.\* Complete certification can be accomplished in two to three years.

Each MEP unit consists of a fast-paced well-structured learning experience with emphasis on practical training as well as the theoretical. Participants will become more effective, more efficient and more valuable to themselves and to the company. They will take new skills and new concepts back to the job after each session - **MEP pays off!**

\* 86% of all business in Washington and Ozaukee Counties operate with less than 25 employees; over 50% have less than 4 employees.

**1986-87 SCHEDULE**

**Unit 2 - Personnel Management**  
Four Tuesdays 7-9:30 pm  
September 23 - October 14

**Unit 3 - Financial Management**  
Four Tuesdays 7-9:30 pm  
October 21 - November 11

**Unit 1 - Starting a NEW Small Business**  
Five Tuesdays 7-9:30 pm  
January 27 - February 24

**Unit 4 - Planning and Forecasting**  
Four Tuesdays 7-9:30 pm  
March 3 - 24

**Unit 5 - Managing: A Key Role**  
Four Wednesdays 7-9:30 pm  
April 1 - 29

**Unit 6 - Marketing Strategy**  
Five Thursdays 7-9:30 pm  
May 7 - 28

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND**

Owner/Operators who manage small businesses, especially people who carry management and decision-making responsibilities, can attend. Many "new" managers come from specialized fields and need a broader knowledge base in the field of business. Others may need an update on the changes in the market place.

**CLASS SIZE**

Classes will be limited for maximum participation. It may be useful to have several people from the same enterprise attend the seminars.

**FEE POLICY**

The first person enrolled from a business will be charged the full registration fee. Each additional person enrolling from that same business will be charged \$25. Fee covers cost of facility, instructor expense and supplementary materials.

Pre-registration is necessary; however, refunds will be made up to and including the day prior to the seminar.

**CERTIFICATION**

Individual certificates are awarded after each Unit; however special recognition will be given to participants completing Units 2-6. Continuing Education Units (CEU's) are recorded in Madison and become part of the participants permanent record.

**Return this INTEREST INDICATOR NOW!**

To: A. Charles Wise  
UW-Extension  
400 University Dr.  
West Bend, WI 53095

**INTEREST INDICATOR**

Our business is particularly interested in:

- Unit 1
- Unit 2
- Unit 3
- Unit 4
- Unit 5
- Unit 6

Please send us a free brochure about these seminars as they become available.

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Position \_\_\_\_\_

University of  
Wisconsin—Extension



Department of  
Business and Management

**This certificate  
is awarded to**

**in recognition of  
attendance and participation in**

## **MANAGEMENT ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

- GENERAL MANAGEMENT
- FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
- MARKETING STRATEGY •
- PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION •
- PLANNING AND FORECASTING •

Instructor

Coordinator