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eBizITPA would like to thank the individuals who are a vital part of making the Center possible.



Annual Report 2008-2009



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“eBizITPA has assisted companies in 66 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties.”

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

As our 2008-2009 fiscal year comes to a close, we have seen trying economic times become even more challenging for Pennsylvania businesses. As we talk to the companies who use our services on a regular basis, one message resounds — companies that innovate while sticking to core business principles feel they have the strength to make it through the recession.

In this report, you will find evidence that the information technology (IT)-based programs and initiatives we offer go a long way in assisting PA companies with long term sustainability.

We have spent a great deal of time this year doing extensive research, analysis and strategic planning for the future to ensure programs and projects we bring forward provide maximum benefit for the Commonwealth. We are looking forward to providing resources, talent and collaboration to build a stronger economy and stronger businesses for tomorrow and beyond.



Ron May,
Executive Director
eBizITPA



“Over 108 million dollars in new revenues reported.”

WHAT WE DO

eBizITPA focuses on identifying the essential information technology-based needs of small and medium-sized businesses and then works with partners in private, economic development and education sectors to respond to those needs with relevant programs and initiatives.

eBizITPA takes a holistic approach to technology-based economic development through information technology. We look at the business lifecycle from start up and new product development to taking mature companies and developing information technology talent internally.

HOW WE DO IT

eBizITPA's work falls into two main strategic categories:
INNOVATION & COMMERCIALIZATION
BUSINESS & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INNOVATION & COMMERCIALIZATION

Innovative products and processes drive economic growth. Our job is to continue to innovate and incubate information technology to help Pennsylvania businesses and organizations flourish.

New Product Development

eBizITPA provides IT-based mini-grant assistance and counseling to help guide businesses and organizations through the processes of market research, prototype development, beta testing and taking a product to market. Over 40 of these have gone to market as products or innovative services.



iA³

This initiative focuses on utilizing *Information As An Asset*. The project is a web-based application for measuring impact and return on investment for economic development entities, foundations and non-profits. This program is truly a market niche because every other tool like it is sales focused with nothing specifically meant to measure ROI within these non-profit entities. We're currently in the early stages of design and development, but it's yet another example of how eBizITPA is taking new technology, pushing it and getting it developed for the benefit of the Commonwealth.

C4I

The C4I project's purpose is to monitor activity along the Erie Bay shoreline by using a new remote radar surveillance technology. In partnership with Penn State Erie, the Erie Port Authority and the Erie County 911 Center, the project is currently in a beta testing phase. The technology has great promise and potential for the entire Great Lakes region.

“We have assisted with the development of over 40 new information technology projects.”



“We have assisted 3,690 companies through our programs and projects.”

WHO WE ARE

Established in 2002, The Center for eBusiness and Advanced Information Technology (eBizITPA) has aimed to raise the level of awareness, adoption and advancement of information technology and supply chain solutions throughout the state of Pennsylvania.

OUR MISSION

To assist Pennsylvania businesses and organizations with understanding, using and developing information technologies to grow the economy by:

- Providing resources to enable company formation and growth
- Developing technology talent and expertise
- Facilitating collaborative efforts to stimulate innovation



BUSINESS & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

IT KickStart

IT KickStart was created to assist regional businesses with IT implementation projects ranging from basic websites to major ERP implementations with medium sized manufacturers, and it's here we see our greatest impact. These companies realize significant cost savings by automating processes and creating new jobs to support their new information technology systems. EBizITPA offers financial assistance for these IT implementations through reimbursement grants. Our knowledgeable staff can also help bridge the gap between marketing and information technology by providing access to our Business Services Technology Locator, allowing companies to source the right type of IT provider for their local IT project. Our technology locator service is widely used and is searchable through search engines.

Technology Apprentice Program

In our Technology Apprentice Program, we help build information technology capacity for regional businesses with recent college graduates, making this program extremely unique. eBizITPA matches companies with graduates for a six month apprentice program in one of four areas: e-Marketing, Management Information System (MIS), Computer Engineering and Business Intelligence. This program has a double impact in that it helps companies meet a need since they may not have technical staff to service their information technology requirements, while also offering real world experience for the graduates with salary and benefits. Through our Technology Apprentice Program, we've seen a job placement rate of over 80 percent after the apprenticeship ends, making the impact of this program significant to the business community.

eLearning Management System

eBizITPA will soon be offering the eBizeLearner as a platform for businesses and other organizations to conduct online training with employees as both a cost savings and a convenience measure, since travel and offsite training courses can be avoided. As we as a nation convert to learning to do things online, eBizITPA continues to foster education opportunities through information technology advancements such as eBizeLearner. This initiative will be piloted with IT fundamentals, e-marketing and RFID courses.



eMarketing Learning Center

The eMarketing Learning Center (eMLC) was formally established in July 2008 to educate and foster professional development in online marketing through top of the line, researched based, unbiased curriculum. The eMLC currently offers four courses: email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), paid search and an executive's guide to the online channel. With the Internet being the primary source of information for shoppers, finding ways to attract an audience and captivate them through this channel is extremely cost effective and measurable for businesses. The eMLC helps businesses and organizations, as well as job seekers gain competitive advantage and remain valuable in today's economy and beyond.



Special Projects

Pennsylvania STEM Initiative

The Pennsylvania STEM initiative promotes primary and secondary education in the fields of science, information technology, engineering and math to support the state's competitiveness in these areas. eBizITPA encourages this program and provides assistance for continued efforts.

Intelligence Technologist Initiative

The Mercyhurst College Institute for Intelligence Studies (MCIIS), the Boys and Girls Club of Erie and the Erie School District have partnered in a program aimed at empowering youth in the field of intelligence studies. This initiative targets disadvantaged students who may not be college bound, but may be suited for supportive careers in the intelligence field. eBizITPA provides both guidance and financial support for this progressive program.

FIRST Robotics Team

The purpose of this program is to inspire high school students to become science and information technology leaders through mentorship programs that foster self-confidence and innovation. eBizITPA locally supports Harborcreek High School in this endeavor.

EBIZITPA'S FINANCIAL REPORT

Our Funding

Primarily funded by the Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority (BFTDA) for short-term initiatives with an initial limited scope of Northwest Pennsylvania, we find our programs and services have been so successful, they continue to expand beyond Northwest Pennsylvania to encompass the entire Commonwealth. Fiscal resources under our current funding levels are not adequate to meet this demand, so we must take an aggressive approach to identifying and securing funding beyond BFTDA and other state funding sources to support our key initiatives.

Our Future

As we look to the remainder of 2009 and beyond, eBizITPA will strive towards our goal of helping Pennsylvania businesses and organizations grow by acting as the catalyst for the advancement of information technology and by adapting our core programs as market needs demand. Our grant programs are also an example of how eBizITPA can incite leveraged investment throughout the business cycle, spurring further investment into information technology.

Our Impacts to Date

- 647 new jobs created
- Over \$108 million dollars in new revenues reported
- Assisted 3,690 companies through our programs and projects
- Assisted with the development of over 40 new information technology-based products
- Assisted companies in 66 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties
- 80% permanent hire rate on Technology Apprentice Program graduates

Businesses participating in an eMarketing Learning Center offering have realized the following results:

- 86% increased their knowledge and improved skills in digital marketing
- 43% increased revenue as a result of online marketing
- 71% gained new customers as a result of online marketing
- 43% found new markets as a result of the online channel

How Our Funding Is Utilized

