Presentation to Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology

Business ServiCenter Business Link North Carolina

Annette Ragan & Briles Johnson January 27, 2009

www.blnc.gov

www.nccommerce.com/en



BusinessServiCenter

- July 2004 One-stop portal for new & existing businesses (all sizes & all industry sectors)
- Access extensive network of services, programs & resources provided by the State of North Carolina
- Statewide Toll free 1-800-228-8443



ServiCenterStaff

 Seven Business Consultants & a Small Business Ombudsman

 Professional, knowledgeable, experienced Business Consultants who are the experts in the State

Spanish & Mandarin Chinese



BusinessesServed

 2008 – Served 25,600 businesses & entrepreneurs statewide

Average of 100 - 125 calls per day



NewBusinesses -

Where do you go if you needhelp with...

- Starting a new business?
- Licensing & permitting requirements?
- Writing a business plan?
- Start-up financing?
- Forming a business structure?
- Registering your business name?
- Taxes, insurance & employer information?



ExistingBusinesses -

Where do you go if you needhelp with...

- Financing options?
- Training for employees?
- Government contracting local, state, federal, military?
- Exporting?
- Market research & analysis?
- New product development?



"Gateway" forInformation

- Assistance is tailored to fit the individual needs of each business
- Customization of state license information pertinent to individual business concept
- 2004 Business License Information Office function moved to Commerce
- NC Directory of Business Licenses & Permits

http://www.nccommerce.com/en/BusinessServices/StartYourBusiness/BusinessLicensesPermits/



"Gateway" continued...

State License Information:

 Over 700 different state business licenses/certifications/permits in NC

16 State agencies

57 Occupational licensing boards



ServingBusinesses Electronically

- Business ServiCenter website evolved from questions received from entrepreneurs & business owners
- Wealth of information, forms, searchable State License Directory, links to partners websites direct to support programs



QuickAnswers online:

 Convenient for businesses & entrepreneurs who want to get answers & information online at any time from anywhere in the world

 ServiCenter Consultants answer more in-depth and technical questions from businesses during normal business hours



CriticalTiming

- Economic recession business are struggling to keep their doors open
- Need help in many areas to survive and prevent increase in job losses
- Imperative that we get the word out to businesses that there is help available to them



BusinessLink NorthCarolina bl nc

• In 2008, Commerce invited the top leaders in 11 statewide, state-funded organizations to build a "seamless delivery system" of services for NC businesses named **blinc**





- Formal network of statewide, state-funded business service providers
- Strong collaborative that is unprecedented by other states
- Partners fully engaged in developing the branding & marketing of network program





- NC Dept. of Commerce
- NC Community Colleges
 - Customized Training Programs
 - Small Business Center Network
- UNC System
- Small Business & Technology
 Development Center
- University Business/Entrepreneurship Programs
- NC State University's Industrial Extension Service

- NC Rural Center
- Employment Security
- Commission of NC
- NC Institute of Minority Economic Development
- NC Department of Agriculture
- NC Department of Revenue
- NC Secretary of State
- NC Biotechnology Center





- Commerce is the convener and provides marketing support
- Utilizing the infrastructure of the Business ServiCenter 1-800-228-8443 number & new web portal <u>www.blnc.gov</u>
- Business ServiCenter is the "front door" to the bl nc Network



TrainingMeetings

- Inter-agency cross training with partners
- 3 Sessions across the State > 150 attendees
- Lively & effective "speed-dating" format
- Valuable networking great enthusiasm



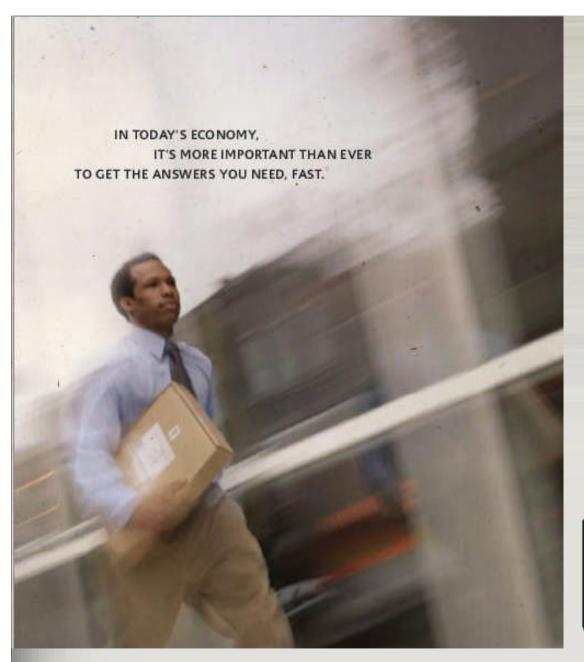
MarketResearch



- Easy to remember
- Contemporary
- Memorable Web address
- Doesn't look like 'government'







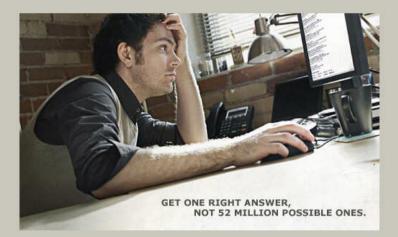
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Business Link North Carolina



Get Answers in a BLNC:

Search



Welcome to Business Link North Carolina!

Welcome to Business Link North Carolina! BLNC, or "blink," is your starting point to access an extensive network of experts who can help your business succeed, whether your company is on the Fortune 500 list - or in its start-up phase. Most services, provided by statewide, state-supported agencies, are available free of charge; others such as workshops and courses may require a small fee.

To access services in North Carolina, you can:

- Call BLNC toll-free, 1-800-228-8443, Monday-Friday, 8
 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time, to talk with one of our
 business consultants;
- · Check out the information and links on this site; or
- . Send us an email at info@blnc.gov.

What's New

Begin the New Year with Six Sigma

Three Truisms About Business Today

Featured Partner



North Carolina's leading resource for rural people and communities.

BLNC Website

This network of experts is a service of the State of North Carolina





Next Steps

- Market via print & radio
- Continue refining & expanding Web site
- Sustain momentum
- E-Newsletters, webinars, calendar of events
- Grow relationships with partners



Websites:

www.nccommerce.com

www.blnc.gov

1-800-228-8443





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