

# **Presentation to Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology**

## **Business ServiCenter Business Link North Carolina**

Annette Ragan & Briles Johnson

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[www.blnc.gov](http://www.blnc.gov)

[www.nccommerce.com/en](http://www.nccommerce.com/en)

# BusinessServCenter

- 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

# New Businesses –

Where do you go if you need help 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?

# Existing Businesses –

Where do you go if you need help with...

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

# “Gateway” for Information

- 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



# Serving Businesses 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



- 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 



- ***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



# Partners

- 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 [www.blnc.gov](http://www.blnc.gov)
- Business ServiCenter is the “front door” to the **blnc** Network

Business Link North Carolina

# Training Meetings

- 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'

IDEAS THAT CAN'T WAIT FOR REGULAR PAPER  
ARE QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY QUESTIONS  
THAT CAN'T WAIT FOR ANSWERS.



bl<sup>inc</sup>

Business Link North Carolina

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IN TODAY'S ECONOMY,  
IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER  
TO GET THE ANSWERS YOU NEED, FAST.



bl<sup>nc</sup>™

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Business Link North Carolina

*The fastest way to help your business*

Business Planning

Entrepreneurship Education

Financing & Capital

Government Contracting

Growing an Existing Business

Industry Sector Resources

International Business & Exporting

Licensing & Permitting

Minority Programs

Sales & Marketing

Starting a New Business

Tax Issues

University Technology  
Transfer / Outreach

Workforce Development

About Us

1-800-228-8443

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

Get Answers in a BLNC:

Search



GET ONE RIGHT ANSWER,  
NOT 52 MILLION POSSIBLE ONES.

## 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](mailto: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







## 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](http://www.nccommerce.com)

[www.blnc.gov](http://www.blnc.gov)

1-800-228-8443



## MoreInformation:

- Annette Ragan, Commerce - 715-2850  
[aragan@nccommerce.com](mailto:aragan@nccommerce.com)
- Briles Johnson, Commerce - 715-2998  
[bjohnson@nccommerce.com](mailto:bjohnson@nccommerce.com)