

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Santa Barbara City College

Project Title: Web Essentials for Business, Outsource, Hire or Train?

Project Type: Sustainable Adoption

Executive Summary

Web Essentials is program to accelerate small business adoption of broadband Web applications for marketing, customer service, productivity and collaboration. The project website questionnaire will help businesses select new cost effective media applications, dynamically provide guidance on outsourcing, hiring or training (incumbent workers), and provide custom documentation to acquire the appropriate resource (i.e. statements of work, job requisitions or training guidance).

The opportunity:

Broadband service adoption rates among small and medium businesses will increase when cost effective and revenue-increasing applications are adopted by owners and business managers.

These applications include: Web 2.0; new media applications (YouTube, Amazon, Wikipedia, Social media tools like Twitter, Facebook and Linked-In); search engine optimization (SEO) for company websites; on-line videos; customer generated information and reviews; blogs and video blogs. Virtual 3D world technologies are in use for collaboration, product demonstrations and meetings while serious games are useful for training and marketing. Whether on a computer or mobile device (I-Phone apps) these applications are evolving rapidly and are essential to competitive business.

The problem:

Although essential broadband intensive applications exist, small and medium business are not adopting as rapidly as large enterprise level businesses or foreign competition. Without the benefit of expensive consulting teams or advanced IT departments they must face a long learning curve, hire local consultant or do nothing.

91% of Business to Business transactions, like consumer facing transactions, occur as a result of internet web searches (ThomasNet/Google Survey 2007), while only half of businesses believe that their website

is the marketing tool it needs to be. Businesses that do not actively build their presence and interact with their customers with new essential Web applications can be described as having painted their storefront windows black on Main Street.

The Solution:

The innovative approach of Web Essentials, is that we provide small and medium businesses with expansive enterprise level decision support and analysis tools to decide about and implement Web 2.0 applications via the project website at no cost to them. While other proposals may focus on training, education or hands-on access, this proposal recognizes that the small or medium business owner or manager hasn't the time to undertake the extensive training necessary to become individually competent in these critical new technologies.

Instead, the owner/manager needs to make effective decisions on outsourcing, hiring or training of staff that meets the need of the business in an accelerated market sensitive manner. This program provides an on-line gap analysis of needs, an interactive decision tree to guide a selection of solutions, i.e. outsource, hire or train, and an online tool to develop the actual customized documents for action including; Statement of Work for outsourcing, the Job Requisition and Job Description of hiring or the curriculum list for internal training. These documents are formatted in such a manner as to be automatically transferable to major job boards, freelance sites for immediate posting.

To market this support service to business, alliances are in development with the California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce and will be developed with other California statewide 501c6 non-profit business support organizations. In addition to on-line and traditional marketing, Lunch & Learn events and guest speaker opportunities will be arranged with these participating organizations. Speakers will be selected from the students that complete eligible Web 2.0 applications courses from California higher education institutions.

The areas or population targets to be served, include all the 3.4 M small businesses in California of which 750,000 represent 99% of the state's employers and 52% of the private sector workforce creating 87% of the new jobs each year (SBA: Small Business profile, Pub 2008). The initial launch is planned for the California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce followed by the California Chambers of Commerce. At an assumed 10% penetration rate, the number of California businesses with employees to be assisted during a two-year period would be 75,000.

Qualifications of the Applicant:

Steve Wright is Statewide Director of the Multimedia & Entertainment Initiative, MEI, of the office of Economic & Workforce Development, EWD, of the California Community Colleges. The MEI Initiative and the office of Economic & Workforce Development have a 10-year history of leading innovative emerging technology training programs with a vast network of public and private advisory staff throughout California.

Steve Wright, MBA, MS Telecommunication, and Project Management Professional is a 23 year veteran of product development with Verizon with a background of accomplishments in innovative economic development projects involving entrepreneurship, internet and broadband applications. As a veteran Proposal Team Leader for multimillion-dollar corporate projects and bids, Steve is an expert in enterprise level decision support tools and analysis for outsourcing, hiring or training for business growth.

Jobs to be Saved or Created:

Based upon the penetration forecast of 75,000 employers in California participation, it is minimally expected that 25% of them would outsource, hire or train as a consequence. Based upon web metrics and survey records we intend to verify over 20,000 jobs created or saved. Nationwide results could be much higher.

Overall cost of the Project:

While scalable, the Project budget is \$600K over two years. \$100K is match and \$500K is requested. Since the majority of the cost is for development, the project is sustainable in the future by a combination of membership and sponsor fees.