Executive Summary: Web Essentials 4 Business or WEB4 is a statewide California outreach project of the California Economic & Workforce Development program hosted by Santa Barbara City College. PROBLEM: Three million California small and medium businesses are struggling to survive a tough economy while facing increased competition through the internet by out of state and international vendors. Today 91% of Business-to-Business transactions occur as a result of internet web searches (ThomasNet/Google Survey 2007), while only half of businesses believe their website is the marketing tool it needs to be to compete. Business owners need to know how to select the best internet applications for their business and how to select the best method to implement them. In so doing, they will increase broadband adoption, increase jobs and revenue. Business relevant internet applications include: search engine optimization (SEO) for company websites, on-line transactions, on-line videos, customer generated information and reviews, blogs and video blogs. Virtual 3D technologies are used for collaboration, product demonstrations and meetings while serious games are increasingly useful in training, team simulations and marketing. Whether on a computer or mobile device (I-Phone apps) these applications are evolving rapidly and are essential to competitive business. Also, Web 2.0 and Social media tools like Twitter, Facebook and Linked-In, should be utilized. But, the small and medium business owner faces challenges, just to name a few: - Need to compete and have a presence on the internet to survive. - Lack of time to personally learn or train on new internet applications. - Unaware of what applications make sense for their business. - Little time or money to make a mistake. - Not likely to be on the internet to read and follow trends. - Lack of funds to compete with Fortune 50 companies that pay savvy consultants. - Limited or no IT or Marketing departments with knowledge in this new area. - What is needed is accurate, timely, custom analysis of their specific needs, as well as criteria, metrics and project descriptions to contract, hire or to train internal staff. ADDRESSING THE NEED: Utilizing our 110 California Community College campuses and on-line WEB4 website we will provide (in English and in Spanish): 1) 550 In person Outreach presentations to business organizations with 100+ trained students from our 110 campuses throughout California. 2) An on-line custom new-media gap analysis diagnostic tool to help businesses identify the specific internet applications that they need. 3) A matrix to help businesses determine whether to outsource the work, hire an employee for a full time job, or train an incumbent worker. 4) A direct on-line access to outsourcing statements of work, job descriptions, and regional training. 5) A direct link to popular job and freelance internet sites for immediate posting of job or contract opportunities. 6) A method to capture business user information and results metrics, build a user community for surveys and feedback to further enhance the support available. Following the initial WEB4 session, the business owner can begin to receive applications and bids to stimulate the next steps.
toward adoption. The on-line WEB4 community and archived advisory material will help them through the remaining steps. AREAS OR POPULATION TARGETS TO BE SERVED Marketing and 550 presentations will target all areas of the state of California in English and Spanish. Areas 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, small bus = < 500 employees). QUALIFICATIONS OF THE APPLICANT Steve Wright is experienced in marketing business adoption of new technologies from his 23 years with Verizon in Market Development leading innovative economic development projects involving internet and broadband applications. Steve holds an MBA, MS Telecommunication, and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). Steve has designed the WEB4 project and will directly manage and monitor the development and outcomes of this project. JOBS TO BE SAVED OR CREATED Based upon a modest penetration forecast of 200,000 employers (out of 3.4M in CA) it is minimally forecast that 10% of them will 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 due to WEB4. Nationwide results could be much higher. OVERALL COST OF THE PROJECT The WEB4 Project budget is $1,144,000 over two years. $248,008 is match (i.e. 20.3%) and $896,000 is requested. Since the majority of the cost is for initial development, the post grant project sustainability cost is low and can be supported by a combination of membership and sponsor fees.