



Business Success Program

Retention & Expansion Program

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Retention/Expansion Program Defined

The number one priority of The EG's Economic Development Division is the *Business Success Program*, which is specifically used to retain and expand Jackson County businesses. Each year, EG staff from the Economic Development Division calls on about 100 businesses, typically accompanied by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and when appropriate a representative from the City of Jackson's Community Development Department. Most of these calls are with area manufacturers, but some of them are to high tech companies or other targeted industries. All of the manufacturing employers with 100 or more employees are visited annually.

Focus of the Program

The Retention/Expansion visit is a face-to-face meeting with the senior management of local companies. During these visits we express the community's appreciation that the company continues to provide jobs and invest in Jackson County. Our conversation also allows us to feel the pulse of the business, determining if their sales and employment numbers are steady, increasing, or decreasing from the previous year's visit. We also ask if the company is planning any investment or job creation in the next year. At these meetings, we identify threats and opportunities, and offer assistance, utilizing the many tools and partner organization's services to assist the company.

Tools Used in Providing Customized Solutions:

- As an assessment tool, we offer free of charge, a Performance Benchmarking Service that is available through the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center which compares companies across over 80 metrics collected from more than 4,500 manufacturing plants across North America
- Using the BEST model from South Central Michigan Works! we provide companies with the ability to analyze their workforce development needs and design and implement a solution using a variety of public funding sources for training
- Assist with labor/management issues through SCMW! and Michigan State University's School of Labor and Management Relations
- Analyze plant layout for inefficiencies with free "waste walkthroughs" through the Jackson Area Manufacturer's Association (JAMA) and its partnerships with MMTC and other Lean Manufacturing experts
- Assist companies with Technology Transfer from area universities through services offered by JAMA

- Assist companies with Business Growth and Diversification Planning programs for manufacturing companies looking to expand in their current markets or to enter new ones via JAMA in partnership with MMTC, Industrial Vision and Ward & Associates
- Assist companies in securing government contracts through The EG based Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)
- Expand export capabilities of a company thru PTAC
- Provide assistance with writing SBIR grants, preparing venture capital presentations and marketing strategies through the Small Business and Technology Development Center
- Provide free market research for area companies, utilizing Grand Valley State University and the University of Texas/San Antonio through SBTDC
- Act as a Business Ombudsman for assistance in dealing with state agencies through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
- Lend support and assistance when dealing with local governmental and regulatory entities
- Assist with Real and Personal Property tax abatements using Public Act 198, 328 and Renaissance Zones
- Provide low interest financing assistance through the Economic Development Corporation using the revolving loan fund and tax-exempt Industrial Development Rehabilitation Bonds
- Assist with identifying alternate locations for companies that are landlocked, tenants or have outgrown their current facilities through a web-based database of available buildings and property
- Assist with Brownfield issues and funding for environmental assessments for companies considering the redevelopment of a vacant or underutilized property with environmental contamination or the threat of environmental contamination through the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA)
- Assist companies in securing Brownfield tax credits for the redevelopment of Brownfield properties through the BRA
- Provide access to the Executive Pulse software system which aggregates and analyzes data from the Retention/Expansion calls made annually by EG staff.
- Integrate Technology Transfer Program designed to acquire rights from universities to develop and market new products that come out of university research programs. This program is based on a community technology transfer model being developed jointly by The EG, JAMA, Purdue University and Dow Automotive