

A Proven Approach to Help Businesses Survive and Grow

The Business Resource Network (BRN) is a unique approach to help businesses survive and grow. It works closely with them to identify and access a host of business services with as little red tape as possible. The BRN operates in Trumbull, Mahoning and Columbiana Counties.

A collaboration of chambers of commerce, workforce and economic development organizations, universities, career & technical centers, state and local government agencies, the BRN partnership targets businesses with growth potential as well as those facing challenges. It then conducts in-depth interviews with the owners and managers of the businesses.

After learning a business's goals and the obstacles it may be facing, BRN Partners present the business with a package of suggested incentives, technical assistance, training and other programs designed specifically for that business.

This all happens through a single point of contact—the BRN Account Executive—assuring tight coordination of services and minimal bureaucracy. There is no charge for the interview and proposal and many services are available at no cost.

Once the business chooses the programs and services it wants to pursue, the BRN Account Executive continues to work with the business and participating BRN Partners over time to deliver quality services and identify new ways to assist the business.



Michael Myhal shows a TMI-produced part to ITAC's Mousa Kassis.

BRN is TMI's go-to resource

With new products in the pipeline and overall growth his aim, Michael Myhal, TMI president considers the Business Resource Network a great resource. He has been working with his BRN account executive since January 2013. "With the awareness the BRN has given me, when I need something I know where to go," Myhal said.

One of the places that Myhal has gone is to the International Trade Assistance Center (ITAC) at Youngstown State University that is headed by Mousa Kassis. The company that produces highly engineered custom rubber and plastic products has started shipping to Sweden a new plastic product that is still under wraps. Michael recently returned from a fact-finding trip to Austria aimed at seeking out more export markets for TMI's products. ITAC assisted him in identifying Austrian companies to contact.

The company was started in Warren by Michael's father in 1984 and relocated to its current location in Youngstown in 2000. Its products are used in highly specialized machinery and aircraft. In the past year, the company has added plastic products to its specialized rubber products and the next step, according to Michael, is to move into the manufacture of total engineered systems.

Michael is so pleased with the services the BRN offers that he has referred other companies to the BRN.



Matt Morell holds an extruded aluminum part.

Zarbana sees BRN as growth partner

For five of the ten years Zarbana Industries has been in business, the Business Resource Network (BRN) has been there. “It (the BRN) is a natural partner to help us grow,” said Matt Morell, Extrusion/Human Resource Manager. The relationship started with Tom Morell, president and Matt’s father, and then passed to Matt three years ago. The precision quality aluminum extruder has used BRN partners to find workers, obtain training funds and get grants for safety.

The other BRN benefit that Matt cites is networking. “I can’t stress enough how invaluable that is,” he said. Also through the BRN, Matt learned about and is currently enrolled in the Youngstown State University/Small Business Administration’s Emerging Leaders Program. Matt credits that program with helping him meet other young local business leaders and learn how other business people, companies and industries deal with many of the situations he too faces.

BRN Partners

Choffin Career & Technical Center
City of Warren
City of Youngstown
Columbiana County Career & Technical Center
Columbiana County Commissioners
Columbiana County Development Department
Compass Family & Community Services
Congressman Bill Johnson’s Office, Ohio 6th District
Congressman Tim Ryan’s Office, Ohio 13th District
Eastern Gateway Community College
Eastgate Regional Council of Governments
Kent State University - Trumbull
MAGNET (Manufacturing Advocacy & Growth Network)
Mahoning & Columbiana Training Association
Mahoning County Career & Technical Center
Mahoning County Commissioners
Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation
Mahoning Valley Procurement Technical Assistance Center
MYCAP (Mahoning-Youngstown Community Action Partnership)

ODJFS Veterans Services
ODOT Jobs & Commerce
Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Ohio Development Services Agency
Ohio Governor’s Office
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce
SCORE (Counselors to America’s Small Business)
Small Business Development Center at Youngstown State University
Small Business Development Center at Kent State
Tuscarawas
Southern Columbiana County Regional Chamber of Commerce
Sustainable Opportunity Development Center
Trumbull Career & Technical Center
Trumbull County Commissioners
Trumbull County Department of Job and Family Services
U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown’s Office
West Central Job Partnership
Western Reserve Port Authority
Youngstown State University
Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber

For Program Year 2014 (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015), the BRN in Trumbull, Mahoning and Columbiana Counties conducted 84 company interviews and delivered 85 proposals. Leveraged resources during that period for the three counties totaled \$3.4 million.