

An update on the workings, challenges, opportunities and successes of The Business Resource Network

+ The BRN: Delivering Business Services that Work

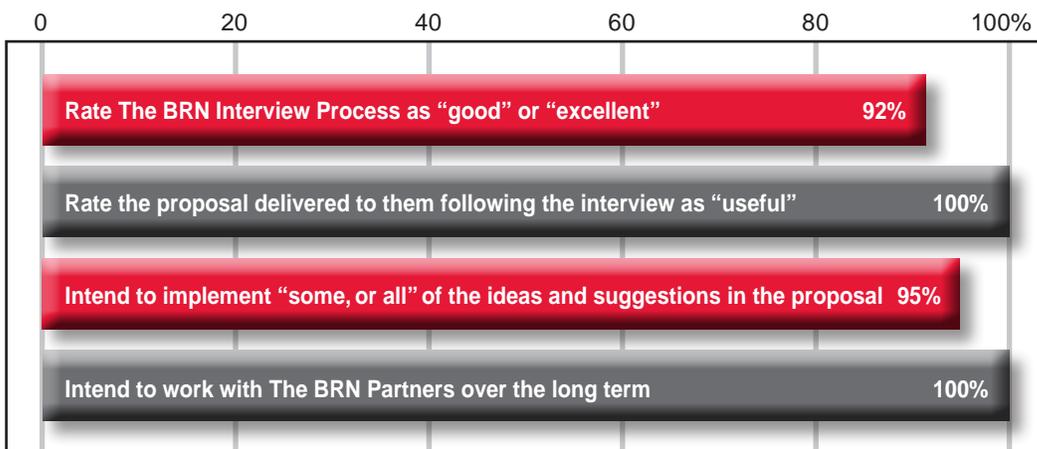
By now, The Business Resource Network has been in motion long enough to make some assessments of how well this strategic partnership is doing its job. And that job, simply put, is to put the power of our network of 38 partner organizations to work reaching out to businesses in the region, learning what their key challenges and opportunities are, coming back to them with actionable ideas to help them survive and grow, and then working with them over time to effectively deliver the financial incentives, training, technical assistance and consulting help – mostly

without cost to the business – in a business-friendly way.

Good intentions matter, but the most important way to judge whether The Business Resource Network is actually doing what we intend it to do is to get feedback from the businesses we serve. To best determine this, we conduct an ongoing survey of the business leaders that we interviewed and work with to get their sense of how well The Business Resource Network approach to delivering business services works for them.

Here are the results so far:

Percent of business leaders participating in The Business Resource Network who...



Source: Ongoing phone and internet survey results of business leaders who participate in The Business Resource Network interview process.

+ The BRN Model

Powerful partnerships. Stronger businesses.

The Business Resource Network is a strategic alliance that's here to help businesses in the region survive, thrive and keep and create jobs through an unparalleled strategic and collaborative approach to helping them meet their challenges and profit from their opportunities.

The goal is to bring together the region's economic development, governmental, workforce, academic and other organizations that offer some sort of program or service for businesses – financial incentives, training, technical assistance, etc. We then package, deliver and leverage those programs and services to the businesses without red tape, bureaucracies, service silos or hassles. The BRN model is "one stop shopping" for businesses.

The process starts with a systematic interview to learn all we can about the business' priorities and goals. Based on that interview, the Partners of The Business Resource Network deliver a proposal with their best ideas. We then work with the business over time to carry out the work outlined in the proposal and identify ongoing ways to be of assistance.

+ BRN Partners

This growing list of Business Resource Network Partners is committed to working collaboratively to help **Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull County** businesses succeed and grow.

- Area Health Education Network
- Burdman Group Inc.
- Choffin Career & Technical Center
- City of Warren
- City of Youngstown
- Columbiana County Board of Commissioners
- Columbiana County Career & Technical Center
- Columbiana County Office of Economic Development

- Congressman Charles Wilson
- Congressman Tim Ryan
- Eastgate Regional Council of Governments
- East Liverpool Chamber of Commerce
- Family Recovery Center
- Kent State University Salem & East Liverpool Campus
- Kent State University Trumbull Campus
- Main Street Warren
- Mahoning & Columbiana Training Association
- Mahoning County Career & Technical Center
- Mahoning County Department of Job & Family Services
- Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation
- NEO HealthForce
- Ohio Apprenticeship
- Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation

- Ohio Department of Development – Region 10
- Ohio Department of Development – Region 12
- Ohio Rehabilitation Services
- Ohio Treasurer of State
- Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 396
- REACH
- Saint Clair Township Area Chamber of Commerce
- Salem Area Chamber of Commerce
- SCORE
- The Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network
- The Regional Chamber
- Trumbull Career & Technical Center
- Trumbull County Department of Job & Family Services
- Village of Lowellville
- Youngstown State University



Four real-world examples of local companies the Business Resource Network Partners worked with to identify and solve challenges and to explore new opportunities for growth

Alloy Machining and Fabricating, Inc., Columbiana

Edward Keating, *President of Alloy Machining and Fabricating, Inc.*

Business Resource Network Account Executives Gene Babik and Joseph Matasek have been working with Edward Keating of Alloy Machining and Fabricating for the past year, following a BRN interview with him. Ed expressed his wish to create a web site, and through the BRN network, BRN partner Mahoning County Career and Technical Center offered to assist. MCCTC arranged for the company to take advantage of their Capstone program and a student in MCCTC's Capstone program designed the company's web site.

The company also was seeking working capital, and the BRN connected it with the Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation, who came through with the necessary funding.

Finally, Alloy was looking to hire a machinist, and the Columbiana County One-Stop assisted it in filling that position. Ed can't say enough about his BRN Account Executives: *"Gene and Joe are fantastic – they are working really hard out there doing the most they can for area businesses. The BRN has absolutely been an asset to our company."*

Jasar Recycling, East Palestine

Glen Dowd, *Chief Operating Officer of Jasar Recycling*

Jasar Recycling has been in business since 1998, and its Business Resource Network interview marked the first time, according to Glen Dowd, COO, that anyone approached the business with no motive other than to assist them.

"Normally," explained Glen, *"businesses have to seek the help for themselves – it's really nice when the help comes to you."* BRN Manager Gene Babik, and Account Executive-Manufacturing, Joe Matasek, went to work helping Jasar obtain a state-required water/run-off EPA permit, necessary for operating the new processing equipment. The permitting process was essentially at a standstill when the BRN alerted various partners, who got involved and were able to get the permit back on track.

"The BRN called in some heavyweights," Glen said, *"and the permit is well underway, thanks in large part to BRN efforts."* The BRN also connected Jasar with contacts to meet recruitment needs, and will soon assist the company with on-the-job training. Glen stated, *"I can't speak highly enough about Gene and Joe and the BRN. They are incredibly proactive. They care, and it's evident. The BRN provided us with tools we need for success."*

Village Quality Solutions, North Jackson

Jeff Liber, *CEO of Village Quality Solutions*

Dimitri Liogas learned a lot about Village Quality Solutions in the course of his Business Resource Network interview with CEO, Jeff Liber.

Village Quality Solutions had long ties with the automotive industry. With automotive manufacturers facing major retrenchment, the time was right to explore new markets and find new opportunities.

According to Dimitri, who served as The BRN Account Executive with Village Quality Solutions as part of his job with the Trumbull County One-Stop: *"During our interview, Jeff Liber was clear. It was time for Village Quality Solutions to look at its business model and marketing plan to identify and build new markets, become more efficient and lean and invest in some new equipment and training that could open some new doors."*

The BRN relationship continues because the initial help that Dimitri and The BRN Partners have been able to offer to Jeff and Village Quality Solutions has been smart and strategic. So far, the alliance between Village Quality Solutions and the Business Resource Network has resulted in a marketing assistance, a Targeted Industry Training Grant, help updating its quality control processes and a relationship with another regional company that's become a business collaborator.

"I can't say enough good things about how much help Dimitri and the other BRN Partners... have been to our company. They and the program have proven to be a great asset to us...."

Jeff Liber, CEO of Village Quality Solutions

According to Liber: *"I can't say enough good things about how much help Dimitri and the other BRN Partners – like Marie Dabelko at Kent State University Trumbull – have been to our company. They and the program have proven to be a great asset to us. I now call them first. The interview process was great and offered me plenty of opportunity to share ideas and outline our goals in confidence."*

As Dimitri sees it: *"This is a partnership that's making things happen and will hold up over time. It's a clear example of the power of strategic partnerships."*



Four real-world examples of local companies the Business Resource Network Partners worked with to identify and solve challenges and to explore new opportunities for growth

Humility of Mary Health Partners, Youngstown

Molly Seals, Senior Vice President, Human Resources

Attracting, training and retaining health care professionals like nurses, pharmacist and physical therapists is a big challenge across the country. Tracking the challenges of recruitment, time to train, and professional development can mean the difference between getting and keeping the best health care workers or losing them to other communities and organizations. Humility of Mary Health Partners approached The Business Resource Network Partners through the NEO HealthForce initiative to identify solutions to build and strengthen its workforce.

Following the BRN interview with Gina Pastella, NEO HealthForce Coordinator, who served as the BRN Account Executive on the project, and Christine Bok, Healthcare Business Services Representative for the Mahoning County One-Stop, BRN Partners outlined a series of recommendations and steps to help Humility of Mary get and keep the people they need.

Gina says, *“HMHP has always been a forward thinking employer, and under the direction of Molly Seals, understands the value of community collaboration. We are happy that through the BRN process, we’ve been able to make an impact, especially in the area of targeted recruitment services.”*

Christine states, *“From the start, there has been open communication between HMHP’s staff and our staff, and a willingness on both sides to work together. Anytime HMHP needs something, they call us and they know that the Business Resource Network will be there with a variety of solutions to fit their business needs.”*

The solutions Gina and Christine and The BRN Partners developed and continue to provide have helped Humility of Mary Health Partners to develop and use new technology-based recruiting tools and methods, a specially-designed healthcare apprenticeship program, strategic workforce planning and a host of other programs and ideas developed to meet the client’s unique needs. The results: Major progress in finding and keeping the right professionals.

“Gina and Christine and their Partners in The Business Resource Network have helped me plan and implement strategies that solve problems and help us meet our long-term goals...”

Molly Seals, Humility of Mary’s Senior Vice President for Human Resources

According to Molly Seals, Humility of Mary’s Senior Vice President for Human Resources: *“Gina and Christine and their Partners in The Business Resource Network have helped us plan and implement strategies that solve problems and help us meet our long-term goals. I will continue to work with the BRN over the long haul as we build our workforce and expand our relationships in the community. I’m very happy with the solutions their collaboration provides.”*

+ Accessing the Network To learn more about The Business Resource Network and our approach to helping your business grow and succeed, click [here](#) to download our brochure, or contact Gene Babik, Manager – Business Resource Network, Mahoning & Columbiana Training Association, at 330/965-1787 ext. 7140 or gene@onestopohio.org.

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