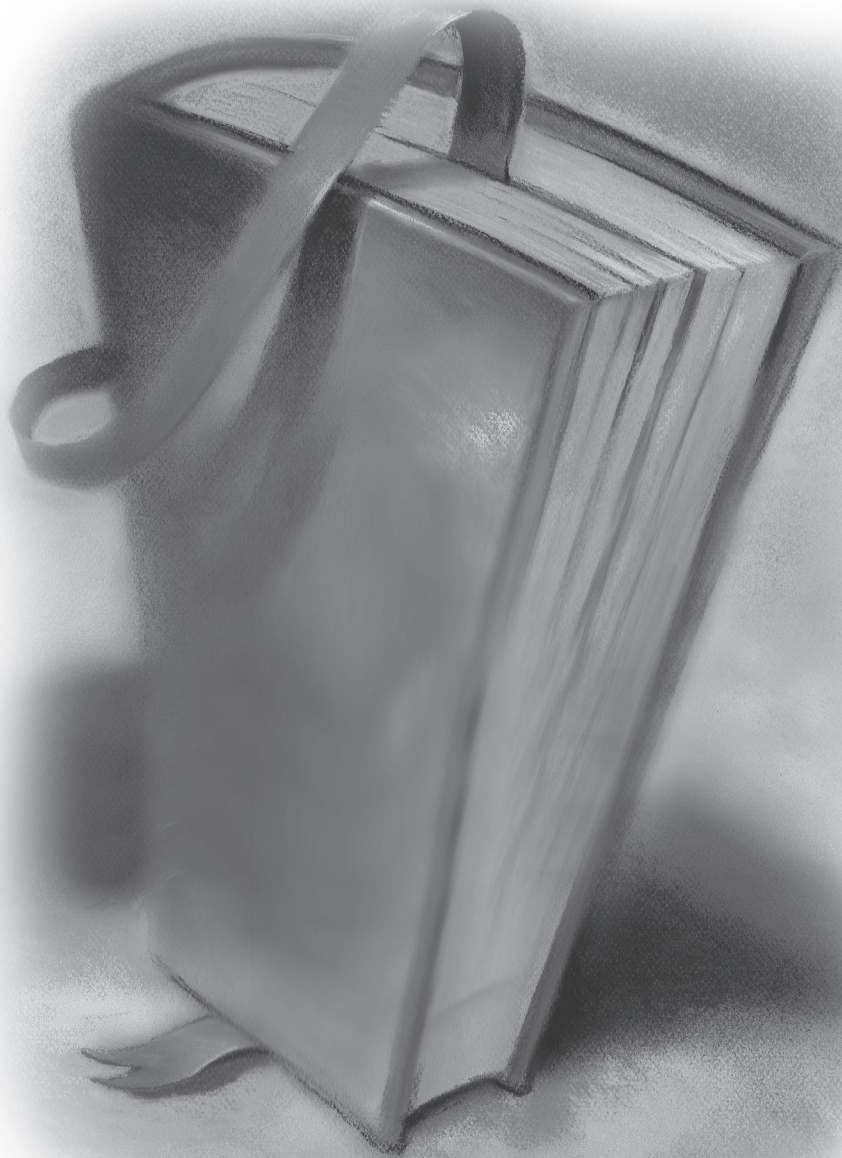


INTRODUCTION



Highlights

NxLevel® History.....	PAGE II
Other NxLevel® Training Programs.....	PAGE III
NxLevel® Micro-Entrepreneur Program	PAGE III
About the Authors	PAGE III
Project Management.....	PAGE IV
Layout and Design	PAGE IV

What is the NxLevel® Training Network?

The NxLevel® Training Network, housed at the University of Colorado at Denver, is a group of organizations engaged in entrepreneurial training, including Small Business Development Centers, Chambers

of Commerce, business incubators, Councils and Associations of Government, Private Industry Councils, Planning Districts, Community Development Corporations, USDA agencies, Native American Groups, SBA funded training organizations, Community Development Financial Institutions and loan funds and others. The purpose of the network is to develop the best training curriculums possible, and

to share best practices among network partners, including effective operational, funding and management strategies.

The NxLevel® Training Network is a clearinghouse for many diverse groups involved in various aspects of assisting businesses and promoting community and economic development. The goal of the Network is to share ideas and promote the efficient use of community resources

“
“Only the educated are free.”
—Unattributed
”

INTRODUCTION

through the building of effective community networks, while providing cost-effective training materials and helping to develop training teams.

NxLevel® training programs are designed to be affordable for both the training partner and the participant. Because the U S WEST Foundation agreed to underwrite the cost of the training materials and donate NxLevel® copyright profit back into programs, the cost of these materials is half that of other national entrepreneurial training programs.

The U S WEST Foundation, University of Colorado at Denver and the state sponsoring coalitions have teamed to help entrepreneurs start new businesses and reach the next level of success. We understand that a strong base in small business builds a strong community, which furthers our primary goal of developing better, more viable communities.

NxLevel® History

Your NxLevel® course was made possible by several parties. Primary funding for developing the NxLevel® training programs has been provided by the U S WEST Foundation. This funding allowed the University of Colorado at Denver to create the NxLevel® Training Network, which is housed at the University.

NxLevel® started with the 14 western states that made up U S WEST's operating territory. It is a partnership between the University and various agencies to provide local training. While the University provides oversight and general support for the network, each instructor provides local insight and expertise critical in making this entrepreneurial training a success.

The NxLevel® Training Network was founded in 1996 on the premise that business training classes were instrumental in developing and strengthening the small business base in the communities it serves. This premise has proven sound in over 300 communities in which NxLevel®'s local partners have facilitated training programs. These programs

have trained over 12,000 individuals in 500 classes from January 1996 to August 1999. In these classes, an average of 85% of the enrollees finished the training and 65% completed a business plan.

The impact of trained participants in the community has been profound. For example, follow-up surveys have indicated that for those participants who own a business, sales increased by 27% within a year of graduation and each business tends to, on average, create at least one new job in the community. Further, of those graduates not in business, 40% go on to start new businesses.

As impressive as these statistics are, we continued to improve by listening to the comments and concerns of the participants, educators and state and community sponsors who administer the training. Most felt that the traditional "off the shelf" entrepreneurial books do not contain material specific to their success. They asked for practical material that would cover the issues entrepreneurs face when deciding to either start businesses or grow their existing ones.

We listened to the comments and concerns of the 4,000 individuals and 180 instructors who completed the training and set about to improve our curriculum. First we sought out educators, successful entrepreneurs and individuals who truly were experts in their given fields. Calling on this group, we developed course materials and curriculum based on that collective expertise, and designed courses and additional materials that were considered vital to a small business owner's success. The result was the NxLevel® Business Start-ups Program and the NxLevel® Entrepreneurs Program. The materials are easy to use, conveniently packaged and reflect the practical applications sought and tested by many thousands of participants.

Other NxLevel® entrepreneur training programs:

- “Tilling the Soil of Opportunity” NxLevel® Guide for Agricultural Entrepreneurs
- “Get the Buzz on Biz!” NxLevel® Guide for Enterprising Youth

What about the NxLevel® for Micro-Entrepreneurs Program?

We listened to individuals throughout our network, and found that there was a need for a curriculum that would be easy to understand, but would also introduce participants to the necessary concepts of self-employment.

NxLevel® began by assembling an experienced development team. The team members were all involved in microenterprise training through various groups, including SBA-funded women and minority training organizations, business incubators, microloan funds, Community Development Corporations, and Small Business Development Centers. The goal was to develop a training program that combined the best components of a traditional NxLevel® program (participant text, workbook, and thorough Instructor’s Manual) with elements of successful microenterprise trainings held by groups long involved in this area. Of course, the training would culminate in a written planning document: the NxLevel® Micro-Entrepreneur Business Plan.

The result of this effort is the NxLevel® program **Business Plan Basics: NxLevel® Guide for Micro-Entrepreneurs**.

On behalf of those involved in developing this program, we at the NxLevel® Training Network wish the program participants happy exploring!

Michael Finnerty, President/CED NxLevel® Education Foundation

63 East 11400 South #322

Sandy, Utah 84070

Phone: 801-446-6162 or 800-873-9378

Fax: 800-860-0522

E-mail: mikef@nxlevel.org

<http://www.nxlevel.org>

About the Authors

Business Plan Basics: NxLevel® Guide for Micro-Entrepreneurs was made possible by the efforts of many individuals with business, training, and self-employment backgrounds who have shared their educational and practical experiences. The material is based on the work of more than 20 authors who contributed to the original NxLevel Business Start-Up and Entrepreneur text books.

Editor

Cameron Wold co-founded the NxLevel Training Network. A former commercial banker, his expertise includes entrepreneurial training, welfare transitions, and shared-use commercial kitchens. A graduate of Amherst College, he holds an MBA from the University of Southern California, and is a candidate for a PhD in education at the University of Idaho. He is currently a community resource developer at Boise State University.

Contributing Authors

Christine Confalone

Ohio Women’s Business Resource Network (OWBRN)

Julann Jatzak

Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation

Brandan Kearney

Writer and Editor

INTRODUCTION

Mary Ann McClure

Ohio Women's Business Resource Network
(OWBRN)

Agnes Noonan

Women's Economic Self Sufficiency Team
(WESST)

Donna Pruett

Arkansas Small Business Development
Center

Helen Sumner

Professional Advisory & Strategy Services,
Inc.

Annette Smith Tarver

Cincinnati Business Incubator

Rene Toman

Umpqua Community Development
Corporation

Debbie Trujillo

Imperial Valley Small Business Development
Center

Cameron Wold

Community Development,
Entrepreneurship, and Adult Education
Consultant

Rosann Woods

Marketing Consultant

Project Management**Cameron Wold****Layout & Design****Michele Renée Ledoux**

Fine Artist | Graphic Designer

E-mail: michele@mledoux.com

<http://www.mledoux.com>