



# Using BR&E to Help Downtown Businesses Succeed

Heritage Ohio Annual Conference, Toledo, Ohio

May 10, 2012

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION



# A little about us

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- Background on OSU Extension
- Our past emphasis of work
- Our new positions
  - BR&E as a major emphasis





# Objectives

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- BRE basics (and survey)
- Demonstration of web-based tools and resources
- Five-step process for a Business Success-Driven BRE Program
- Implementation discussion panel
- Special offer
- Contact information

# What is BR&E?

A formal BR&E program is a structured effort involving a broad cross-section of community interests, engaged in ongoing dialogue with the business community to help existing businesses remain profitable, competitive, and efficient.

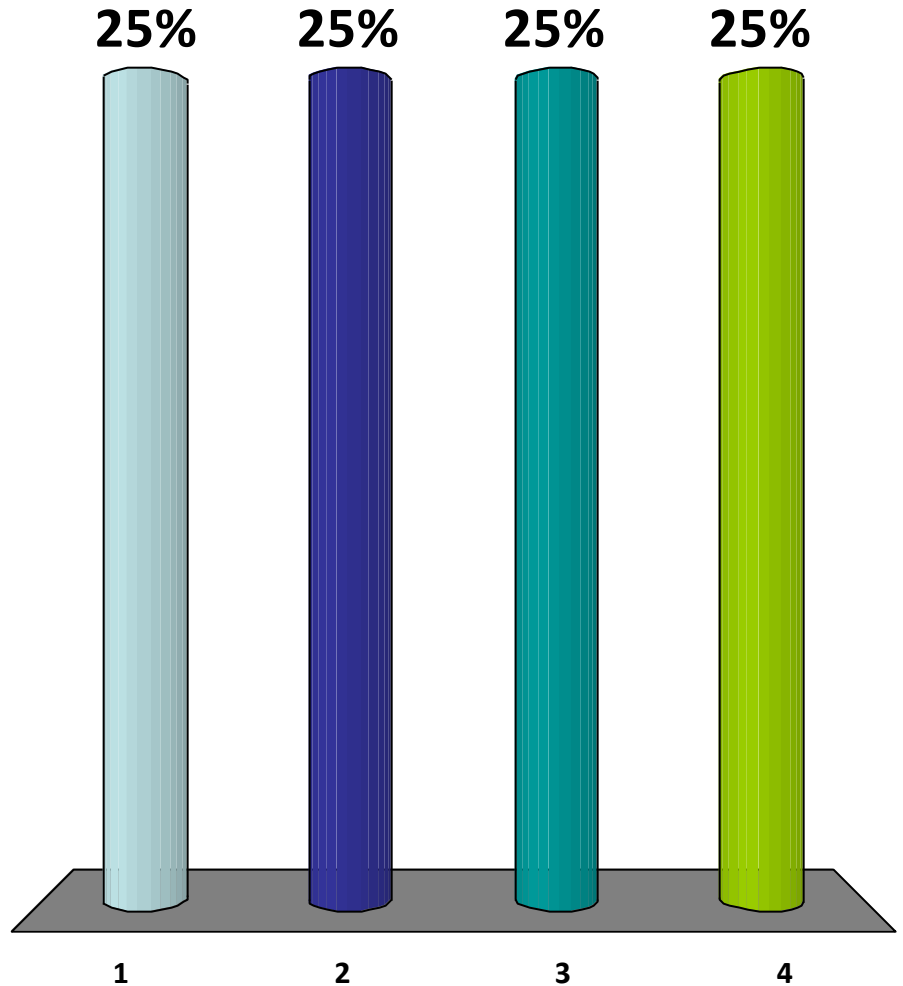
– George Morse, 1990



From *The Retention and Expansion of Existing Businesses: Theory and Practice in Business Visitation Programs*, ed. George W. Morse (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990)

Since 1986, more than \_\_\_\_ communities have participated

1. 100
2. 120
3. 140
4. 200





# Where have we conducted a BR&E?





# Past participant thoughts

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- "By addressing the needs of our industrial partners, we were able to work with them individually. The end result has been the expansion of our existing businesses and through the partnerships that have resulted with them, new businesses have located in Strongsville."
- Mike Daymut, Strongsville City Council



Research shows EXISTING businesses  
create \_\_\_\_\_ of all new jobs.

1. 20-40%
2. 40-60%
3. 60-90%

33%

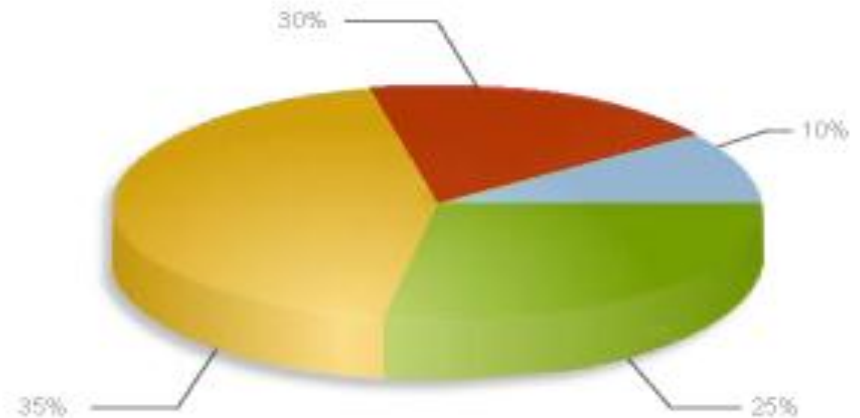
33%

33%



Nearly \_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_ members rated the program 'HIGH VALUE'.

1. 5 out of 10
2. 6 out of 10
3. 8 out of 10
4. 9 out of 10



**3D**  
**Pie Chart**

<http://localecon.osu.edu/BRnE/>



# How it works

- 12-month ‘membership’
- BR&E training workshops
- Program support
- Data entry & analysis software (<http://surveygold.com>)
- Pre-tested questions for multiple economic sectors
  - Retail and Professional Services/downtown focus
  - Industrial
  - Health Care
  - Travel & Tourism
  - Agriculture
  - Cross sector
- “Build-your-own” Question Bank

# Web-based resources

- Public and members-only access
- Site is slated for revision

1. Who We Are
2. What is BR&E
3. What We Provide
4. Success Stories
5. For Our Members
6. Contact us
7. Useful Links
8. Site Map
9. FAQs



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Ohio Business Retention & Expansion Initiative. The header features the Ohio BR&E logo on the left, the title "Ohio Business Retention & Expansion Initiative" in the center, and the "OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY Extension" logo on the right. Below the header, a large "W" graphic is followed by the text "Welcome to The Ohio BR&E Initiative". A "Home" button with a right-pointing arrow is visible. The main content area includes a paragraph stating "Research shows EXISTING businesses create 60% to 90% of all new jobs." and a list of four bullet points: "Improve the business climate of the community", "Help to make local businesses remain competitive", "Increase employment", and "Stabilize the local economy". Below this is a paragraph about the initiative's purpose. At the bottom, there are links for "BR&E Program Overview", "Audio Podcast (21 minute mp3 file)", and "Audio Podcast Transcript (54 KB pdf file)". A quote from Brent Painter is also present.

OHIO  
BR&E

Ohio Business Retention & Expansion Initiative  
Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics

OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
Extension

Welcome to The Ohio BR&E Initiative

Home

Research shows **EXISTING** businesses create 60% to 90% of all new jobs.

Communities that actively implement an on-going [BR&E program](#) focusing on the retention and expansion of local businesses will:

- Improve the business climate of the community
- Help to make local businesses remain competitive
- Increase employment
- Stabilize the local economy

The Ohio Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) Initiative provides the [resources, training and tools](#) to develop the capacity of the community to better understand its economy. In addition to enhanced community capacity to address critical community issues, other outcomes of such community engagement include a streamlined BR&E process that enables local leaders to focus on planning, action and results; a database of local information, and; a more robust local economy. Nearly 9 out of 10 Initiative members have rated the program as 'HIGH VALUE'.

BR&E Program Overview  
[Audio Podcast](#) (21 minute mp3 file) or [Audio Podcast Transcript](#) (54 KB pdf file)

"We had a prospect who was looking into constructing a new building. However, he'd heard mixed reviews about our Planning Process. I showed him our most recent survey findings so he could see how our Planning Process was rated by the business community. He indicated that the information was helpful and at this time it looks like he is going ahead with the project."

-Brent Painter, Economic Development Office, City of Stronassville



# Turn-key templates and tools

- Demonstration of web-based templates and tools

1. Surveys/sample questions
2. Sample letters
3. Press releases
4. Report templates
5. Tips for success
6. Podcasts and video training
7. Workbook and fact sheets

## **Complementary Products**

The Ohio BR&E Initiative offers a complementary product that enhances the results of the BR&E surveys with additional research and analysis of the retail sector.

### **Retail Market Analysis**

Retail market analysis seeks to identify market trends in local and regional retail sectors using detailed demographic and retail sales data on local communities. The goal of the program is to provide relevant information and analysis that can be used as input into economic development strategies for local communities.

### **Central Business District: Measures of Success**

The CBD-MS program seeks to identify determinants of central business district success and provide community decision-makers with the metrics against which Ohio communities can measure themselves and focus their central business district revitalization efforts. The program is targeted to communities of approximately 15,000 pop. or less.



THE OHIO BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION INITIATIVE  
**HANDBOOK**  
 8<sup>th</sup> Edition



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# What to expect

Communities that actively implement an on-going BR&E program focusing on the retention and expansion of local businesses will:

- \* Improve the business climate of the community
- \* Help to make local businesses remain competitive
- \* Increase employment
- \* Stabilize the local economy

The Ohio BR&E Initiative provides the resources, training and tools to develop the capacity of the community to better understand its economy.

It enables local leaders to focus on planning, action and results.

It provides a database of local information.

Nearly 9 out of 10 Initiative members rated the program 'HIGH VALUE'.

<http://localecon.osu.edu/BRnE/>



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# BRE' s 9-step process

- Form Task Force
- Schedule & Conduct Task Force Meeting
- Announce Program
- Distribute Questionnaires
- Conduct Business Visits
- Enter & Tabulate Response Data
- Identify & Address Red Flag Issues
- Analyze & Report Response Data
- Communicate Results

Evaluate!



# Five steps to a business success-driven BRE program

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1. Identify and respond red flag issues
2. Analyze survey results to identify trends and/or common problems
3. Draw conclusions
4. Write report and develop presentation
5. Present and report findings to board and community



# Step 1: Risk assessment

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- Quickly evaluate each survey upon receipt, or during interview
- Identify red flag issues
- Situations requiring immediate action
  - Is the business at risk for closure or relocation?
  - Is there evidence the business is considering expansion?
  - Are there individual business needs, i.e. financial, inventory control, cost structure, that need addressed by local expertise?





# Step 2: Analyze data

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- Enter and convert results in *Survey Gold*.
- Sort responses
  - Size
  - Type
  - Location
  - Market
- Sums, averages and percentages are the most informative ways to present data; i.e.
  - Downtown businesses spent an average of \$5,000 on advertising last year
  - The typical downtown retailer has 3 employees
  - 63% of respondents said they had difficulty getting city permits



# Step 3: Blend findings and draw conclusions

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- Hot button issues that surface
  - Training needs
  - Parking or traffic issues
  - Services issues (roads, snow removal, etc.)
  - Quality of Life (school, hospital, downtown)
- Business investment trends
  - How many and percentage of respondents plan to modernize or renovate their buildings?
  - How many net new jobs will be created in the next three years?
  - Which businesses are making product or services changes, planning to update the interior, update or launch a new website?



# Impact examples

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- **Retention**

BR&E efforts resulted in the retention of at least 50 jobs and 2 businesses in the downtown.

- **Expansion**

50 percent of the businesses own or lease sufficient property to renovate or expand their businesses. About a fifth of the businesses surveyed are considering renovation or expansion.

- **Identification of attraction**

Downtown businesses identified the need for a bookstore or news stand business in the downtown area.

- **Response to an emergency**

The BR&E Initiative provided the impetus, because relationships had been made, to prepare businesses for upcoming downtown construction.



## Step 4: Write report/develop presentation

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- Use *Survey Gold* for report template
  - Graphs and charts
  - Highlight major findings
  - Emphasize the positive
- Review report with Economic Restructuring Committee/BR&E task force
  - Brainstorm action items based on conclusions
  - Select what to include in power point presentation
  - Discuss communications strategy
- Develop customized presentation for board/community organizations
  - Purpose and methodology
  - BR&E Task Force
  - Results
  - Action plan



# Step 5: Report findings

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- Board
- Press Release to media
- Newsletter
- Annual Dinner
- Post report on web site
- Presentations to community groups
- Highlight business achievements
- Civic or business meetings





# Sample action plan steps

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- Build on cluster development of arts and entertainment to attract like businesses
- Individual business needs met through local, volunteer expertise
- Establish 50% grant/loan fund to incentivize interior or exterior improvements
- Remove barriers in one-stop assistance system to increase ease of doing business
- Develop joint marketing campaign focused on one event, theme or highlight (historic building?)



# Participant roundtables

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- Have you ever conducted/participated in a BRE?
- Are you doing BRE in your downtown now?
- How did you implement the program?
- Does the program inform you of business needs?
- How do you typically respond?
- Examples of success stories in your community?
- Example of losing a business and what you would do differently?
- How can the OSU Extension BRE program help you?



# Special offer

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The Get Started Package @ \$500 includes:

- Initial meeting to determine need
- Survey Gold software
- 3 hour workshop (combines Coordinator, Task Force and Data Analysis and Reporting Strategies workshops in addition to training on Survey Gold software)
- Unlimited access to web-based materials, tools and resources
- One full year of program support
- BR&E workbook and fact sheets
- Customized program

# See us on You Tube

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- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s\\_gPeot4szk4&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_gPeot4szk4&feature=player_embedded)



# Questions for us?

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# Contact Information

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Nancy Bowen, CEcD,  
Assistant Professor & Field Specialist Community  
Economics

[Bowen-ellzey.1@osu.edu](mailto:Bowen-ellzey.1@osu.edu)

David Civittolo  
Assistant Professor & Field Specialist  
Community Economics

[Civittolo.1@osu.edu](mailto:Civittolo.1@osu.edu)