

Score counselors build better businesses

For the past 20 years, Score Central Pennsylvania Chapter has been offering free and confidential counseling to startups and small businesses serving Centre, Clearfield, Huntingdon and Mifflin counties.

With counseling and workshops managed by a team of volunteers with successful backgrounds in business, government, education, law and finance as its primary areas of excellence, Score has provided counsel and advice to more than 2,000 clients since 1991. During the past 12 months alone, the chapter has helped 144 clients, 40 of which were from out of state.

Providing business counseling is Score's most important function and can be conducted face to face or by phone, Internet or mail. Clients are able to set their own agenda and times for meetings. Because of the broad range of counselor experience,



John R. Vincenti
Helping Hands

many clients take advantage of the ability to receive team counseling to start or grow their businesses. One Score client, for example, has

worked with a team of five counselors.

If counseling is Score's primary thrust, the chapter's business improvement workshops is a close second. These cover two important areas: business basics and beyond the basics. All workshops are offered free of charge to Score clients.

Business basics are conducted monthly from September through July. The workshop covers business issues from A to Z, addressing not just business

startups but also issues confronting existing businesses seeking to improve their business planning and structure, finance and marketing.

Beyond the basics workshops are designed to delve further into specific business areas such as financial management, cash flow, taxes, marketing and advertising, successful presentations, 10 ways to find new customers, writing a better business plan and women's entrepreneurship. Workshops covering business law, book-keeping and insurance are slated for the fall.

"Knowing how to plan and carefully evaluate your business proposition and customer value has never been more important," said chapter Vice Chairman Jan Hedquist, former president of a large, international advertising agency. "Today's economy puts a premium on planning and attention to where and how you use

your funds to not just attract customers but how to retain them."

Score's volunteers — 26 men and women with successful backgrounds — serve either as counselors or resource people who provide help and information to counselors and interns. Currently two students from Penn State's Smeal College of Business are part of the Score CPA team assisting with two chapter studies — one on ways to improve the chapter's effectiveness, the other on gauging past clients' economic impact.

Looking for free and confidential counseling with no strings attached? Feel like giving back by sharing your business expertise and working with others? Then ScorePA.org is for you. **SCORECPA.ORG**

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