

CHAMBER M B E R R L I N K

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Do You Know What You're Missing?



Bruce Hayes of the Tennessee Small Business Development Center can help answer your questions about running a business.

FREE HELP

Everyone knows nothing in the business world is truly free. But when it comes to finding a great resource that can help start-ups as well as existing business owners, the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (www.tsfdc.org) offers unmatched resources for free with confidential services.

One of the top professionals in this area is senior business specialist Bruce Hayes, who is employed by Pellissippi State. He spends his weeks splitting time between Blount, Knox and Sevier counties helping business people of all types get a handle on the complexities of running or starting up a new venture.

"For years we were known as a company that helped people find start-up money," said Hayes. "Since 2009 our focus has changed in that we are helping in-business clients so that people who need to discuss legal and financial problems or taxation issues have someone to help them work it out. Our client base has changed dramatically."

In that vein, the TSFDC has services geared towards helping the more seasoned and experienced small business owner. Whether sole proprietors, S-corps, corporations, partnerships or LLCs, TSFDC has the professionals and the services that can help solve the various problems that are found in growing and expanding businesses.

Likewise, small business owners, entrepreneurs or those thinking about starting a new business need to contact the TSFDC to gain an edge in the business environment.

By law, the TSFDC cannot advertise their services, so it comes down to word of mouth or internet searches to bring them clients.

With 1,000 centers across the United States, including 16 in the state of Tennessee alone, help for business owners can be found. There are five business specialists in his office working in eight area counties.

Hayes, a seven-year veteran of helping business people, conducts start-up classes at the Blount County Chamber of Commerce on the third Thursday of each month from 9 a.m.-noon. All other Thursdays are spent working with existing business clients.

He noted that, "Next year, we are going to offer classes in government contracting and business planning."

A former businessman himself with a construction background, Hayes finds that his position has forced him to increase his knowledge about issues and concerns for all types of businesses.

"I'm a generalist," said Hayes. "I have to know a bit of everything as I'm faced with questions like: My business is in trouble and how do I do something? How do I find financing to expand? How do I re-finance? How do I handle issues with the IRS?"

"It's all continuing education. I spend about four weeks a year in training sessions learning new products or just brushing up on the stuff we do every day.

"We track a lot of state and federal laws, especially the new health care law coming up. We have to understand the impact it's going to have on businesses and what they need to do to plan for it.

"It's a matter of planning and execution when it comes to business operations."

Hayes has seen a lot in his time with the TSFDC. But even he concedes, even the best business plan on paper doesn't mean it will succeed.

"The toughest part of consulting is working with someone who has spent their entire life to build something and either technology or markets have changed or bank or federal regulations have changed and suddenly they are in a steep decline. They are passionate about what they have done. It's sad.

To that end, Hayes says he gets his greatest joy by helping people turn it around by finding new markets or additional things to do.

"I can't look at someone with their plan and tell them they will succeed or not," said Hayes. "I've been proven wrong many times on both sides of the success range."

With years of working with people from all walks of life and experiences across the board from novice entrepreneurs to seasoned business people, Hayes has noticed one thing that is consistent with successful companies.

"There is a lifecycle to this," said Hayes. "We spend a lot of time on the front end in the planning stages and then they get started. The time commitment between us goes down a bit because they are focused on their business. In a typical case, as they continue to grow, we'll meet every week for three months. Then as they move along, we meet monthly to review the financials and what's going on. Then it spreads out to once every three months and then to every six months and then they get out on their own. But they always know that help is just a phone call away."

He cites a recent example of a chef who enjoyed cooking and thought he wanted to get in the restaurant business.

"We spent a lot of time getting to understand what goes on in the restaurant business," said Hayes. "He then found out he really didn't want to do that. He started the process and wound up being a personal chef for several families. He still enjoyed cooking and doing what he loved, but didn't have the responsibility of taking care of employees and business operations like payroll and keeping up with state and local regulations."

For more information or to sign up for one of Hayes' sessions, please logon to www.tsfdc.org or call the Chamber at 865.983.2241

Allan Cox, Chair

201 S. Washington Street | Maryville, TN 37804-5728

Phone: 865.983.2241 | Toll Free: 855.257.3964 | Fax: 865.984.1386

www.Blountchamber.com | Email: infodesk@BlountPartnership.com

Holiday Open Houses Set

The 13th annual Holiday Open House is set for Wednesday, Dec. 5 from 8:30-10:30 a.m., at the Chamber office located at 201 S. Washington St. in Maryville.

Happy
Holidays!

This event brings together the culinary efforts of the Blount Partnership's staff as they prepare an outstanding breakfast to thank the businesses and individuals in the community.

In addition, the Townsend Visitor's Center is holding its Holiday Open House on Dec. 7 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Light refreshments will be served.



Did You Know?



Have you checked out and downloaded the FREE Chamber mobile app?

Check it out by downloading the free app on iTunes or the Android Market by searching for **My Chamber App**. Get information on all Chamber members, including address, phone number, web site and directions.

Chamber members need to take advantage of getting an expanded listing on the Blount Partnership's mobile app by upgrading for \$249 to include a logo, web site link, larger ad size, **hot deals**, better placement and a business description.

For more information, call 865.983.2241

Did you know that Chamber members are offering Hot Deals to the public?

Check them out by going to www.BlountChamber.com and clicking on the red Hot Deals button.



There are currently Hot Deals from Snappy Tomato pizza and Honey Baked Ham.



Also, check out the Chamber's YouTube channel to see what's been going on in the community.

www.youtube.com/user/blountchamber

New Members

We'd like to welcome new members to the Blount County Chamber of Commerce who joined since August. If you are interested in joining or finding out more information, please call 865.983.2241 or log on to www.BlountChamber.com

Reinhart Food Service, LLC — www.rfsdelivers.com

Core Benefits & Investments — www.corebi.net

Jazzercise Maryville Fitness Center — www.jazzercise.com

Bethel University — www.bethelu.edu

Innovative Modular Solutions, Inc. — www.innovativemodular.com

Revive Therapeutic Massage — www.revive-tm.com

Alarm Specialty Company — www.alarmspeciality.com

Country Manor Acres — www.townsendcountryweddings.com

Falconnier Design Co. — www.falconnier.net

Event Calendar

The event calendar on www.BlountChamber.com allows Blount Countians to post their events directly to gain added exposure. These are great opportunities to connect and network with potential customers. The events and meetings below will be held at the Chamber unless otherwise noted. Visit our website to receive notices of events and meetings you would like to attend — www.BlountChamber.com, click on Events Calendar. For more information, call 983-2241.

Nov. 24-25 Art Photography- Smoky Mountains Visitor Center

Nov. 24-25 28th Annual Fantasy of Trees

Nov. 26-28 Townsend Artisan Guild- Holiday Gifts & Demonstrations

N. 29-D 1 House of Santa Mouse- Maryville College

N. 30-D 2 Art Photography Exhibit- Smoky Mountains Visitor Center

Dec. 1 Sam Houston Schoolhouse Candlelight Tour

Dec. 1 Blount County Potters Guild Holiday Show and Sale

Dec. 2 Townsend Christmas Parade

Dec. 2 Reindeer Run 5K Maryville

Dec. 5 Chamber Holiday Open House (8:30 a.m.)

Dec. 7 Smoky Mountains Visitor Center Open House (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)

Dec. 7-9 Art Photography Exhibit- Smoky Mountains Visitor Center

Dec. 12 Employment Eligibility Verification Program Seminar

Dec. 13 Coffee Club at Treasures Jeweler

To schedule a free small business counseling session or to make an appointment with a representative from the Tennessee Small Business Development Center call Claire at 983-2241.

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