

Digital Economy Business Development Program

A New Way to Drive Uptake and Benefits, From the Broadband Economists

As businesses and communities look for ways to compete and flourish in a global economy, strategic investments in broadband infrastructure have the potential to be transformative. But how do you turn *potential* into measurable success?

While there has been great focus on providing better, faster broadband, many businesses remain perplexed as to what to do with their new bandwidth riches. A grasp of the comprehensive benefits (the “So what?”) of broadband still eludes many businesses. And while we build the roads and superhighways of the 21st century, no one is providing drivers’ education beyond the most basic, “step on the gas to go, hit brake to stop” instructions. Driving is so much more than just that - and so is ‘getting online’ for businesses.

Because money and human capital has been invested in broadband networks, government, community stakeholders, businesses and subscribers want to see the benefits from these investments. SNG is offering a new way to drive network utilization by creating ground-up demand for services, helping potential customers identify real benefits - driving take-up, identifying and bridging gaps in the business plan/ performance, and helping alter course as required to reach sustainability.

Who is this program for?



Economic and Regional Development Agencies



Small Business Associations / Chambers of Commerce



Municipal (and Regional) Networks



Private Network Operators



Electric Utilities

Who should care - and why?



Economic and Regional Development Agencies - While economic development organizations are often focused on growing a region by attracting outside business, our clients have found that fostering new businesses and helping existing small-to-medium size businesses “take the next step” through broadband outpaces any gains they could have from attracting even the largest of businesses to their city.



Small Business Associations / Chambers of Commerce - Support and attract businesses by employing real insights into their individual growth strategy. Your members receive meaningful direction and individual strategy to leverage broadband to grow and succeed. Recommendations from the DEBDP will be seen as a key for staying with - or joining - your organization.



Municipal (and Regional) Networks - What the pragmatist would say matters most is sustainability. Think bigger. The DEBDP increases the use of your network and creates revenue opportunities for businesses that beget new jobs and additional tax revenues.



Private Network Operators - The key to achieving meaningful returns from broadband investments is to encourage and enable businesses to increase their use of broadband, and the best way to do this is through direct engagement with businesses at a local level - providing organizations with the business case for broadband utilization. Helping your business clients get more from broadband increases customer loyalty and opens up a path for higher customer revenues. If your broadband network is not getting the uptake you thought you would get - and that you need - you're not alone.



Electric Utilities - Smart grid initiatives are driving needs for enhanced data connectivity and bandwidth. With fiber, utilities can realize additional benefits including reliability improvements, increased economic development opportunities, cost savings to subscribers, and additional revenue opportunities for advanced services.

Driving uptake and benefits from the Broadband Economists

Strategic Networks Group, the world's leader in tracking and projecting broadband's impacts as well as developing strategies to maximize them, is pleased to introduce the **Digital Economy Business Development Program (DEBDP)**. This program is designed to help individual businesses take the specific steps they need to maximize broadband's benefits for growth. In short, this program drives both economic development and network uptake.

So what?

As bigger, faster broadband networks are built - does it really matter to the economic vitality of an individual business, or a region? SNG's research clearly shows that it does... and that businesses that use broadband more... and more effectively... achieve greater revenues, reduce costs, and are more productive and competitive. So what's the disconnect? Often businesses understand that broadband is "good" but they don't know HOW to put it to work for their specific business.

The **Digital Economy Business Development Program** enables a proactive approach to drive change from the ground up and where it counts... at the individual business level, leading to broader, more effective broadband use. As many businesses do not have the time or knowledge to properly explore the opportunities and benefits of broadband, SNG's program leads the horse to water... and even teaches them how to drink.

How we do it

How do we do this? How can SNG identify the right broadband solutions and strategies for individual businesses? By simply taking basic learnings and applying them across the board? Quite the contrary. Every business is different and each entity should be treated individually as there are no "one-size-fits-all" solutions. We apply over 15 years of broadband research across more than a dozen states and tens of thousands of businesses to craft a strategy that is unique to each and every business, supported by a suite of information to help each business take actions relevant to them.

SNG's extensive research focuses on how businesses use e-solutions - Internet-enabled applications and processes - in their business operations. SNG derives actionable intelligence by uncovering:

- Current level of Internet utilization
- Impacts on employment, revenues and operating costs of varying levels of utilization
- Business-specific barriers to adoption
- Opportunities to capitalize on broadband benefits
- The "best practices" from like-sized, similar industry businesses and the accompanying financial windfall these companies have seen and how it can be replicated.

Specifically, SNG's Digital Economy Business Development Program (DEBDP) provides a beginning-to-end package of services needed to make individual businesses and communities more globally competitive. The DEBDP process has five core steps:

- 1. Self-Assessment** - Businesses are asked to complete a 20-minute online business assessment survey to ascertain just how effective (or ineffective) an organization is currently leveraging broadband's potential and benefits.
- 2. Initial Business Feedback** - Each and every participating business receives a Digital Economy index (DEi) Scorecard, a one-page document that outlines for the organization's leadership how they are doing in comparison to their peers when it comes to utilizing broadband for business benefits. Also included are three immediate suggestions to drive up revenues and improve efficiencies.
- 3. In-Depth, Individualized Action Plans** - Utilizing the DEi scorecard and a live scenario generator (the DEi Calculator) that draws on SNG's extensive database of tens of thousands of business and institutions, the DEBDP provides a suite of tools and knowledge base needed to take each business through their individual results and explore the financial impact that implementing specific e-Solutions will have on their business.
- 4. Ongoing Online Support** - SNG provides a customized Web portal for local businesses to access. This provides ongoing and updated information for follow-on questions and a roadmap to successful implementation of e-Solutions. The "how-to" web pages, known as Digital Economy e-Learning Modules, are business-oriented educational resources designed to help businesses successfully use broadband and maximize their benefits from e-Solutions. SNG provides a large number of context specific links to online resources, as well as access controls (log-in), tools to manage your business interactions, different levels of administrative control for SNG and clients, and white labeling for client branding.
- 5. Impact Tracking** - Understand how your broadband (and accompanying education) pays off with mechanisms built into the program to track participation, assess progress and collect data on the impacts of broadband adoption by participating businesses. This micro-level data can also be aggregated and used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program and the socio-economic impacts from broadband.

SNG's customized research and proprietary Digital Economy Database form an unmatched resource for businesses to understand the benefits of utilization. At the same time, SNG reveals the next steps for successfully moving forward and using broadband to its fullest and competing in a digital economy.

Whether you're an organization fostering economic development for your area, or, a network operator looking for additional uptake, you have common goals in achieving expected economic and social benefits from the network, protecting your reputation (economically and politically), and reaching network sustainability. SNG provides you with the power to demonstrate the value of broadband and the tools to accelerate adoption and its accompanying benefits.