**STN Internet Utilization Assessment: Making Our Community More Competitive**

As businesses and communities look for ways to compete and flourish in a global economy, the Internet has the potential to be transformative – if used effectively.  Unfortunately, a majority of small and medium sized businesses don’t understand what they should be doing online to grow.

Research has shown that small-to-medium businesses deploying just one additional revenue generating Internet practice can increase their revenues by as much as 18%. Source:  SNG - See more at: <http://sngroup.com/small-business-growth-program-video-overview> .

**STN** is working with Steuben County Industrial Development Agency, Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development, and Southern Tier Economic Growth towards helping businesses use the Internet to compete in today’s increasingly digital economy by conducting a baseline study on businesses' Internet use. The findings of our study will result in strategies for our region’s businesses to be more competitive and provide access to individual tools for your business’ growth.

**How This Program Benefits Our Region’s Businesses**

The **Small Business Growth Program** (SBGP) shows businesses why they need to improve and change their behavior online with individualized business cases – a roadmap of Internet applications to deploy and accompanying Return on Investment (ROI) – along with the tools to get there. The unique value of the SBGP is taking results from tens of thousands of assessments taken by business across the US – more than ten States – and showing businesses exactly how their peers are thriving online.

The SBGP shows SMEs (Small to Medium Sized Enterprises) the business implications, in terms of potential revenue growth and cost savings, of using Internet applications.

We see this as a great program to help businesses as increasing your Internet use just a little bit could have massive bottom line implications. Extensive research conducted by SNG amongst businesses across the US shows that on average and across all industries, SMEs deploying additional Internet applications – and not just selling online – are seeing significant revenue increases and cost savings.

What are these applications, and how, specifically, can they improve **your business?**  Just how easy is it to succeed instead of fail?  Take twenty minutes to learn from your peers, capitalize on their success and avoid their missteps.

All local companies that complete the assessment will receive a personalized scorecard that will illuminate opportunities to drive revenue and create efficiencies. [Click to see examples of scorecards.](http://sngroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Example-DEi-Scorecard.pdf)

Additionally, participating businesses will receive access to unique online tools and tutorials to help better understand how to be more effective online.

**We Need Your Input**

We are hopeful that as a local business that you can help us to not only be more competitive as a region, but also to provide businesses like yours with the tools you need to be competitive in today’s digital economy.

[**Click here to take the 20-minute assessment and realize the benefits of this program >>**](http://sngroup.co1.qualtrics.com/WRQualtricsSurveyEngine/?Q_SS=blWDBgonxlFsMvP_1YvKxaHMnoOwdpz&_=1)

All of your answers will remain confidential, as our third party partner, Strategic Networks Group (SNG), will only be reporting results in aggregate and never shares personal/business data with any other entity.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. If you would like to promote the survey to your peers, please send them to [www.southerntiernetwork.org](http://www.southerntiernetwork.org).

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: How much does it cost to participate in this program?**
**A:**This program is completely free for businesses as the **Small Business Growth Program** has been purchased by the sponsoring organization.

**Q: Why did the sponsoring organization pay for this program?**
**A:**It is in their best interest to see a strong and healthy region better utilizing the Internet and its’ applications.

**Q: Is there a size business this program is best for?**
**A:**Typically small and medium sized businesses (less than 50 employees) are best suited to this program as the businesses most likely to lag behind with Internet utilization.

**Q: After I have completed the assessment, you will provide me with what?**
**A:**You will receive your own custom “**DEi Scorecard**” that shows how you stack up against your peers and competition. [Click here to see example DEi Scorecard](http://sngroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Example-DEi-Scorecard.pdf).

**Q: What is a DEi score?**
**A:**Digital Economy index, or **DEi score**, is a number from 1-10 measuring your organization’s use of broadband with 10 being the highest.

**Q: What is on the DEi Scorecard?**
**A:**The**DEi Scorecard** shows what applications (eSolutions) your peers are using across the United States and their reported economic benefits. According to your assessment answers, we show you a) how you stack up amongst your competitors and b) the economic impact of adopting the top three Internet applications you are not currently utilizing.

**Q: How do you know the economic impact?**
**A:**The **DEi Scorecard** reports the impacts from like-sized businesses in your industry sector. Over the past 24 months SNG has run assessments with thousands of businesses across the United States.

**Q: So all I get is the DEi Scorecard, right?**
**A: The DEi Scorecard** is the first piece of critical business intelligence you receive. If you choose to move forward, you can also receive one-on-one help to deploy applications, as well as several online tools to help with next steps.

**Q: I feel like I am on top of what my business should be doing online – why should I complete this Business Assessment?**
**A:**An overwhelming majority of businesses participating in this **Business Assessment** and the**Small Business Growth Program** report back that the business information they received was a tremendous help and uncovered areas of improvement they had not previously thought about.

**Q: What kind of impacts should a business expect from adopting an additional Internet application?**
**A:** Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) deploying just one additional revenue-generating Internet practice can their revenues by as much as 18%. Streamlining just one process with online tools can drive cost savings as high as 5%.

**Q:  Is this dependent on the speed of my Internet connection?**
**A:** No matter your speed, it is likely that you can do more online. Your service speed doesn’t matter and for the most part the speed of Internet service in your region does not matter.  More and more business is being done online – make sure you are there!

**Q: Why should I feel comfortable sharing this information about my business?**
**A:**As a third-party firm with strict research roots, SNG keeps your answers in strict confidentiality and only reports in aggregate. SNG never shares personal/business data with any other entity.

SNG aims to help communities make the most broad-reaching and transformational impacts that broadband can bring to enable businesses, communities and regions to better utilize Internet applications and maximize broadband's potential. Email: mcurri@sngroup.com