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Factors Influencing Participation in BR&E Programs: A Study of Local Coordinators in Six States

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Factors Influencing Participation in BR&E Programs: A Study of Local Coordinators in Six States

ABSTRACT

This study used a telephone survey of coordinators of local Business Retention and Expansion Programs (BR&E). The focus of the study was to survey BR&E coordinators who conducted programs in the last five years to better understand the factors that lead the community and the coordinator to undertake a BR&E program.

We used state program leaders to identify coordinators in six participating states: Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and West Virginia. The states represented programs that had a similar approach to BR&E in terms of a community approach which used volunteers by design. A total of 94 Coordinators were identified, and 80 responded to the survey during the summer and fall of 1998 (85% response rate). Of those that did not respond, six were no longer working in the community and could not be contacted. Initial contact was made by phone to explain the project and to schedule a phone interview. Following the initial phone contact, a copy of the survey and an explanation of the project was mailed to the respondent. Most of the interviews were conducted over the phone, but in some cases coordinators sent the surveys in the mail.

For the most part coordinators reported few concerns or conflicts prior to beginning a BR&E program. However, local coordinators reported that many businesses were not aware of programs available to them and that this was a motivating force in initiating the program. Furthermore, many indicated that citizens were not knowledgeable about economic development and the problems faced by local businesses.

In general the coordinators recognized and supported many of the benefits that we generally use to promote BR&E programs. When asked what attracted them to a BR&E program they answered (in order of importance) -- the program emphasized a response to local business needs; it focused on existing local businesses; it allowed for local decision-making; and there was a written report and written priority projects. Coordinators were also asked to rate factors about the program that influenced their personal participation. Their answers reflected a mix of community and personal interests. The factors with the highest rankings were: it would help firms remain and grow; it would help them develop better contacts with businesses; it would help them learn about businesses; it would help their organization; and the program was needed in the community.

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Factors Influencing Participation in BR&E Programs: A Study of Local Coordinators in Six States

INTRODUCTION

Business Retention and Expansion programs (also known as BR&E) have been utilized in the United States for nearly 30 years. BR&E is an economic development strategy which recognizes the importance of existing businesses to the economy and emphasizes working with existing businesses as part of local and state economic development strategies.

Although there are many types of economic development strategies that focus on existing businesses, the BR&E Visitation Program is one of the more comprehensive approaches and is a good starting point for a community to begin working with existing firms. Not all visitation programs are alike. The type of program endorsed by Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI) has several distinct features:

1. It is a locally based program that by design utilizes local leadership in the design, implementation, and response to the needs of the local businesses.
2. Programs use a face-to-face survey approach to identify key concerns and areas where additional support is needed.
3. The community engages in a facilitated process to respond to the issues identified in the business visits and puts programs in place as part of the overall economic development strategy.

The BR&E Visitation program sanctioned by BREI seeks to help communities build capacity and leadership while also responding to the needs of local businesses. The dual goals of these programs - community capacity (community capital) and developing strategies for existing businesses - set the BR&E Visitation Program apart from other existing business approaches.

Previous research has looked at the experiences and successes of BR&E programs. However, these studies did not examine the reasons why communities considered a BR&E program and why coordinators decided to commit their time and energy to the program. This study specifically seeks to add to the BR&E literature by focusing on the decision-making process to enter into a BR&E program. This research was funded by a grant from the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development.

We used state program leaders to identify coordinators in six participating states: Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and West Virginia. The states represented programs that had a similar approach to BR&E in terms of a community approach which used volunteers by design. A total of 80 Coordinators responded to the survey during the summer and fall of 1998 (85% response rate). This report provides a brief introduction to BR&E programs, an overview of the research process, a summary of the survey results, and conclusions.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF BR&E PROGRAMS

BR&E programs grew out of concerns that economic development was viewed primarily as attracting new firms. In their efforts to lure new firms, local and state officials often ignored existing businesses and their problems. Yet, these businesses are critical to the local economy. Research shows that between 60 and 80 percent of new employment is due to existing businesses. For example, Kentucky keeps statistics on expansions and new plants for manufacturing firms. From 1995 to 1998, existing firms accounted for 60% of employment gains and 3/4 of the investment dollars, or over \$5.2 billion.

The BR&E program in New Jersey in the early 1980s is generally credited as being the first systematic approach to retention and expansion of existing firms. The New Jersey program was a partnership among the New Jersey Department of Commerce and Economic Development, New Jersey Bell Telephone, and Rutgers University. This program used local leaders to conduct business visits as well as to develop and implement recommendations. The local community was assisted by a state team who conducted training, analyzed the survey information, and assisted in developing recommendations. A written report summarized the results of the survey and recommendations were presented to the community.

Many other states adapted and modified the New Jersey Program to meet their needs. Changes included new support materials, written recommendations, advanced training, and strategies for retail and agricultural businesses. Some state programs are supported by the Cooperative Extension Service (e.g., Minnesota), while others are administered through a partnership of state government, public utilities, and state universities (e.g., Kentucky).

Virtually all BR&E programs have a core recognition of the importance of the existing businesses. A BR&E program is not meant to replace other strategies, but rather is one component of an overall economic development strategy. BR&E programs also share the conviction that community leaders must be involved in planning the program, conducting business visitations, and in implementing recommendations. Finally, BR&E programs share the belief that local follow-up to problems and issues is absolutely essential to a successful program.

What are BR&E programs? BR&E programs refer a broad set of strategies to assist and encourage existing businesses to continue to do business, increase efficiency, or to grow. Successful communities engage in one or more of these programs as part of their overall economic development plan. These include:

- Provide technical assistance to firms
- Sponsor seminars and workshops

- Improve the linkage between businesses and the schools including school-to-work programs
- Improve relationships among state and local government and businesses
- Improve quality of life, services, or the workforce
- Offer subsidies for retention or expansion
- Influence the retention or expansion of state and federal facilities in an area
- Industrial extension programs
- Create an early warning system for plant contractions, closings, and relocations

Goals of a Business Visitation Program

1. Demonstrate to local business that the community appreciates their contribution to the local economy
2. Help existing businesses solve problems
3. Assist business in using programs aimed at helping them become more competitive
4. Develop strategic plans for long-range business retention and expansion activities
5. Build community capacity to sustain growth and development

Source: Morse and Loveridge, 1997

What Is a BR&E Visitation Program? A **Business Visitation Program** is a

mechanism by which a community can decide upon which existing business programs it wants to emphasize. The visits provide a community with comprehensive information that can be used by local governments, business leaders, and other planning groups. BR&E Visitation programs can be geared toward manufacturing, retail, service or agricultural sectors of the economy. Over 40 states have some form of a visitation program.

A BR&E Visitation program is a locally based program which can best be described as participatory research. The community retains ownership of the program, shapes the focus of a survey, is actively involved in collecting and analyzing data, and plans for a response to the data. The goals of a BR&E Visitation program are listed in the Box.

There are two key elements to a BR&E Visitation program that are critical to its success. *The first key is that it is a local process.* The program is planned and implemented at the local level by a volunteer group. Most often these volunteers are professionals in economic development, finance, public utilities, or members of a chamber of commerce. In addition, a B&E Visitation Program uses selected volunteers to conduct visits. The local involvement leads to buy-in and commitment, higher responses rates on the survey, and increased willingness to respond to the issues found in the survey process.

The second key element is that we plan for something to happen with the information. A BR&E Visitation Program should not lead to another report that sits on a shelf. From the start there is a plan for follow-up which involves a task force of experts who are

organized to respond to issues. While a community cannot guarantee that each problem will be solved, the community does engage in a good faith effort to work with the business community to address problems and concerns.

SURVEY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of the survey effort was to interview local coordinators for BR&E programs within the prior five years. The five year limitation was used because we were asking participants to recall information from the beginning of their program, and we felt that too long of a time frame would present data reliability problems.

Since there was not an available list of BR&E coordinators, we relied on the assistance of state program leaders to identify coordinators in six participating states: West Virginia, Minnesota, North Dakota, Maine, Nebraska, and Kentucky. The states represented programs that had a similar approach to BR&E and participated in BREI. All of these state programs involved a community approach which used volunteers by design. Prior to requesting a list of coordinators, state program leaders were informed of the goals of the research and assured that confidentiality would be maintained.

A total of 94 coordinators were identified through this process. Initial contact was made by phone to explain the project and to schedule a 30 minute phone interview. Following the initial phone contact a copy of the survey, an explanation of the project, and the time and date of the scheduled interview was mailed to the respondent.

Of the 94 coordinators, 80 completed an interview for an overall response rate of 85 percent. The majority of the interviews were conducted over the phone. Some respondents were not able to participate in a phone interview after repeated attempts, but they were able to return a completed survey by mail. Of those that did not respond, six were no longer working in the community and thus no longer part of the population for the project. Removing these six from the list left an adjusted response rate of 91 percent (80 of 88).

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The survey was administered to coordinators of local BR&E programs in six states. For most of the coordinators this was their first experience with a B&E program (77.5%). The majority of coordinators found out about BR&E through a state sponsor (52.5%), followed by a colleague (40.0%), association (25.0%), or a presentation (22.5%). Two thirds indicated they had some form of existing business programs in the community, but far more indicated they had an attraction program (75.8%) or encouraged new business start-ups (75.0%). The majority of the programs (61.3%) targeted mixed firms (manufacturing, retail, and others) while the next highest focus was manufacturing only (28.8%). The average number of firms visited was 67 with a low of 10 to a high of 547.

Reaction	Percent Yes
a. I was curious about the program	92.5%
b. I felt the program was needed	92.3%
c. I was excited about the program	83.8%
d. I was worried about the time commitment	57.0%
e. I was skeptical about the program	17.7%

The coordinators were asked a series of five statements about their first reaction to the program. The questions are listed in Table 1 and Figure 1. The vast majority of coordinators were curious about the program, felt it was needed, and were excited about BR&E (see Table 1). Over half were worried about the time commitment that BR&E requires (57%). The time commitment of the coordinator and the Leadership Team is substantial. Morse and Loveridge estimate at least 110 hours of commitment for a coordinator over a two year period, which may expand further depending upon involvement in priority projects (1997). Only 18 percent were initially skeptical about the BR&E program.

Coordinators were asked about their initial role in introducing the BR&E program to their community. The majority began as part of a committee that studied the BR&E program and eventually decided to implement the program (57%). Another third had a stronger role and indicated they initially sold the idea to others in the community (31.6%). Only 11 percent indicated that someone else in the community sold them on the idea. It appears that most coordinators of local BR&E programs took an active leadership role either as the driving force for the program or through their participation on a committee. A second question supports this notion. The coordinators were asked about which response best describes how they decided to get involved in a BR&E program. Most indicated their involvement was part of their job (53.8%) or they volunteered (32.5%). Over a small percentage indicated they were recruited (12.5%) or felt they didn't have a choice (1.3%).

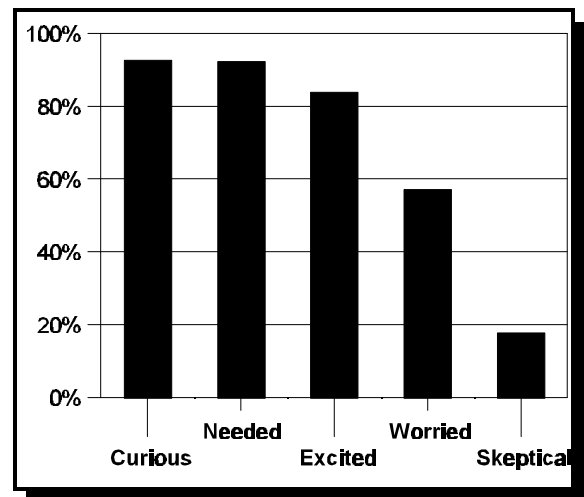


Figure 1: Coordinators' First Reaction to BR&E

Description of the Social Capital in the Community. Those involved in community development often focus on the past experiences of communities as shaping future collective action. The next section of the survey focused on the coordinator’s assessment of the community using a series of questions used in past research on social capital. The actual questions are given in Table 2.

For the most part the coordinators viewed their community as a friendly, close-knit place where people are involved in the community. For example, 66.3 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that being in the community is like living with a group of close friends. Four-out-of-five believed that residents of their community could be involved in governmental affairs if they wanted to. Nearly three-quarters believed that community organizations and clubs wanted what was best for the community. All of these indicators suggest the communities drawn to BR&E Visitation programs have a sense of community and a reservoir of social capital to draw on when conducting a program. Those involved in promoting BR&E programs believe this sense of community is important to a successful program and seek to enhance or build upon it when assisting a community in a BR&E Visitation program.

Table 2: Coordinator Views of Social Capital Aspects of Their Communities

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un-decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. Being a resident of this community is like living with a group of close friends.	17.5%	48.8%	15.0%	16.3%	2.5%
b. If you do not look out for yourself, no one else in this community will.	3.8%	13.8%	10.0%	61.3%	11.3%
c. Most everyone in this community is allowed to contribute to local governmental affairs if they want to.	27.5%	55.0%	6.3%	8.8%	2.5%
d. When something needs to be done in this community, the whole community usually gets behind it.	6.3%	52.5%	18.8%	20.0%	2.5%
e. Community clubs and organizations are interested in what is best for all residents.	20.0%	53.8%	10.0%	16.3%	0.0%

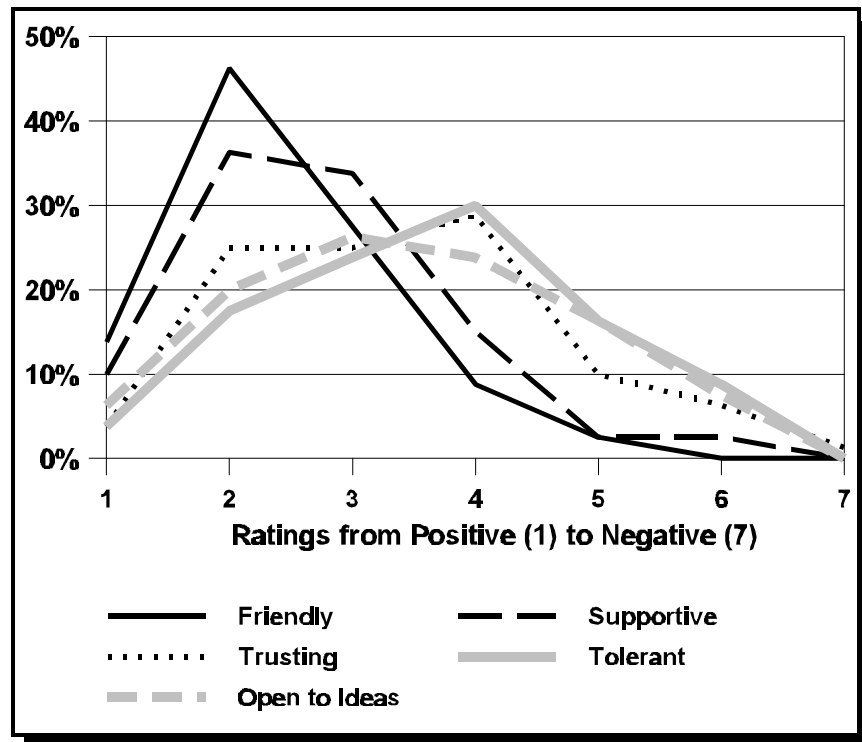


Figure 2: Coordinator Views of the Community Via Selected Continuums

Next the coordinators were asked to rate their community along a seven point continuum between two opposite pairs: friendly versus unfriendly; supportive versus unsupportive; trusting versus not trusting; tolerant versus not tolerant; and open to new ideas versus rejecting new ideas. By-in-large the coordinators rated their communities toward the positive end of the continuum (see Figure 2). However, the rating were considerably more positive for Friendliness (average of

2.45) and Supportiveness (2.71) compared to Tolerance (3.64) and Openness to New Ideas (3.46) and Trust (3.4).

Beginning the Program. The coordinators were asked several questions about the beginning of their programs that related to problems and concerns that they or others in the community shared about the program. A list of six different areas of concern were given to the coordinator and he/she was asked if each was a concern, and if so to describe the problem and how it was resolved. Specific comments are given in Appendix II. Only 6 percent indicated problems with turf battles in their community (see Figure 3). Turf battles were fought between government entities (city versus county) or organizations e.g., (industrial development authorities versus other economic development groups). Most indicated that these problems were resolved satisfactorily.

Another source of concern was over the use of volunteers. Two of every five coordinators (42.5%) indicated there were concerns over the use of volunteers. In their description of the problems, the major concerns were over the time commitment of the volunteers, whether they could recruit enough, and the professionalism of the volunteers. The resounding solution given for these concerns, and what enabled the programs to move forward, was the mandatory volunteer visitor training. A related

concern was over volunteers maintaining confidentiality, where one-third of the coordinators indicated it was a concern. Most indicated the training and careful selection of volunteers were the main ways to address this concern.

Slightly less than one-third expressed concerns about the costs of the program (29.1%). Most of these concerns proved to be short-lived and communities found support from a number of sources, including local industries, banks, utilities, and state governments. Only 12.5 percent of the coordinators indicated there were problems getting funding (see question 18). In looking at the comments, many of these problems involved confusion over which group was responsible for which costs of the program.

Two of the largest concerns involved the time it takes to complete the program and the overall effectiveness of the program. Over half (56.3%) were concerned about the time factor. A BR&E program does require a substantial amount of volunteer time, and most programs indicate the initial part of the program, from inception up to the commencement meeting, takes six months to one year to complete. However, communities are strongly encouraged to think of the implementation of priority projects that come out of the survey process as requiring another one to two years to complete. In the comments the coordinators indicated that volunteer time was a precious commodity in their community and the initial view of a one to two year process as daunting. They also indicated that keeping people involved and engaged during down times was also a concern. At-the-same-time, coordinators indicated that concerns about the amount of time required and the difficulties in keeping people engaged resolved themselves once the surveys were returned. At that point the local people began to become more involved by responding to issues raised by the firms.

The issue of effectiveness is a difficult one for BR&E programs, both from the perspective of those promoting these programs and from the coordinators. Forty percent of the coordinators were concerned over whether the program would be effective in terms of a return on the investment into the program (in jobs and growth), and whether they could effectively respond to business problems. Some indicated that through the recommended process of a BR&E Visitation Program - such as establishing a Leadership Team and Task Force, conducting Red Flag Reviews, setting priority

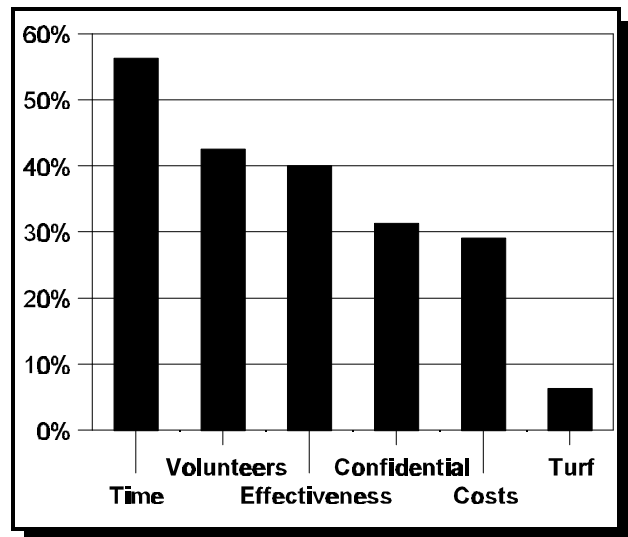


Figure 3. Coordinators Views on Concerns at the Beginning of the BR&E Program

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projects, and having a community commencement meeting - helped to address these concerns in the community.

The Players in the Visitation Program. BR&E Visitation programs have evolved over time, as has the terms and structure currently recommended for a program. BREI in its training program currently recommends a four person Leadership Team to plan and oversee the program and a 10 to 20 member Task Force to advise and assist in the community response. However, state programs often use slightly different terms or recommendations for the local structure. In this survey the average size of the Leadership Team was nearly nine persons, while the median was 7.5. The lowest was two, and the highest was 22. The average size of the Task Force was 20, with a median of 18. One community indicated it had no members on the Task Force while another had 70 members.

BR&E Visitation programs are encouraged to have representation of five different groups on the Task Force and Leadership Team - Business Leaders, Development Professionals, Local Government Officials, Education Officials, and Other Community Leaders (Morse and Loveridge, 1997). The coordinators were asked to indicate the involvement of 12 different organizations in the BR&E effort (see Table 2). Nearly all the communities had representatives from Business owners (87.5%), Chamber of Commerce (85.0%), Public Officials (83.8%) and Industrial Development Authority/Economic Development Authority (77.2%). These organizations were followed by another group that were represented one-half to two-thirds of the time - Banks (73.8%), State and Federal Agencies (68.8%), Public Schools (61.3%), and Utilities (57.5%) and Post-Secondary Education Institutions (50.0%). Far below these are Religious Organizations

TABLE 2. ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE LOCAL BR&E PROGRAMS	
ORGANIZATION	PERCENT
Business Owners	87.5%
Chamber of Commerce	85.0%
Public Officials (Mayor/County Official)	83.8%
Industrial Development Authority (organization responsible for the recruitment of manufacturing firms, Economic Development Authority, Community Development Authority))	77.2%
Banks	73.8%
State and Federal Agencies	68.8%
Public Schools	61.3%
Utilities	57.5%
Post-Secondary Educational Institutions (technical schools, colleges, community colleges)	50.0%
Others	21.3%
Religious Organizations	15.0%
Main Street Program	10.0%

(15.0%), Main Street Programs (10.0%) and others (21.3%). The other category includes organizations such as Extension, Regional Development Agencies, and foundations.

Roughly one-in-four programs indicated that there were organizations they would have liked to participate that did not (28.8%). Reasons given for these organizations not participating were concerns over effectiveness, confidentiality, volunteers, and in some cases turf issues.

What Attracted Coordinators to a BR&E Visitation Program? The next section of the survey focused on a series of questions as to what attracted the coordinator to the BR&E Visitation Program. The questions focused on the unique aspects of the program that are typically emphasized in introductory literature, such as a focus on existing businesses, a written report, and an emphasis on responding to needs. The complete list of questions and the responses are given in Table 3 and Figure 4.

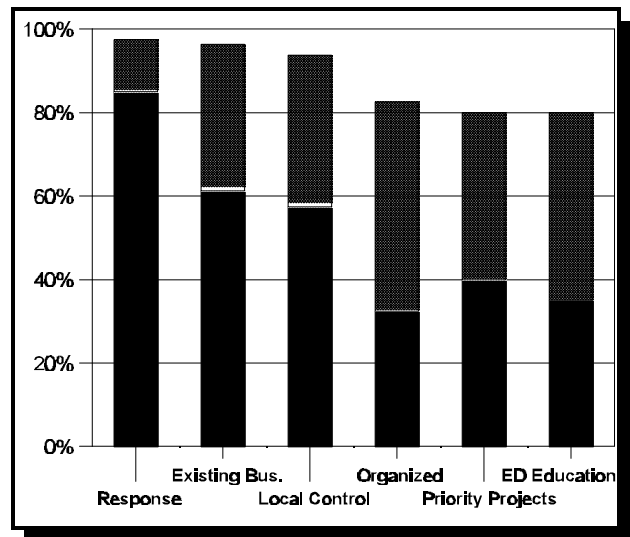


Figure 4. Factors that Attracted Coordinators to a BR&E Visitation Program

In general, the coordinators responded favorably to the key components emphasized in BR&E Visitation Programs. The combination of *Very Important* and *Important* for each factor was 70 percent or higher, and very few indicated they were not aware of a particular factor. The highest and most strongly felt reason was that the program emphasized a response to local business needs. Nearly all the coordinators felt this was *Very Important* (85.0%) or *Important* (12.5%). The second most important reason was that the program focused on existing business (96.3% combined). This was followed by an emphasis on local people making decisions (93.8%), the organization of the program (82.5%), the use of written priority projects (80%), and the opportunity to educate local people on economic development (80%). The use of a written report and the reputation of the organization providing technical support also received high ratings.

Ratings of BR&E Objectives. The Coordinators were asked to rate each of five objectives to BR&E Visitation programs on a scale from one to ten. This strategy had been used in previous research on BR&E programs, however, this time they were asked to answer in relation to when the community was considering the program. The

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	WAS NOT AWARE	DON'T KNOW
a. The program emphasized responding to local business needs	85.0%	12.5%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
b. The fact that it focused on existing businesses	61.3%	35.0%	2.5%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
c. The fact that local people would make decisions about what to do	57.5%	36.3%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
d. The program appeared to be well organized	32.5%	50.0%	8.8%	3.8%	5.0%	0.0%
e. There were written priority projects for community action to improve the business climate	40.0%	40.0%	15.0%	2.5%	1.3%	1.3%
f. The opportunity to educate local people in economic development	35.0%	45.0%	17.5%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%
g. The reputation of the organization providing technical assistance	33.8%	38.8%	17.5%	5.0%	3.8%	1.3%
h. There was a written report	40.0%	33.8%	17.5%	6.3%	1.3%	1.3%

scale was from one to ten with one being low importance and ten being high importance. The objectives and the average ratings are given in Table 4. A graphic depiction of the top three ratings categories (10,9, and 8) are given in Figure 5.

All of the ratings were high, with no average less than .7.2. The two highest objectives were that the program demonstrated a pro-business attitude, and that it assisted firms in solving local problems. Both of these had an average rating of 8.8 out of a possible 10. The rating for early warning of potential closings or expansions is notably higher than past coordinator's assessments after completing the program, indicating a

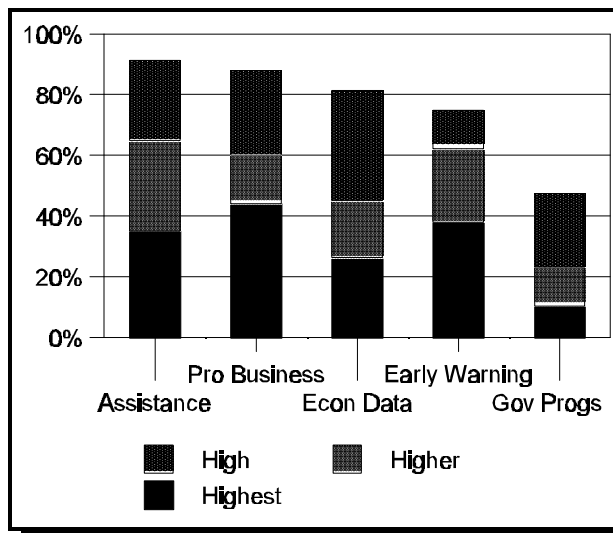


Figure 5: Highest Rating for BR&E Visitation Goals

difference between expectations and program experience. While some BR&E programs find out about a potential closing or relocation during the firm visits, it is not typical.

TABLE 4. COORDINATOR RATINGS FOR OBJECTIVES OF THE BR&E VISITATION PROGRAM

VARIABLE	MEAN	MEDIA N	MODE	MINIMU M	MAXIMU M
a. Assists firms in solving local problems	8.8	9	10	5	10
b. Demonstrates a pro-business attitude	8.8	9	10	5	10
c. Provides data for economic development	8.3	8	8	2	10
d. Gives and early warning of potential closings or expansions	8.5	9	10	2	10
e. Helps firms use State and Local Programs	7.2	7	8	2	10

Factors that Influenced the Coordinator to Participate. The next section focused on 12 factors that influenced the coordinator’s participation in the program. These factors included personal benefits to the coordinator to benefits to the coordinator’s organization and community. The responses of the coordinators reflect a mixture of both, which seems to indicate that he/she viewed participation as both advantageous to career and to community. The scale was from one to ten with one being low importance and ten being high importance. The wording of the factors and the average ratings are given in Table 5. A graphic depiction of the top three ratings categories (10,9, and 8) for the highest factors are given in Figure 6.

The highest factor that influenced the coordinators to participate had to do with the value of the program for existing businesses. The top factor was that the program would help firms remain and grow in the community, which had an average rating of 9 out of 10. However, this was followed by professional

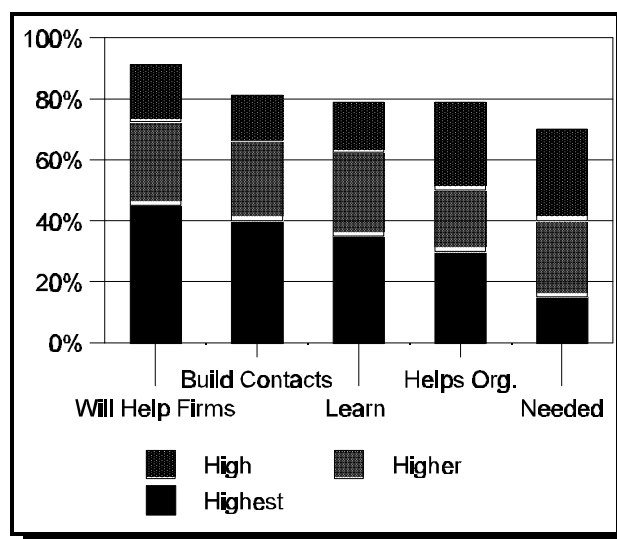


Figure 6. The Ratings for the Highest Factors that Influenced the Coordinator to Participate

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considerations – it would help me develop better contacts with local leaders (8.5) and it would help learn more about businesses in the community (8.4). Coordinators were also concerned with the impact on their organization. Most felt it would be good for their organization (8.1) or provide positive public relations (8.0). Other factors, such as personal nonprofessional benefits, received much lower ratings. For example, few felt it would help their social life (1.9), be fun (4.3), or improve their personal economic prospects (4.9).

VARIABLE	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
a. This will help firms remain and grow in the community	9.0	9.0	10	4	10
b. This program will help me develop better contacts with local leaders	8.5	9.0	10	1	10
c. The program will help me to learn about businesses in my community	8.4	9.0	10	1	10
d. The program will help my organization	8.1	8.5	10	2	10
e. This program will be good public relations for my organization	8.0	8.0	10	1	10
f. This is needed, local firms have been feeling neglected	7.6	8.0	8	2	10
g. It is my civic duty to help the community by participating in this program	6.8	7.0	8	1	10
h. This program will help me share my ideas about how we should promote the community	6.4	7.0	8	1	10
i. The program was a low risk strategy for me	5.6	6.0	5	1	10
j. If we help local firms grow, my personal economic prospects will likely improve	4.9	5.0	1	1	10
k. This program will be fun	4.3	4.0	1	1	10
l. This program will help me develop my social life	1.9	1.0	1	1	8

The Status of Economic Development Programs in the Community. One of the last questions in the survey asked coordinators to reflect on the status of economic development activities in the community, specifically focusing on the coordination of activities and the involvement of businesses and citizens (see Table 6). Responses were mixed as to whether economic development activities were poorly coordinated, with slightly more than half disagreeing with that statement for an average response of 4.9 (on a scale from 1 to 10). Far more agreed that people had a poor understanding of economic development (average of 6.3) and that few people were involved in economic development (average of 6.0), and that local people had a poor understanding of business problems (average of 6.8). Coordinators were even more in agreement that firms did not understand the resources available to them (average of 7.4) or that they were unlikely to ask for help (average of 7.6).

VARIABLE	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
a. Our local economic development activities were poorly coordinated.	4.9	5.0	3	1	10
b. People in our community had a poor understanding of economic development	6.3	7.0	8	2	10
c. Few people were involved in our local economic development efforts.	6.0	7.0	8	1	10
d. Local people had a poor understanding of business problems.	6.8	7.0	7	2	10
e. Firms did not understand what resources were available to them.	7.4	8.0	8	2	10
f. Firms were unlikely to ask for assistance.	7.6	8.0	10	2	10
g. There were turf battles about economic development.	4.9	5	1	1	10

CONCLUSION

The coordinators from local BR&E Visitation programs represented coordinators in six states that conduct active BR&E Visitation Programs -Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and West Virginia. Their responses reflect the fears, anxieties, and hopes of many potential coordinators as they begin to think about participating in a BR&E Visitation program. Most begin with a curiosity and interest, but a few are skeptical about the impact of the program, and far more are worried about the time commitment. However, all of participants in this survey went forward with the program and served in a leadership capacity. The purpose of this survey was to gain a better understanding of why their community participated and what drew them to be a coordinator.

For the most part coordinators reported few concerns or conflicts up-front in the BR&E process. There were a few who indicated concerns with turf battles amongst competing economic development organizations, but these issues were mostly resolved. A larger group expressed concerns about the use of volunteers, confidentiality, and the ability to pay for the program. Once again, the programs were able to work through these issues through discussion and by following sound practices developed by BR&E professionals. For example, many of those who expressed concerns about confidentiality indicated that the mandatory training of volunteers addressed this concern directly as part of the training.

When looking at the status of economic development activities in their communities, coordinators reported concerns that economic activities were poorly coordinated; that local people were not involved in economic development activities, had a poor sense of the local economy, and did not understand the problems local firms faced; and that firms did not always know who or what to ask for help. The BR&E Visitation program provided some benefits in many of these areas by involving a wider group in understanding business needs and problems, and then by coordinating this information into a community response to the businesses.

Coordinators also recognized and supported many of the goals and benefits of a BR&E Visitation Program that professionals generally promote. Coordinators liked that the program focused on existing businesses and responded to their needs, that it involved local people in decision-making, and that there was a report and priority projects identified. The motives for participation of Coordinators reflected a mixture of professional interests – building contacts and helping their organization – and a sense of commitment to existing businesses.

The responses of the coordinators re-affirm many of the marketing strategies currently used in BR&E Visitations programs. They reacted strongly to the goals of the program, and many of the factors suggested to engage in a BR&E Visitation Program.

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Professionals running state or provincial programs should emphasize these aspects of the program when recruiting new communities. Previous research has shown that these unique aspects of the BR&E Visitation program have lead to effective programs. This research report shows that these same aspects can serve as effective marketing points when promoting the program.

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APPENDIX I: The Survey and Results

Local BR&E Program Coordinator Telephone Survey

Date: _____ Time: _____ Telephone: _____

Community: _____ State: _____

1. **What year did you begin your first BR&E program?** From 1988 to 1997, with 59% since 1995

2. **Was this your first experience with a BR&E program?** (Circle your response)

Yes 77.5% No 22.5%

3. **How did you hear about the BR&E program?** (Check all that apply)

- 6.3% Brochure in the mail
- 22.5% Attended a presentation
- 2.5% Heard from newspaper/radio/tv
- 40.0% Colleague
- 10.0% Boss
- 25.0% Professional Association
- 52.5% Contact from state BR&E sponsor

4. **What were your reactions to the BR&E Visitation program when you first heard about it? Please answer Yes or No to each one.**

	Yes	No
a. I was curious about the program	92.5%	6.3%
b. I was skeptical about the program	17.7%	82.3%
c. I was excited about the program	83.8%	16.3%
d. I felt the program was needed	92.3%	7.7%
e. I worried about the time commitment	57.0%	43.0%

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5. We'd like to know a little bit about your role in introducing the BR&E program to your area? Which of the following best describes your role? (Choose only one)

- 31.6% I sold people on the idea
- 57.0% I was part of a committee that studied the program and jointly decided to implement it
- 11.4% Someone sold me and others on the idea

6. Which of the following best describes how you decided to get involved in your areas's BR&E program (choose only one)

- 32.5% I Volunteered
- 0.0% I felt like I owed someone a favor
- 12.5% I was recruited
- 53.8% It was part of my job description
- 1.3% I didn't have a choice

7. We are interested in your attitudes about the community where your BR&E program took place. Please rate your community by indicating whether you STRONGLY AGREE to STRONGLY DISAGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un-decided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. Being a resident of this community is like living with a group of close friends.	17.5%	48.8%	15.0%	16.3%	2.5%
b. If you do not look out for yourself, no one else in this community will.	3.8%	13.8%	10.0%	61.3%	11.3%
c. Most everyone in this community is allowed to contribute to local governmental affairs if they want to.	27.5%	55.0%	6.3%	8.8%	2.5%
d. When something needs to be done in this community, the whole community usually gets behind it.	6.3%	52.5%	18.8%	20.0%	2.5%
e. Community clubs and organizations are interested in what is best for all residents.	20.0%	53.8%	10.0%	16.3%	0.0%

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8. We are interested in how you would describe your community. For each of the words pairs I will give you, please rate your community along a continuum from one extreme to the other. For example, the first pair is friendly versus unfriendly. The numbers in between (1, 2,3,4,5, 6 and 7) represent degrees of friendliness, with 4 representing a middle ground. Please indicate which best describes your community.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Friendly	13.8%	46.3%	27.5%	8.8%	1.3%	2.5%	0.0%	Unfriendly
Supportive	10.0%	36.3%	33.8%	15.0%	2.5%	2.5%	0.0%	Unsupportive
Trusting	3.8%	25.0%	25.0%	28.8%	10.0%	6.3%	1.3%	Not Trusting
Tolerant	3.8%	17.5%	23.8%	30.0%	16.3%	8.8%	0.0%	Prejudiced
Open to New Ideas	6.3%	20.0%	26.3%	23.8%	16.3%	7.5%	0.0%	Rejecting New Ideas

Now we'd like to learn about the circumstances of how the community began the BR&E program. Specifically, we would like to know about any issues that emerged when you were deciding to begin the program. Please answer yes or no to each question.

9. Were there turf battles about who should conduct the program?

No 93.8% Yes 6.3%

If yes, describe the problems and how did you overcome these concerns?

10. Were there concerns about whether volunteers could conduct effective visits?

No 57.5% Yes 42.5%

If yes, describe the problems and how did you overcome these concerns?

11. Were there concerns about volunteers maintaining confidentiality?

No 68.8% Yes 31.3%

If yes, describe the problems and how did you overcome these concerns?

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12. Were there concerns about the financial costs of the BR&E program?

No 70.9% Yes 29.1%

If yes, describe the problems and how did you overcome these concerns?

13. Were there concerns about effectiveness of the program?

No 60.0% Yes 40.0%

If yes, describe the problems and how did you overcome these concerns?

14. Were there concerns about the amount time it would take to complete the program?

No 43.8% Yes 56.3%

If yes, describe the problems and how did you overcome these concerns?

15. How many people were involved in organizing your local BR&E program? Please break it down by the following functions:

8.9 Leadership Team or Planning committee

19.6 Task Force

35.6 Volunteer Visitors

50.7 TOTAL PARTICIPANTS (Recognizing that some people serve in multiple roles, estimate the total number involved)

16. What organizations were involved in the local BR&E program? (Check all that apply)

85.0% Chamber of Commerce

77.2% Industrial Development Authority (organization responsible for the recruitment of manufacturing firms, Economic Development Authority, Community Development Authority))

83.8% Public Officials (Mayor/County Official)

61.3% Public Schools

50.0% Post-Secondary Educational Institutions (technical schools, colleges, community colleges)

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10.0%	Main Street program
57.5%	Utilities
73.8%	Banks
87.5%	Business Owners
15.0%	Religious Organizations
68.8%	State and Federal agencies
21.3%	Others _____

17. Were there organizations that you felt should be involved in the local effort but declined to participate, either initially or throughout the process?

No 71.3% Yes 28.8%

If yes, please answer a-c below:

a. What kind of organization(s)

b. What concerns did they have? (Check all that apply)

- 9.1% Turf issues
- 4.5% Use of volunteers
- 18.2% Confidentiality
- 9.1% Costs
- 36.4% Effectiveness
- 22.7% I Don't Know
- 50.0% Other: _____

c. Were they convinced to participate by the end of the program?

No 60.0% Yes 40.0%

If yes, what convinced them?

18. Were there problems finding local funding for the program? (Funding includes local expenses such as copying and mailing as well as any funds for participating in the state program]

No 87.5% Yes 12.5%

If yes, how did you overcome these?

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19. Now we would like to ask some questions about what attracted you to the BR&E program. As you were deciding to get involved in the program, how important were the following aspects of the program to you? For each one, was it Very Important, Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important. You can also answer that you were not aware of an aspect or you don't know.

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	WAS NOT AWARE OF THIS	DON'T KNOW
a. There was a written report	40.0%	33.8%	17.5%	6.3%	1.3%	1.3%
b. The program emphasized responding to local business needs	85.0%	12.5%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
c. There were written priority projects for community action to improve the business climate	40.0%	40.0%	15.0%	2.5%	1.3%	1.3%
d. The reputation of the organization providing technical assistance	33.8%	38.8%	17.5%	5.0%	3.8%	1.3%
e. The fact that it focused on existing businesses	61.3%	35.0%	2.5%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
f. The fact that local people would make decisions about what to do	57.5%	36.3%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
g. The opportunity to educate local people in economic development	35.0%	45.0%	17.5%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%
h. The program appeared to be well organized	32.5%	50.0%	8.8%	3.8%	5.0%	0.0%

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20. When you were considering the program for your community, can you tell me how important you would have rated the following BR&E program objectives on a scale of one to ten, with ten being highest?

The BR&E Program:	Low Importance					High Importance				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
a. Demonstrates a pro-business attitude	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	5%	5%	28%	16%	44%
b. Helps firms use state and federal programs	0%	3%	1%	1%	12%	19%	17%	24%	13%	10%
c. Assists firms in solving local problems	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	5%	26%	30%	35%
d. Provides data for economic development	0%	1%	0%	1%	3%	6%	8%	36%	19%	26%
e. Gives early warning of potential closings or expansions	0%	3%	0%	1%	4%	1%	17%	13%	24%	38%

21. Now I'm going to read a number of statements about participating in a BR&E program. As I read these, I'd like you to try to put yourself in the frame of mind you were in as you were considering whether to participate in the BR&E program. After each statement, tell me on a scale of 1 to 10 whether you felt this was an important consideration. 1 means you the factor was a Very Unimportant consideration, while 10 means you felt it was a very important consideration.

	Very Unimportant					Very Important				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
a. This program was a low risk strategy for me.	8%	6%	5%	14%	17%	15%	8%	11%	9%	8%
b. This program will help me learn about businesses in my community.	3%	0%	3%	0%	5%	5%	6%	16%	28%	35%
c. This program will help me develop better contacts with local leaders.	3%	1%	3%	0%	5%	1%	6%	15%	26%	40%
d. It is my civic duty to help the community by participating in this program.	8%	4%	3%	1%	10%	11%	15%	24%	10%	14%

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	Very Unimportant						Very Important			
e. This program will help my organization.	0%	3%	3%	4%	5%	3%	5%	29%	20%	30%
f. This program will help my public relations for my organization.	3%	1%	1%	1%	4%	6%	15%	20%	20%	29%
g. This program will help me develop my social life.	68%	10%	9%	6%	1%	4%	1%	1%	0%	0%
h. This program will be fun.	21%	11%	14%	8%	13%	9%	10%	11%	1%	3%
i. This program will help me share my ideas about how we should promote the community.	10%	4%	4%	5%	14%	8%	14%	19%	11%	13%
j. If we help local firms grow, my personal economic prospects will likely improve.	24%	6%	10%	5%	9%	11%	9%	11%	6%	7%
k. This is needed, local firms have been feeling neglected.	0%	4%	5%	1%	9%	5%	6%	30%	25%	15%
l. This will help firms remain and grow in the community.	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	3%	3%	19%	28%	45%

22. What basic strategies for economic development was your community pursuing before you started the BR&E program? (Answer Yes or No for each one)

a. Working to expand existing business	67.5%
b. Attraction of new manufacturing plants	78.8%
c. Encouraging new business startups	75.0%
d. Capturing more state or federal aid	48.8%
e. Encouraging people to buy more things locally	53.8%
f. Developing tourism	60.0%
g. Improving infrastructure	75.9%
h. Improving the downtown appearance	61.3%
i. Other	17.5%

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23. Which of the following best describes the types of firms you targeted in your BR&E program? (Choose only one)

- 28.8% Manufacturing only
- 1.3% Retail and services only
- 3.8% Tourism firms only
- 5.0% Agricultural firms only
- 61.3% Mixed sectors (combinations of sectors)

24. How many firms did the program ultimately visit? 66.9 firms

25. Now I'm going to ask you a number of questions relating to the status of economic development activities before getting involved in your local Business Retention and Expansion program. For each question, I'd like you to give me a number that describes your reaction, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 10 being "strongly agree".

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
a. Our local economic development activities were poorly coordinated.	13%	9%	18%	6%	14%	13%	10%	9%	4%	6%
b. People in our community had a poor understanding of economic development.	0%	8%	10%	5%	15%	10%	15%	23%	10%	5%
c. Few people were involved in our local economic development efforts.	4%	4%	18%	5%	13%	6%	15%	20%	9%	8%
d. Local people had a poor understanding of business problems.	0%	5%	3%	8%	15%	9%	20%	19%	9%	14%
e. Firms did not understand what resources were available to them.	0%	1%	5%	3%	10%	5%	20%	29%	18%	10%
f. Firms were unlikely to ask for assistance.	0%	4%	1%	6%	5%	8%	19%	19%	17%	22%
g. There were turf battles about economic development.	18%	10%	10%	5%	15%	10%	8%	9%	5%	9%

26. What are the most important things you would emphasize in marketing a local BR&E program?

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APPENDIX II: SURVEY COMMENTS

Question	Response
1	now ongoing
2	had heard about it, not worked with it
3g	County extension agent
4a	“confused” Took a while to grasp project objective
4e	Not worried about time commitment because it was an opportunity to get into the businesses. New in the area at the time.
4c	Enthusiastic
4d	Not sure
4e	somewhat
5	state holding money over our head
5	Not applicable
6	part of funding mechanism
6	Local Economic Development make it mandatory
7d	floods/blizzards demonstrates
7c	core leaders, not grass roots
9	County vs. city- to include all recruited from each city to represent them
9	<p>Port Authority has responsibility for manufacturing BR&E. They thought it was getting into their turf. The non-profit that coordinated the program and brought writer in as a consultant was able to identify how they could HELP the Port Authority ACCESS manufacturers in this neighborhood.</p> <p>An underlying concern was that a high level Port Authority staff member was a graduate of the U of MN. She had a perception that this program (which in MN is through the Univ. Extension Program would not be PRACTICAL and get results (retention). I was able to give her names/references from other MN communities who had used the program and gotten results. It convinced her enough to let us try it. Now she is one of our biggest fans.</p> <p>Last, the foundation that funded the program was excited about the potential. The program officer we worked with is the wife of the former long-term mayor of St. Paul. She is very influential, as is the foundation she works for.</p>
9	Which organization held responsibility. Poorly dealt with and not completely overcome
9	Couple of non-profits wanted to lead. Overcome by collaborative effort
9	Quickly worked out- ensuing happened
10	Time
10	problem was number of people available not being enough... some did extra work, some interviews not done
10	Lack of training is problem Standardized the survey & sent pairs on interviews
10	This person participated in all visits as “backseat” to provide consistency
10	Trained volunteers and focused on confidentiality
10	From administrative end- training

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Question	Response
10	In regular meetings did sample visitations, role play
10	some conflicts with businesses appointed to visit. Would change if necessary. - Wondered if enough probing could be done. "If allowed to be in there, visitors should feel comfortable to keep asking questions"
10	Resolved itself by expertise of volunteers. Knew the businesses being visited
10	training session
10	Training- selective when choosing volunteers
10	identified task force members from original group, asked volunteers, training sessions
10	overcome with training with videos and discussions
10	Poorly overcome and had negative impact on program
10	Provided volunteer training. One of two had to attend.
10	Problem- would any volunteers use information for personal gain? Solved- were told that if this occurred, no longer allowed to participate. Also selected volunteers
10	Staff and community development conducted visits
10	Concern that it was technology oriented. Had to customize, educate and discuss. 1.5 years training.
10	Time involved and consistency. Overcome in training & stated specified time frame involved
10	Concerns about consistency and reliability. Business volunteers, could they use time correctly or would they be selling their own business. Addressed by training which was part of the state package and sent volunteers in pairs
10	Very small community. Which people to send where? Identified businesses, then some were assigned & some chose
10	Training- overcome false preconceptions
10	Concerned about numbers needed at 2 people per visit. Weren't sure they could find that many. Good response from the community.
10	Strong desire by one leadership team member to hire one person to do all the surveys and have the surveys be open ended. We pilot tested & re-pilot tested a survey instrument with some open-ended questions and some close-ended questions. When leadership team members saw how difficult it was to compile the open-ended questions, they were more open to the new instrument. They also began to see the value of the LEARNING by the individuals who conducted the survey. Eventually, with reservations, they allowed the survey to happen using volunteers.
10	volunteers not "aware" of industrial business. NO college students will be used again.
10	Time allotment and distance involved concern. Recruited geographically to avoid. Coordinator helped.
10	tremendous concerns, overcome
10	-Recruiting enough volunteers. - Many phone calls
10	Coordinators hadn't worked with volunteers. Apprehensive about interest in helping. People <u>did</u> volunteer.
10	Training individuals and public. Newspaper, mailings, TV and radio
10	2 hour per visit time limit
10	Training programs & "dos and don'ts" sheet
11	Training stressed
11	Not after they were trained!
11	as in #10. Not sure it was upheld

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Question	Response
11	training
11	training emphasis
11	Recording the name & address & coming back -Explained the procedure thoroughly
11	Same as #10
11	not a concern because volunteers were selected carefully
11	Very small town- staff sworn to code, volunteers not
11	Methodology taught and stressed how it would be maintained through process
11	Attempted through training, trust issue
11	Training
11	Not strong concern. Training emphasized
11	small town. 1- Training 2- non-controversial persons chosen
11	This was main concern- State came in with INTENSIVE training. Points- 1- conduct 2- privileged information
11	Somewhat. Training covered
11	Stressed throughout the process
11	Through training
11	Training emphasis
11	People like to talk
11	Training- stressed coded surveys. Only 2 coordinators knew i.d. key. Secure location for surveys
11	Very aware during training to cover this
11	Program leader conveyed the importance of confidentiality well in traing- that message went to the community as well
11	Training of interviewers
12	Not that couldn't generate money, but concerned about total. Rumors named huge amounts. Squashed.
12	Volunteer hours needed & effort on their part
12	yes, before state involvement. Job development kicked in
12	Utility and University funded
12	two local banks provided after state funds
12	Wanted partnership with businesses vs. falling exclusively on to extension. Worked hard to recruit funds
12	Program seen as a need, sought funds & contributions
12	Didn't prove to be a problem. State coop funded with a utility and university
12	applying for grants
12	Sprint telephone covered the costs
12	Used sponsors within the community
12	Would there be enough to cover the program? 1- Sponsors from business community were found and was put into city government budget

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Question	Response
12	All kicked in to help
12	Program funding not discussed/Sponsoring group footed bill but never clarified. Program introduced as “going to happen”
12	applied/received grants
12	Local business volunteers concerned about lost business time. Explained that funding from state & coverage were provided
12	Didn't have money. Secured corporate sponsorships and chamber contributed
12	Economic Development Authority paid for survey & also a scholarship received from U of MN
12	State grant
12	Problem, lack of resources for coordinating time Solved, private fund raising
12	Only initial concerns. Quick community support followed
12	Received fund grant
12	2 utilities were underwriting. Conflict toward end of program
12	Partial U funding
13	follow through
13	Whether or not beyond local level action would take place expediently. Unfounded concern
13	Doesn't come out of legitimate body whose job it is to follow-up. Not worked out because it is no one's mission - Based on availability of time of people involved. Short-term life span depending upon leadership. - Chamber level has leadership turnover that - If done by the city, would add legitimacy to the program.
13	Afraid at end there may be problem addressing needs. Some resolved/some not
13	Problem- skepticism by businesses Solved- get them involved in process
13	unfamiliarity
13	We've done lots of these types of programs in the past, spend thousands of dollars and nothing is done with the results
13	Implementation of results found. Not sure this has been resolved as yet.
13	Initially- “another survey?” Red flags immediately brought to those who could change things. Problems quickly addressed to those concerned
13	Recently done survey not followed through at state level - Explained that this would be done at local level
13	Concern about 'return' from program
13	In that once we get information, what will we do with it?
13	Results
13	Attempted by different organization that had no follow-up. We were just determined to go & make follow-up a priority. Attached to persons as part of job
13	People skeptical. Not sure all convinced. Businesses that were helped became believers
13	Thought they wouldn't find anything new -Explained people in the community all involved & all looking for solutions
13	1- Pre-packaged format relying on quantitative questions. Group felt qualitative necessary prior to survey. 2- for volunteers to talk with business, felt more open-ended discussion should take place first. Committee & BR&E people not on same page. Group wanted something different (not qualitative survey). Survey was revamped to some degree to compensate. Did create open response with qualitative numbers.
13	Implementing recommendation, long-term still being looked at

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Question	Response
13	Not all overcome. Surveys presented at large. Not as much follow up as would like. Group didn't do. Program design good.
13	"just another study" - follow up! Meeting at end was well done
13	Assumed existing business knew what they were doing. Not much we can tell them
13	State initiatives were repetitive and nothing happened as a result of them. Wanted to know how this would be different from prior "same idea" programs
13	Initially wanted to know how results would be dealt with/follow up
13	not honest/forthright about problems and concerns
13	Concerns about facilitators providing adequate attention to program started
13	Would not have tried program if they did not think it would be effective
13	Haven't worked through completely
13	problem- how to implement the program at the end. Not yet finished
13	Continuity- make sure that follow through is done. Broke into 3 phases according to business sector. Used each for Chamber's following year of work.
13	Primarily how survey would be used with large vs "in house" business & whether effective. Still being worked out
13	Intro. Pieces weren't finalized at start. Survey itself and data not complete, had no visuals
13	Follow-up questions. Kept handle & made sure issues acted upon
14	"Busy factor" -No more than 3 calls per visitor
14	Keeping momentum going. Communication helped to maintain this
14	Tackled one sector each year because of reason stated in #13
14	organized and efficient/ relied on volunteers
14	Distance (as in prior answer)
14	Not completion but time for each interview. Both volunteer and business time factor. Difficulty in length vs. time; detail vs. saving time
14	Perception of time involved
14	Major. Way it's set up. Rural area travel time vs. time necessary at own job. Not sure was overcome in all areas.
14	Set aside regular work as much as possible to follow through and complete program
14	Dedicated people only reason it is still happening. Extended program has made it difficult. Too long a time to work on single project
14	Maintained core group of 10 consistently involved
14	Always time is precious. First program done with manufacturing, 2 nd on retail not worth the time
14	When results were beginning to arrive, difficulty became unimportant.
14	Use volunteers a lot. They were already overextended. Used as many volunteers as possible to cut per volunteer time
14	Had to create time & made it priority
14	Yes because of commitment to make ongoing effort after state got out. Question of time for BR&E vs. recruitment
14	paid staff
14	Did take more than expected

Factors Influencing Participation in BR&E Programs: A Study of Local Coordinators in Six States

Question	Response
14	Personal problem. Longer time frame than originally thought. Felt it was worth it
14	Job descriptions outlining amount of time
14	Single business owners were concerned about no one running the business while this was happening
14	People being trained, instrument prepared in time to respond during time period wanted. Prepared 6-8 months prior. It did work.
14	Greater than a year and a half to complete. Longer than anticipated
14	Followed schedule. When introduce to the program, make sure it was well understood before attempting
14	problem until dividing duties by job description
14	Time concern for volunteers. It did stretch out over longer period of time. Made the questionnaire more deliberate. Asked questions which could be dealt with
14	End result was specific to community and worth time invested
14	Made a time line and stuck to it
14	Power of persuasion, different people (division of labor). Carried load when needed
14	small office. Scheduled carefully to avoid problems. Not bogged down badly. Volunteers coordinated other areas.
14	Many projects going on/ took longer than initially estimated
14	the first time we ran the program, it took many months to complete-this time, start to finish, 9 weeks! Much better!
14	Key person left shortly after beginning
14	Yes, Extension staff did, but felt it was needed
14	Once places identified teams formed and time was broken down well
14	Overcome by limiting the number of volunteer visits & the total number of meetings
14	yes, overcome iwth decision that BR&E was strong priority
14	Cooperation with extension and members involved in program. Briefed people on amount of interview.
14	Initially, no. Later, personnel changes in state team effected processing of data. 1 year to get 1 st draft of tabulated information. 6 months for final. Commitment level for those who came in not the same. Should be a back-up person to take over if someone leaves.
14	Volunteers amount of time, quarterly meetings and subcommittees met once a month
14	showed interview, gave definite meeting times and amounts. Approximately 7-8 hours per person. Stuck to it
14	Staggering- time needed expressed up front so all prepared from start
15	total participants (50net)
15	task force at 40- all areas involved who could address issues that came up
16l	Planning commission
16l	Golf courses & ski hill
16l	student- high school
16l	Local governmental officials
16l	Farm credit
16l	School-to-work coordinators

Factors Influencing Participation in BR&E Programs: A Study of Local Coordinators in Six States

Question	Response
16a	none
16l	Extension
16	multiple chambers
16l	Montessori
16l	extension
16l	McKnight Foundation and University United (non-profit business owners)
16l	Municipal officials and regional planning commission
16l	Regional development council
16l	Tourism board member, airport commission, real estate
16d	Pub schools- minimally
16l	public/private economic organization (non-profit)
16	other- Regional Development Commission Civic Leaders
16l	residents
17a	We wanted more ethnic minorities involved but the leaders of these organizations are VERY busy. They were interested but we were unable to recruit. (We did have persons of color involved but a disproportionally small #)
17a	Banks- talking to others' customers
17b	other- time
17c	Somewhat. Many agreed to be interviewed
17a	Public high school businesses classes. Religious groups. Senior citizens
17a	Power company
17a	Chamber & public officials
17a	schools (superintendents)
17a	Senior citizens, educators/teachers (only administration involved)
17c	a couple did, couple did not Questions about working with and confidentiality
17a	Community/commercial clubs
17c	Did attend final report meeting
17a	Businesses
17c	convinced by appeal from volunteers
17c	one of the cities involved has moved on to the next phase, the other currently has not. Still not enough support from the government units. Feel more would have come out of it for longer range planning
17a	more businesses/schools
17a	youth
17c	High school juniors asked to profile community. Ask them what they see and how they would change community/jobs/etc
17a	governmental
17	Hindsight- some would have liked to see 100% backing by governmental units

Factors Influencing Participation in BR&E Programs: A Study of Local Coordinators in Six States

Question	Response
17c	some. Senior citizens- civic duty
17a	More chambers & large businesses
17a	Three businesses declined to be interviewed
17a	Although we spoke to local Rotarians, I feel they should have been more involved. Rotary Club
17c	Knowing they would have resources when process complete
17a	various local politicians and businesses large and small
17c	-Started to see genuine issues communicated - People not hiding. Discussing issues.
17c	Relationships and opportunity to effect broad policy in area. Persistence and commitment. Follow-up with critical voice
17a	Local administrator (personal differences-now gone) Mayor of largest city
17a	technical colleges
17a	Ind. Bd (?)did not exist
17a	Local officials
17a	School administration (1 teacher was involved)
17b	speculate... small community officials have jobs Officials don't understand effects of businesses on community
17c	Got on executive board (planning committee). Not visiting, but acting with program
17	Job service
18	private fund raising
18	Grant, county commissioners kicked in
18	Went for private sector businesses
18	Establishing track record, then funding came. "Best money ever invested" (from a sponsor)
18	Most interested in attracting new business. Chamber took hit
18	End of program - Did not pay final bill. Was utilities responsibility
18	Lots of process
18	Confusion between local and state government about who was paying for one area. Not large amount of money
18	EDA picked up tab
18	from one major sponsor
18	1 business provided funds & government facilities/ local & schools
18	Wrote a foundation grant and got funding. Foundation gave follow-up grant for implementation
19f	personal
19h	importance of organization upgraded early in the process
19e	deterrent
19h	pushed over edge to do it
19d	university
19h	too canned

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Question	Response
19c	autonomy to choose businesses
20d	New information most helpful
20b	not applicable
21j	not valid question
21i	Implementor, not policy maker
21g	"0"
21k	If interviewee had felt this was the case, it would have been an important consideration. Not the case in this area
21d	not valid question
21a	not valid question
21f	The EDA
22i	Improve business climate
22h	downtown changed to neighborhood
22i	Educating on economy
22i	Active chamber, redevelopment of defective land, active one on one participation/communication with companies
22i	partnership building- people connections
22b	white collar/technology stressed
22i	Personnel Search & Ed Community
22l	Financing tools
22g	Attitude- "Main St. gonna roll up anyway"
22g	other- improve housing needs
22a-h	All somewhat on irregular basis through chambers
22i	customer service & marketing education
22g	Youth program development
22i	Historic district preservation
23	chose mixed sectors, targeted manufacturing
23	Technology focus
24	5 sent back/ no visitors
25e	More confusion than not understanding whether grants offered vs. applied for
26	"two pronged sword" - Vehicle for local chamber to get in to help existing businesses feel they have a say in what would happen and that community cared about them. - Locals had a communication opportunity with economics of existing businesses and how it effects them. Excellent, well organized , practical public relations
26	Companies need to feel welcome and that local residents have a stake in existing business. - Demonstrates to businesses that people care. Builds good will amongst community members

Factors Influencing Participation in BR&E Programs: A Study of Local Coordinators in Six States

Question	Response
26	The whole concept of BR&E representatives listening to the committee and customizing (eventually) the survey to fit the needs of the community. Community requested it should happen or they felt the program would not work. - It was the more open-ended questions that resulted in the BEST responses. Technology is sensitive to availability of government resources. Feels that without the tailoring that took place of the survey, companies wouldn't have benefitted the way they did.
26	This would be a survey that would produce results
26	Results in retention
26	1- Assistance local businesses get from various programs 2- Trustworthy folks to keep confidences need to be found & we're there to help you THE BUSINESSES
26	All benefit- program is not dependent on the size of an operation
26	- Cooperation with local business community. - Utilizes skills of community volunteers
26	Local community and people give input to develop a "Program of Work" - Able to find what is important and address issues. - Used first survey to document findings (e.g., worker's comp) and as a result changed state laws later. Overall savings as a result. - Information used for future community growth based on companies planning for the future and the need for employees, land, etc.
26	1- Value of finding red flags 2- Raise awareness of public that existing business has GREAT value. Reality- quietly businesses can grow and don't receive enough attention. Locals get involved 3- University source validated results because it is independent of Chamber whom you would expect to say good things
26	Local. Allows orderly & comprehensive view of local community. No other program does this. Communication & economic development. In this program there were 3 counties to start (clustered) Now 4 or 5 because this allowed a way to establish and write by-laws then used as a resource for future. It started communication, qualified them for grants, involved WVU, and serves as introduction to communities.
26	1- Improved understanding of existing businesses and their concerns and issues. 2- Reinforce to businesses their importance to the community and their influence on the economic health of the community.
26	Just that- strong PR before, during and after.
26	Government not backing up what they were told by business reps. - Hurt Develop Foundation's credibility - Negative impact overall. State agencies "lukewarm" in response to what was done - Smaller team with more vested interest. People not willing or don't have time to commit. - Credibility of volunteers and people in executive spots not part of the community. They don't give volunteers their time. Had high hopes for the process. Program design brought credibility but it just didn't work. - Could be apathy amongst people participating not necessarily program itself. Know it has worked and worked very well in other communities.
26	1- Program WELL structured. State offered partners in the program with those who were established. Community "plugged" in and added volunteers to already existing structure. 2- Key to selling the program, Tom did EXCELLENT job of training and survey preparation. 3- Univ of KY made costs nominal and made it vrey easy for communities to implement it. "No brainer" whose results would be very important to the community.
26	- Attention it gets to existing industries. They feel left out in needs being met. They stated "Much goes to new business". Helped give them priority. - Issues came up that were "perceptions" and not costly to solve. Some tangibles were also easily solved at low cost.
26	- Diversity of involvement & process. Major community organizations involved. Broader base allows for integrated communication & better understanding. - Strong leadership in planning & more than one person was a good thing here
26	1- Promotes pro-business attitude 2- Stronger business environment "Businesses found out someone cared that they were there" 3- Better relationship between businesses & Chamber 4- Local citizens involved in economic development
26	1- Involvement of local people. Educational opportunities on both sides 2- Something for existing businesses. New idea (for small rural area especially). Message should be gotten out- New industry comes from EXISTING businesses and how they feel in the community. "Felt good that someone had come to interview them"
26	- Good opportunity to get other community members involved in economics, not just economic development people - Helps them realize that existing business contributes heavily to economy and is very important to maintaining the community

Factors Influencing Participation in BR&E Programs: A Study of Local Coordinators in Six States

Question	Response
26	-Relationship with industrial leaders is established or strengthened. Value of having relationship with leaders is what determines future success. -Reinforce to leaders concern of community for THEIR Well being and success. Community is willing to work with them to solve problems.
26	Statistical survey had been done but never have interpreted the data to assess what needs to be done. Could go to public with general results and were able to pinpoint issues for businesses. - Analyzed by outside person and this lends credibility without bias.
26	1- Personal contact with one on one interview process gave a good reason for visiting. It "legitimized" the visit and gave visitors a foot in the door 2- Confidentiality has to be stressed to get honest answers 3- Builds trust 4- Follow-up is very important on OVERALL basis. Both on specifics and generalities. 5- Built credibility for organization doing visits
26	- Opportunity to understand local economy - Business people express concerns, volunteers come away with much better understanding of economics in local area. - If everyone could have been involved, think all would patronize local business
26	Key- get people involved early & educating Training- businesses attend & conduct mock interviews. Attached to higher education for data analysis. Rural community folks attached credibility to this fact. Gave something to do with data when it came back
26	Retention- have to sell members of community concerned with future prosperity. Program removes barriers to their prosperity - Extended awareness to those not otherwise involved. Raises awareness
26	1- Boggled down with project as a result of BR&E "Improving Basic Skills of the Work Force" Sizeable project that was too long term vs. immediate results. This was important to the interviewees. * A business has responded with a school-to-work program & taken a leadership role in this project. 2- Opened up a new dialog between political forces & business/economic developers
26	#Make sure all areas in community are involved. Key to success of program
26	Liz Templin was instrumental in whole process- cuts to chase. - One on one contact. - Initial meeting with high level political leader - Focused and timely customer friendly follow-up on identified business issues "Walk Your Talk"
26	- Focus on results and understanding economic base in community - Communication of business owners and community. - Really listen to businesses. Gives them understanding they are important. What can we do to keep you and make you happy? - Resources available especially to businesses perhaps in very rural areas who may not have access to information
26	1- Learning about local business 2- Shows genuine interest and concern for maintaining local businesses.
26	Allows finding what businesses want & need. - Linkages & greater cooperation/participation arise between public & private sectors.
26	the link with city & chambers produced the ability to collect data which can be used long-term by planners, etc. in the area.
26	Fact that commitment came from across the community. Leadership shared, not 1 or 2 organizations. Spread responsibilities. Good communications. * Interested in whether the size of the community is accounted for in this survey's results
26	1- Identifies barriers to expansion 2- Identifies opportunities to partner. 3- Aides job creation. 4- BR&E one of the most likely to be successful for a rural area. 5- Creates good will
26	Better understanding by Task Force members of technology uses and infrastructure needs of hi-tech firms in Dakota County
26	1- Proper selection of Steering committee. Good cross section of community vs. "good ol' boys:" 2- What is AVAILABLE to firms. Isolation factor is diminished.
26	1- Early warning of problems with major firm were found here 2- Generation of data for local businesses. 3- Forming contacts and relationships in business community. Gets a lot of community members involved in local economic development process.
26	- Results of places where it's been done. Would be able to see actual results of the program - Timeliness should be aggressive & made as short as possible
26	1- Creating links among persons in the area (one on one with direction setting purpose) 2- Credible way to get in the door with people you wouldn't normally be able to see. 3- Systemized and professional nature allows entry to corporations, etc. that might otherwise not participate.

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Question	Response
26	FOLLOW THROUGH!! Gather & develop plan to meet needs expressed 2- Committed, organized coordinator. Changes in personnel become time consuming & can throw wrench in program 3- Can be a wonderful tool if you use it right 4- If not followed up on, program can do damage to community relations
26	1- Focus on existing businesses 2- Concern for problems effecting local businesses 3- Demonstrate that officials are committed to address community issues.
26	According to community size, identify 1 or 2 groups who very much want to find out this type of information. These core people become leadership and it is important - "Time" at first looks like a huge amount, but actually it isn't - Good facilitators
26	1- Red flag business people. Details that were becoming big obstacles identified. Were often easily overcome. 2- Outside resources could be brought in to assist local owners. E.g., bookkeeping, record keeping. 3- some businesses really weren't aware of possible resources to assist their company. E.g., grants, small business authority
26	-Red flags brought to surface and able to get documentation to prove the problem -Information from survey uses subsequently to secure large grant for the area from the state.
26	- Communities looking to ATTRACT can do that by taking care of who's there & who needs to be identified, e.g., welders. Those already there can point out weaknesses much more quickly than a new business coming in. - Active in helping businesses that are there. - Clarified goals & objectives by the process used
26	- Stories about how minor things can give businesses major heartburn. Some solutions are very simple and can prevent a loss of existing businesses. - volunteers learned a lot of economic development knowledge. Helped increase future volunteer base.
26	1- Education awareness to community. 2- Start-up organization. Great tool to get folks involved immediately. 3- Life cycle of organization, "market intelligence" helps gain solid footing 4- More personalized survey format could help address business recruitment as well as retention. Can be done as recruitment at the start also. Gets community more excited and interested.
26	- for ALL businesses, not just the major corporations. Benefits whole community. - Educates many on what goes on economically. Especially rural are. Helps each understand other area and brings them together.
26	Brought people together. Best prospects are for further growth and enables us to present strategies and actions to allow growth & survival.
26	No substitute for getting in and meeting people! Without this, don't think you would get in or be able to work together. People reluctant to bring small problems, easily solved, up. This program provided vehicle to solve these quickly and to address large issues.
26	Credibility of the program itself
26	1- Generates economic information on health of business economy and current satisfaction with business size. (Some too busy) 2- good forum for communication. Let know for businesses what help is there and got information. Weren't aware businesses wanted certain information that we could easily give them. 3- Local people helping THEMSELVES
26	-Easy to do. - Important that the first representation of the program is done by strong leadership. - UTILIZE results of survey. If it doesn't happen program is useless. - Same people involved that are always involved. Program allowed this participant to know & recognize some of these people. - Wonderful experience. So well done by extension group at the University that it was then understandable and very professional. Organizational excellence.
26	1- Business retention and expansion 2- Bring in new businesses and opened up communications between 3- Good foundation for economic growth
26	- Ability to show local businesses where to obtain help for their problems - Development of solutions to some of these problems. WORTHWHILE PROGRAM
26	Community involvement- KEY
26	- Brings different segments of the community together that may not talk but have similar problems - 3-4 key issues that needed to be addressed across the board to be dealt with long term were identified
26	Outcomes- what happens as a result of the program -Businesses have stated the results of the program
26	1- Benefit to all 2- Grassroots needs assessment 3- Builds a sense of community

Factors Influencing Participation in BR&E Programs: A Study of Local Coordinators in Six States

Question	Response
26	Connection between community and business. Dialog's opened. - Importance of participation of businesses and residents for improvement of economic development
26	- Built relations amongst people between business sectors (public) - Improved understanding of business concerns - Showed that people cared - Government together with businesses. Saved 2 businesses who were moving to expand. They remained and provided 300 new jobs. - New businesses did open as result of BR&E. Large economic impact on area.
26	1- good community tool 2- Reference for future projects and ideas. Crosses chamber and economic development 3- Threads county, city, chamber, tourism. Good for state, recognizable as a good thing for all.
26	1- Requires community involvement 2- Learn to LISTEN to the people who are telling you what their needs are!
26	Key- follow up and inclusive. Actions planned & carried out after surveys are completed
26	- Raised respect level of community members toward businesses - Good time to build morale & find out what the businesses need. - Local people involved - Be very inclusive & flexible, though this was not part of the program. This person felt it was necessary for area's farms to be more informal - "Tailor it to needs of the community" - Local people are in charge - Not university extension but local program run by local people - Identified projects that needed to be done & allowed follow-up and one-on-one education. Reinforced direction that needed to be taken. Grants, etc. were gotten. Results gave support for follow-up efforts.
26	Gets local officials talking to businesses, not just people -Helps local folks develop understanding of how the sectors impact their community - True partnership is critical among businesses, lenders & public officials * * Felt the survey was designed for businesses- this person was working with dairy **
26	Jobs
26	One on one meeting! Gave employer feeling of being paid attention to. They also had the ability to ask questions. Majority of businesses are servie, not much money available
26	Lets businesses feel they're cared about - Visits let them know what's available for them - Feel they're wanted in the community and valuable
26	-Involved locals working as a team for the first time -Helped business growth -Improved access to new resources for businesses
26	1- majority of businesses had no idea of resources at all levels. Now have available readily. Created a resource "card" for all businesses in community listing phone numbers of all resources available. 2- Local and state government not aware of businesses in trouble until this. 3- Opened line of communication between businesses and municipality. 4- PRIDE brought back to the community. Business community brought together through interviews and public forum.
26	-Making sure you're bringing lots of public awareness. Businesses feel they are being invested in. Personal visits are excellent. Gets local government involved. - Businesses can comment on local issues, not just state & federal. Small issues can be addressed, e.g., kids "hanging out" - Needs EXTENSIVE follow-up. People will not invest time next time the survey arrives if results are not acted on
26	Communication amongst businesses, communication from businesses to government and community's future are all positively impacted. 1- Business owners felt isolated from community and no communication with other businesses or government. BOTH ADDRESSED and have gone forward 2- Make businesses aware of available resources not used before. 3- by going out and taking we were able to write several successful grants. The data collected was used in this case and for other things. Program has expanded since this one and gone on to other communities.
26	It helps get in touch with needs of existing businesses
26	The bringing together of 30-40 people and their ideas in an attempt to make an impact
26	- Public and private partnership in identified concerns of local businesses. - Proactive in identifying needs. Had hands-on opportunity to help businesses. - Volunteers probably would never have had a chance to meet with a company CEO for any other reason. - Attempted to implement for retail and found it almost impossible. "Do not have time to meet with you, I have to run my business", was common thing heard. Retailers want help but won't allow those who can provide it in to facilitate the help being gotten.
26	-Simplify -Results -Action
17b3	big problem. Sent people from outside (state people)
17b5	follow through?

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Question	Response
17b7	staffing concerns
17b7	Thought it would take too much time for interview. E.g., 1- small business, only owner& one employee running & couldn't get away & 2- Credibility of getting results from interview
17b7	Public officials may have had concerns that very costly solutions would arise and this may have hindered their wanting to participate
17b7	Return on investment
17b7	weren't committed 100%
17b7	staffing
17b7	Time factor
17b7	Time issue, very interested
17b7	Lack of interest in community activism/volunteerism

**The Department of Food and Resource Economics
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of Delaware**

The Department of Food and Resource Economics carries on an extensive and coordinated program of teaching, organized research, and public service in a wide variety of the following professional subject matter areas:

Subject Matter Areas

Agricultural Finance	Natural Resource Management
Agricultural Policy and Public Programs	Operations Research and Decision Analysis
Environmental and Resource Economics	Price and Demand Analysis
Food and Agribusiness Management	Rural and Community Development
Food and Fiber Marketing	Statistical Analysis and Research Methods
International Agricultural Trade	

The department's research in these areas is part of the organized research program of the Delaware Agricultural Experiment Station, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Much of the research is in cooperation with industry partners, other state research stations, the USDA, and other State and Federal agencies. The combination of teaching, research, and service provides an efficient, effective, and productive use of resources invested in higher education and service to the public. Emphasis in research is on solving practical problems important to various segments of the economy.

The department's coordinated teaching, research, and service program provides professional training careers in a wide variety of occupations in the food and agribusiness industry, financial institutions, and government service. Departmental course work is supplemented by courses in other disciplines, particularly in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the College of Business and Economics. Academic programs lead to degrees at two levels: Bachelor of Science and Masters of Science. Course work in all curricula provides knowledge of tools and techniques useful for decision making. Emphasis in the undergraduate program centers on developing the student's managerial ability through three different areas, Food and Agricultural Business Management, Natural Resource Management, and Agricultural Economics. The graduate program builds on the undergraduate background, strengthening basic knowledge and adding more sophisticated analytical skills and business capabilities. The department also cooperates in the offering of an MS and Ph.D. degrees in the inter disciplinary Operations Research Program. In addition, a Ph.D. degree is offered in cooperation with the Department of Economics.

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