



Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center

Michigan Minimum Wage Law

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm signed legislation that will give hundreds of thousands of workers in Michigan a pay raise. Senate Bill 318 increases the state's minimum wage from \$5.15 per hour to \$7.40 per hour over the next two years. The minimum wage has not been increased since 1997.

The details of the new law are as follows:

- Effective October 1, 2006, increase the minimum wage to \$6.95 per hour;
- Effective July 1, 2007, increase the minimum wage to \$7.15 per hour;
- Effective July 1, 2008, increase the minimum wage to \$7.40 per hour.

Employers of two or more people who are at least 16 years of age and who work on the premises of their employer or at a fixed site designated by that employer are covered under Michigan's minimum wage law.

Exemptions apply to employers subject to the minimum wage provisions of the FLSA; persons employed in summer camps for not more than four months; and fruit, pickle, and tomato growers.

The proposal contains no cost of living adjustments beyond that point, does not change the payroll wage for tipped servers, preserves the sub-minimum youth training wage, and does not create new fines or penalties for employers.

Please visit this website for the full article:

<http://www.michigan.gov/cis/0,1607,7-154-27673-139644--,00.html>



Inside this issue:

<i>Minimum Wage Law</i>	1
<i>MI-SBTDC Client Highlight</i>	1
<i>Frequently Asked Questions</i>	2
<i>General Business Counseling</i>	2
<i>Small Business Tips</i>	3
<i>Upcoming Trainings & Programs</i>	3
<i>MI-SBTDC Staff Contact Information</i>	4
<i>MI-SBTDC Training</i>	4
<i>Map to Regional Center</i>	4
<i>Search Engines</i>	4

Region 8 of Michigan's MI-SBTDC is hosted by Lansing Community College

MI-SBTDC CLIENT HIGHLIGHT: Margaret Hunters, LLC

Patricia Steele had over 30 years of retail experience when she decided to enter the world of entrepreneurship with her business Margret Hunters, LLC, a retail store specializing in high-end women's apparel. She came to the Livingston County MI-SBTDC Satellite Office, hosted by Greater Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce, in 1991 while in search of a location for her future company. Business Consultant Dennis Whitney worked with Patricia in researching available locations and preparing a business plan while providing networking resources for accounting, legal and banking requirements.



Patricia received a \$105,000 loan from LaSalle Bank in addition to an SBA loan to purchase the building, while also contributing \$90,000 of her own private owner investment capital. Margret Hunters, LLC officially opened on October 5, 1992 and became a leader in the revival of the Brighton Main Street shopping area.

In 2005, Patricia approached the MI-SBTDC concerned about her position and viability in the marketplace. With assistance, she was able to continue and enhance her relationship with her banker, revise her marketing to target core customers and realign staffing to provide a consistent service level. Today, Margret Hunters, LLC has over \$400,000 in sales, has increased its employee base and has launched a website in response to the increasing number of statewide customers.

Frequently Asked Questions:



What does marketing involve?

Marketing is your most important operational concern. There are four basic aspects of marketing often called the “four P’s”:

- * **Product:** A description of the item or service you sell.
- * **Price:** The amount you charge for your product or service.
- * **Promotion:** The ways you inform your market as to who, what and where you are.
- * **Place:** The distribution channels you use to offer the product to the customer.

As you can see, marketing encompasses much more than just advertising and selling. For example, a major part of marketing involves researching your customers: What do they want? What can they afford? What do they think? Your understanding and application of the answers to such questions play a major role in the success or failure of your business

This Cooperative Agreement is partially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration. SBA's funding is not an endorsement of any products, opinions, or services. All SBA funded programs are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.

General Business Counseling: Protecting Your Ideas

It's not easy to think about ideas as property, but for some businesses it's vital. Most of us have had an idea for a new product or service only to dismiss, postpone, or neglect it. Sometimes we later find that others had the same idea, but took it to market before we did. By that time, it is too late for us to take advantage of the idea.

Ideas are relatively easy to come by, but inventions are more difficult. It takes knowledge, time, money, and effort to refine an idea into a workable invention, even on paper. Turning an invention into an innovation - a new product accepted by the marketplace - takes a lot of effort and a little luck. There are substantial barriers in the path of those who pursue innovation. Overcoming them requires careful planning and plenty of input from others.

Hundreds of thousands of inventors and innovators file each year for protection under U.S. patent, trademark and copyright laws. However, it can be hard to decide which of the three vehicles is most appropriate for the protection of a particular invention. Although a single product or service may require a patent, a trademark, and a copyright, each category protects a distinct aspect of a creative work or expression.

Patents, copyrights and trademarks, as well as know-how or trade secrets, are often collectively referred to as intellectual property. Many firms have such property without even being aware of it or of the need to take measures to protect it.

Many people's notions of intellectual property are unrealistic. Some believe, for example, that simply having a patent on a product

will enable one to succeed in the marketplace. Consequently, they may spend thousands of dollars to obtain the exclusive rights to market something that no one wants or can afford to buy. Others may decide that intellectual property protection is not worth the trouble.

People who may not be interested in protecting their own rights must still take precautions to avoid infringing on the rights of others. This calls for more than the avoidance of copying. Some copying is unavoidable; but one can easily infringe on the rights of others without deliberately imitating specific features of goods or services.

More information about intellectual property:

[U.S. Patent and Trademark Office - Patent Section](#)
[U.S. Patent and Trademark Office - Trademark Section](#)
[U.S. Copyright Office](#)

Small Business Tips: Five Rules of Customer Care

Critical to keeping customers happy is understanding them and the way they think. For example, customers do business on the basis of emotional desire: they want what they want -- when they want it. Customers also tend to gravitate toward a company or group of people they like. Plus, most customers have a strong tendency to stick with businesses with which they are familiar, and are slow to change buying habits unless given a very good reason.

However, when they are displeased, even by a small disappointment or discourteous word, various surveys have revealed that customers tell from seven to 11 people about their dissatisfaction.

An important key to serving customers well is this: don't try to change them. Here are five specific steps to help you take full advantage of the critical element of customer care:

1. Conduct your own survey. Profit from the ideas, suggestions and complaints of your present and former customers. Talk and meet with your customers. Ask questions. Learn their attitudes, what they want and what they dislike.

2. Check employees' telephone manners periodically. This link is particularly important for small businesses, as bad telephone handling can undermine other constructive efforts to build a profitable enterprise.

3. Rules such as prompt answering and a cheerful attitude of helpfulness are of critical importance. Have someone whose voice is unfamiliar play the role of a customer or prospective customer, preferably a difficult one.

4. Make customer service a team effort. Use group meetings, memos, posters and in-house publications to build customer consciousness throughout the organization. Continually drive home the crucial rule that getting and holding customers requires team play, and invite employee ideas.

5. Extend your efforts after hours. It's the friendly feelings people have that draw them to you and your business. Take advantage of the relaxed atmosphere of social occasions or a neighborly chat over the back fence to turn friends into customers, or to reinforce the loyalty of existing ones.

Upcoming Trainings & Programs:

www.misbtdc.org/region8

Trainings

E-Commerce: Intro to Online Selling
September 19, 2006
6:30pm—9:00pm
Cost: \$50 per person or 2 for \$90

Legal Issues in Starting a Small Business
September 26, 2006
6:00pm—8:00pm
Cost: \$25 per person or 2 for \$45

Building a Successful Marketing Plan
October 11, 2006
8:30am—12:00pm
Cost: \$70 per person or 2 for \$125

Steps in Developing a Business Plan
October 19, 2006
12:30pm—4:00pm
Cost: \$90 per person or 2 for \$160

Financials with QuickBooks: Intro level

October 20, 2006
8:30am—5:00pm
Cost: \$125 per person or 2 for \$225

Finding the Money: Investors and Bankers

October 25, 2006
9:00am—11:00am
Cost: \$25 per person or 2 for \$45

Financials with QuickBooks: Advanced level

December 1, 2006
8:30am—5:00pm
Cost: \$125 per person or 2 for \$225

For more training information or to register call (517) 483-9853 or visit www.misbtdc.org/region8

Programs

Evening with the Experts
October 10, 2006
6:00pm—9:00pm
Cost: FREE
To register call (517) 483-1921

Business Basics Orientations
Offered Bimonthly, Wednesdays
12:00pm—1:30pm
Cost: FREE
To register call (517) 483-1921



MI-SBTDC Staff in Region 8

Regional Center

Bo Garcia
Regional Director
MI-SBTDC — Lansing
(517) 483-1921

Thomas Donaldson
Senior Business Consultant
MI-SBTDC — Lansing
(517) 483-1921

Kellie Hanford
Certified Business Consultant
MI-SBTDC — Lansing
(517) 483-1921

Satellite Center

Dennis Whitney
Satellite Director
MI-SBTDC — Brighton
(810) 227-5086

Affiliate Offices

Ionia County Economic Alliance
Diane Smith, Executive Director
545 Apple Tree Dr.
Ionia, MI 48846
(616) 527-8014

Lansing Community Micro-
Enterprise Loan Fund
Denise Peak, Director
520 W. Ionia Rd.
Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 485-4446

Shiawassee Chamber of
Commerce
Carol Vaughn, President
215 N. Water St.
Owosso, MI 48867
(989) 723-5149

CTFE Clinton Task Force on
Employment
George Contompasis, Director
101 W. Cass, Suite A
St. Johns, MI 48879
(517) 224-2000



MI-SBTDC Mission Statement

The Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC) enhances Michigan's economic well being by providing counseling, training, and research, and advocacy for new ventures, existing small businesses and innovative technology companies. With regional, satellite and affiliate offices statewide the MI-SBTDC positively impacts the economy by strengthening existing companies, creating new jobs, retaining existing jobs, and assisting companies in defining their path to success.



<http://www.sba.gov>



<http://www.lcc.edu/bci>

Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center

Lansing Community College
315 N. Grand Ave
PO BOX 40010
Lansing, MI 48901

**Got a tip or story?
Let us know!**

Phone: (517) 483-1921 Fax: (517) 483-1675
Website: www.misbtadc.org
E-mail: sbtadc@lcc.edu

Finding Solutions for Growing Businesses

Search Engine Marketing

Who says all search is the same? A recent study indicates that using different search engines for a query will produce very different results. The study, released in July 2005 by Dogpile.com in conjunction with researchers from the University of Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania State University, indicates that when the same search term was entered on the four leading search engines -- Google, Yahoo!, MSN and Ask.com -- the first-page results showed only a 1.1% overlap. In other words, the same result showed up on all four engines only about 1% of the time. Almost 85% of the results produced were unique to one engine; two engines put the same result on the front page in 11.4% of occasions, and three of the four shared a top result only 2.6% of the time. According to metasearch engine Dogpile, which aggregates results from the four leading search sites, consumers should be aware that they're restricting their search by only using one or two engines.

The Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center regional office, affiliated with the Business & Community Institute at Lansing Community College is one of 12 offices statewide, providing services and support to the Michigan small business community in the areas of counseling, training and research.



The Lansing Community College's Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center at the Business & Community Institute, contributes to the promotion of economic development by assisting in the creation of new small business and the retention and expansion of existing small businesses. We achieve this mission by providing technical

assistance to prospective and existing business owners and managers in Ingham, Eaton, Clinton, Ionia, Livingston, and Shiawassee counties. We provide our clients with the education and training needed to establish and grow a successful small business.

ADDRESS:

Academic and Office Facilities
315 N. Grand Ave, Room 202
P.O. Box 40010

