

Lessons Learned: Ups & Downs of a 2nd Location

By: Randi Jenkins and Cindy Garcia

On the morning of April 30, 2008, in the beautiful Kodosky Donor Lounge of the newly built Joe R & Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts, twenty-seven local business owners gathered for the Small Business Development Program's premiere *Ups and Downs of a 2nd Location* workshop. As the sun peeked through the wall of windows and arose from behind the city's downtown skyline, breakfast was served with a side dish of lessons learned from some of Austin's most successful and well known entrepreneurs.

The focus of this unique learning event was to provide business owners the opportunity to listen and learn from successful entrepreneurs who were ready to share their "ups and downs" of opening their second (third, and fourth, etc.) locations. Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office's Assistant Director, Rosalinda Jalifi, made opening remarks, welcomed the guests on the behalf of the City of Austin and introduced panelists: Paul Carrozza of RunTex, Inc., Ken Schiller of Rudy's Country Store and Bar-B-Q, and William McLeroy of Taurus Training and Doggy Play Day.



These three accomplished business owners discussed their own successes and failures in the realms of business and life. This workshop provided "real life" lessons to those considering business expansion.

Prompted by Ms. Jalifi's questions, the three panelists discussed why they decided to open their second location, what criteria they used to select their 'new' location site, what the top challenges were in opening the second location, and what, if any, financial obstacles they had faced. When Ken of Rudy's Country Store and Bar-B-Q, was asked about his famous customer service, he jokingly replied "we look for anyone who isn't a vegetarian". Rudy's opened in 1994; by July of 1998 they were opening store number two; they now have locations all over central Texas. A key resource and inspiration to Ken has been a book by Bradford D. Smart, Ph.D. named *Topgrading*.

Paul of RunTex, Inc. just celebrated his business' 20th year anniversary. He spoke of the essential need to have three main positions in place, "a chief executive officer (CEO) who is the visionary, a chief operating officer (COO) in charge of operations, and the chief financial officer (CFO) in charge of the money". He ended with saying "don't assume you know it all, and learn to listen". Practical advice did not stop with Paul and Ken. William owner of Taurus Dog Training and Doggy Play Day summed it up by encouraging the attendees to "have lots of energy and lots of support". After the panel discussions, the participants were joined at their tables by the speakers. The attendees were able to personally interact with the panelists ask more pointed and specific questions. This proved to be the most valuable experience for the attendees.



One of the goals for each event that the Small Business Development Program (SBDP) hosts is to provide a venue for the participants to not only gain knowledge but also find inspiration and resources for their endeavor. This new event was an additional way for SBDP to assist small business owners of Central Texas. For more information on SBDP's services, resources, and events, please call 512-974-7800 or visit us online at www.cityofaustin.org/sbdp.