

Thank you for participating in the Nebraska**EDGE** Participant survey. Your information will be tabulated and combined with other EDGE participants. The information from the survey will be used for program reports, program planning and promotions. If you have additional comments, please use the space below. Your opinions are important to us.

Nebraska**EDGE**

Participant Survey 2008



The Center for Applied Rural Innovation is conducting a survey of former participants of the NebraskaEDGE/NxLevel™ training program. The objective of the survey is to discover how and if the training program helped you increase business skills and meet your business goals. We are also seeking participant opinions on the design of future business trainings.

If you would like a copy of the final report, please write your name and address on the back of the return envelope. Envelopes will be separated from the survey to ensure your confidentiality.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is an equal opportunity educator and employers with a comprehensive plan for diversity.

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Q38. From the categories below, please circle which best describes your total household income from all sources for 2007

1. Less than \$10,000
2. \$10,000 - \$19,999
3. \$20,000 - \$29,999
4. \$30,000 - \$39,999
5. \$40,000 - \$59,999
6. \$60,000 - \$79,999
7. \$80,000 - \$99,999
8. \$100,000 or greater

Additional Comments

Well, that is the end of this survey. Before we finish up, do you have any questions or any comments that you would like to add?

Thank you for your time to complete this survey. Please return the survey in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

Following are a few questions to learn more about your experience with the NebraskaEDGE entrepreneurial training program. The entire survey should require only 20 minutes of your time. Your responses are very important to helping the EDGE program enhance its ability to provide education to Nebraska's small business owners.

SECTION 1 – BUSINESS BACKGROUND

Q1. How would you describe the status of your business at the time you enrolled in the EDGE course? *(circle the number of your answer)*

1. Idea for a potential business
2. Start-up (less than 1 year old)
3. Existing (in business more than 1 year)

Q2. How did you or how will you first become involved with the business for which you enrolled in the training course? *(circle your answer)*

1. Started the business myself and/or with partners
2. Purchased an existing business
3. Purchased a franchise business
4. Joined a family business
5. Inherited or acquired business as a gift
6. Was an hired employee of the business
7. Was a contract employee for a business
8. Interest in the business idea, no association
9. Other (please specify): _____

Q3. What was your highest priority for participating in the program?

1. Decide if business ownership was right for you, or if your business idea was viable.
2. Receive assistance to make your existing business more formal, stable, or profitable.
3. Help addressing an immediate and threatening problem with an existing business.
4. Receive assistance to substantially grow your business
5. Other (please specify): _____

Q4. Check the item that indicates your initial plan for the operations of your business prior to EDGE. Since participating in EDGE, have your plans changed? Check the item in the “Since EDGE” column that currently indicates your plan for business continuation.

	Prior to EDGE	Since EDGE
1. Start the business.	_____	_____
2. Continue the business until you find a better job or current job/occupation that provides more money/benefits.	_____	_____
3. Keep the business as long as it pays its own expenses.	_____	_____
4. Keep the business as long as it is profitable and provides extra cash.	_____	_____
5. Continue to grow the business to the point that you can pass it on to children/family.	_____	_____
6. Eventually sell the business for a lot of money and retire or start another business.	_____	_____
7. Had or have no idea how long you plan to keep the business.	_____	_____

Q5. As a result of your participation in the EDGE program, did you make any of the following decisions? (circle all that apply)

1. Established, acquired or purchased your business
2. Expanded your business
3. Created a spin-off business
4. Downsized your business operations
5. Sold your business
6. Closed your business
7. Initiated no changes in your business
8. Other (specify) _____

Q33. What is your ethnicity?

1. Hispanic or Latino
2. Non-Hispanic or Latino

Q34. What is your current marital status?

1. Single/never married
2. Married
3. Divorced/separated
4. Widowed

Q35. Are you the sole earner in your household?

1. Yes
2. No

Q36. What is your highest level of formal education?

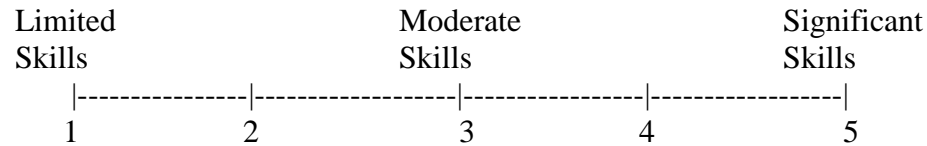
1. Less than high school graduate
2. High school graduate – Diploma or GED
3. Technical, trade or vocational school
4. Some college, no degree
5. Associate degree
6. Bachelors degree
7. Master’s Doctorate, or Professional degree

Q37. Counting yourself and children, how many people live with you and share income or expenses?

Number in household _____

Q28. What type of Internet access do you have on your computer?

Q29. On the scale below, rate your general skill level in using the computer and various business software, (i.e., Microsoft Excel, Word, email, Internet). (Circle the number of your answer.)



SECTION 5 - DEMOGRAPHICS

For the final section of the survey we would like to ask you some questions about yourself. Your answers are completely confidential and optional.

Q30. What is your age?

_____ Years

Q31. What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

Q32. Please indicate your race.

1. American Indian or Alaska Native
2. Asian
3. Black or African American
4. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
5. White
6. Other (please specify): _____

Q6. Is the business for which you enrolled in EDGE currently in operation?

1. Yes (proceed to Q7)
2. No (skip to Q13)

Q7. What is your primary function/s in this business? (Circle all that apply.)

1. Producing this business's goods/services
2. Managing day-to-day operations
3. Financial control with the authority to sign loans, leases and contracts
4. None of the above
5. Other (specify) _____

Q8. What is the approximate percentage of the business owned by you?

1. Less than 49%
2. Exactly 50%
3. Between 51 - 100%
4. Don't know

Q9. Is this business currently your primary source of personal income? Did this business provide your primary source of personal income prior to participating in EDGE?

Currently primary source of income	Yes	No
Prior to EDGE was primary source of income	Yes	No

Q10. What percentage of your total household income did this business provide in 2007?

_____ %

Q11. Was your total household income an increase or decrease from 2006?

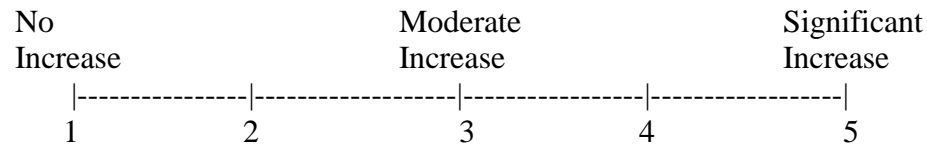
1. Increase
2. Stayed the same
3. Decrease

Q12. Do you feel your business has provided you with a higher standard of living since you took the EDGE class?

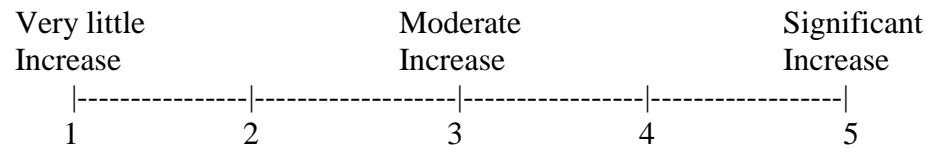
1. Yes
2. No

SECTION 2 – BUSINESS SKILL CHANGES

Q13. As a result of your participation in the EDGE course, how much did you increase your understanding of the business trends and economic climate that affects your business? Circle the number of your answer.



Q14. To what degree did you increase your knowledge of community and economic development activities and how they affect your business operations? Circle the number of your answer.



Q25. EDGE is considering offering advanced training on specialized topics for past participants. How would you prefer to participate in the training? (circle all that apply.)

1. One-day workshops offered within the region, group setting
2. Weekend workshops offered within the region, group setting
3. Webinar workshops offered over the Internet, provided at set times with an instructor leading the session. Webinars then recorded for playback on demand.
4. Podcasts available for on-demand download, compared to YouTube™ videos
5. Other suggestions _____

Q26. EDGE is considering offering an interactive website that provides general and specialized business information and networking opportunities. What would you like to see on the website to make it a user-friendly and informative website? (circle all that apply.)

1. General business information with links to applicable resources
2. Specialized/topical business information for experienced business owners.
3. Blog section about timely business information
4. Discussion boards for networking with other businesses
5. Business profiles for cross business marketing
6. Podcasts featuring business experts
7. Secured (private) section for one-on-one consultations with business experts; subscription or fee-based.
8. Secured (private) section for business mentoring and/or marketing between past participants; subscription
9. Other suggestions: _____

Q27. Do you have access to a home or business computer?

1. Yes (proceed to Q28)
2. No, plan to purchase a computer within the next year (proceed to Q28).
3. No, do not plan to use a computer for home or business (skip to Q29).

Q22. Please provide suggestions that you feel would improve the training course or learning experience for all participants.

Q23. What business topics or skills do you feel should be added to the training that could help business owners?

SECTION 4 – FUTURE COURSES

The following section asks your preference of delivery models for educational trainings and workshop.

Q24. EDGE is considering different training methods of delivery. Looking back over your experience with the class, how do you think others would prefer to participate in the course? (circle all that apply.)

1. Use existing model – in local classroom, 12-week training course, group delivery with one/two instructors and local guest speakers.
2. New model - In classroom delivered via interactive distance television, one regional instructor broadcasted to local sites with local business coaches to assist, 12-week training course.
3. New model – In classroom, 4 modules – 3-4 weeks in length with breaks in between modules. Wrap-up regional business plan finishing workshop.
4. New model - Internet class delivered in a group format, course offered at set available times, networking between participants online and in person.
5. New model - Internet class delivered at self-paced, available anytime, networking between participants online.
6. Other suggestions: _____

Q15. As a result of your participation in the EDGE course, did you implement the following components of business management and planning? (please check Yes, No, In progress, or Not Applicable for each question.)

	Yes	No	In progress	Not applicable to your business
1. Develop goals and objectives for your business.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Conduct industry research	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Assess your local/regional business climate	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Assess and meet regulations that affect your business.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Assess and minimize business risk	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Analyze and target your customers.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Prepare and implement marketing strategies that best reach your customers.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Calculate your breakeven for products and services.	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Assess and adjust your pricing structure	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Prepare projections and budgets.	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Prepare and manage a cash flow.	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Complete a business plan for your business.	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Prepare and apply for business credit.	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Develop an exit plan for your business.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Q16. How did the following activities change as a result of your participation in the EDGE course? (Scale ranges from 1 = Decreased greatly to 5 = Increased greatly, 6 = Do not know)

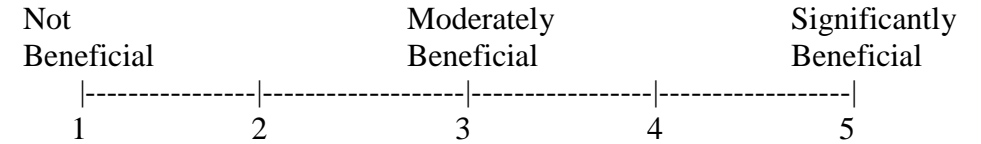
	Greatly Decreased		No Change	Greatly Increased		Don't Know
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Use of local governmental/non-profit resources to assist your business	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Use of local private resources to assist your business (i.e., banks, attorneys, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Interaction with other local business owners	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Support to other business owners	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Involvement in local business organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Involvement in community organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Involvement in community development activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Leadership in community development activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Financial contributions to community projects	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION 3 – COURSE EVALUATION

Q17. Which NebraskaEDGE course did you take? (circle the corresponding number to your answer)

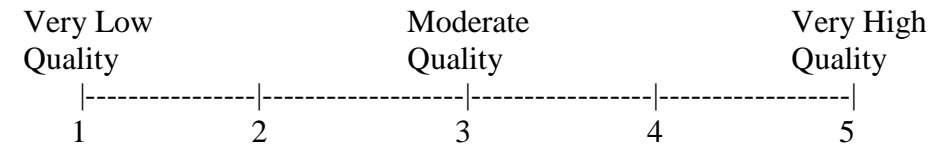
1. NxLeveL Entrepreneurs (gray or blue book)
2. NxLeveL "Tilling the Soil of Opportunity"
3. Preparing the Entrepreneurial Venture (electronic curriculum)

Q18. Please circle the number below the bar scale below that indicates how beneficial the EDGE program has been to your business activities.



Q19. What was the one thing about the course that you think will have the greatest impact on your business? How?

Q20. How do you rate the quality of the instruction you received while in the EDGE training course? Circle the number below the bar scale to indicate your answer.



Q21. How do you rate the quality of the course overall? Circle the number below the bar scale to indicate your answer.

