
Director's Report – DRCI

February 2023

Entrepreneur Program Update - There are currently 12 *Program Companies* in the Don Ryan Center with several others in the pipeline

- STARTUP companies
 1. Hull & Husk
 2. Hilton Head Coffee Roasters
 3. Wheeler Trucking (Hardeeville)
 4. Capital Chiropractic (Hardeeville)
 5. Prime IV Hydration
- HEROES companies
 1. OPFOB (STARTUP)
 2. Elite Support Americas (STARTUP)
- GROWTH
 1. MXM Productions
 2. Barbers of the Lowcountry
 3. CrossFlight
 4. Universal Bookkeeper
 5. Lowcountry Cone
- Standing meetings with every company at least 2 times per month
- Multiple screening calls with leads that are interested in learning about our Programs
- Pourzilla graduated from the HEROES Program

Operations

- Launched Business Health Check/Better Call Paul campaign
- Launched "How I Built It" series that kicks off in March with Greg Parker from Parker's
- Attended several GBCC and HHI Chamber events
- DRCI staff attended Ribbon Cuttings for Seaglass Windowscapes, Intrepid USA Healthcare & Hospice, Chick-fil-A
- Ran Lutzie 43 5K
- Meeting with Creative Coast and Beaufort Digital Corridor about the Bridge Fund (now Creative Coast Fund)

- Attended the 2023 Converge Conference
- Introductory conversation with a new company called EEZERO
- Initial phone call with 1 Nite Lips. Looking for design and production assistance
- Three DRCI budget review meetings with TOB for FY2024
- Meeting with Ian Scott CEO of Beaufort Chamber of Commerce to learn more about them and strengthen the relationship between our two organizations.

Mentor Program

- 69 Mentors

Partnerships

Hardeeville

- Working with City of Hardeeville to cross-pollinate social media sites DRCI/HDV
- HDV Newsletter
- Kickoff Meeting with Capital Chiropractic
- Planning Business 301 Event for April. The focus will be on finances and funding

BlacQuity

- 2023 classes and office hours are scheduled at DRCI

Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation

- Working with them on multiple projects
- Sponsoring and promoting 2023 Converge Conference that's planned for January
- Attended BCEDC 2023 Strategic Planning meeting

Jasper Chamber

- Planning weekly office hours for Hardeeville/Jasper County at Jasper Chamber
- Cross-pollinating DRCI/Jasper social media

SCORE

- Working on 2023 Chapter meeting schedule at The HUB
- Working with SCORE to find additional mentors for DRCI

Greater Bluffton Chamber

- Planning GBCC events at The HUB for 2023
- Scheduled Lunch and Learn at The HUB for March 7th
- Attended Coffee and Connection

Beaufort Digital Corridor

- TechStars Event for March 2023 – David will be a judge

Beaufort County Senior Leadership

- Working with Clinton Hallman planning Leadership Day at The HUB for February 22nd

HHCA

- Planning to teach a prep day for Shark Tank at HHCA in March
- Shark Tank planned at The HUB on March 22nd

Bluffton High School

- Spoke to 2 recent graduates about starting a business
- Scheduled a tour and talk for two entrepreneurship classes from Bluffton High School at The HUB

HHI Chamber of Commerce

- Networking at Conversations & Cocktail event
- Attending ribbon cuttings

Lowcountry Council of Government

- Met with Tony Pollen. This is his slow season right now but will reach out in the Spring to hold some office hours here at DRCI

BusinessATTRACT

- Met with Carlton Dallas and Karen Gilbert (Beaufort County Schools) to continue discussions about an event like “Silicon Garden” held on HHI. Based on the busy schedule the schools have between now and May, current thinking is to hold a Bluffton event in the Fall. Goals are to focus not only on the areas in the HHI event but to add sectors such as Aerospace, Light Manufacturing and Healthcare. This is an ongoing discussion.

Marketing

- Working with Town of Bluffton to cross-pollinate social media sites DRCI/TOB
- Social Media
- Newsletter
- Launched “How I Built It” campaign and Business Health Check
- TV Interview on WHHI to air end of February
- Sponsor for 2023 Converge
- Updated verbiage for business license renewal letter from town

Planning 2023 repeating scheduled events

- **“How I Built It”**
 - A monthly event where successful businesspeople tell their story about how they started and grew their company. Launching in March 2023 with Greg Parker
- **"Business Health Check Up"**

- Complete online business health checkup questionnaire and schedule a meeting to go over the health of your business, discuss strategies.
- Feeder to one of our STARTUP or GROWTH Programs
- Phase one of the program starts January 2023
- This program was based off a suggestion from Councilwoman Frazier at DRCI's update to Council, October 2022.
- **"Pre-START"**
 - A quarterly event where we go explain things to consider when starting your business

Board of Directors Meeting

- Communication with all Board members who have not met the required level of meeting attendance to gauge their desire to continue to serve
- Recruiting a new board member to replace Bill Fugue who resigned due to time commitments
- Recruiting two new ex officio member to replace Ray Deal and Nate Van Epp who resigned due to time commitments
- Reviewing ex-officio members and possible reshuffle based on more flexibility after recent By-Law modifications

February Highlight

Our hard work is paying off and building a pipeline.

The DRCI has seen a surge in new Program Companies, thanks to our increase in networking, marketing and new programs like “Business Health Checkups” and “How I Built It”. We have become a beacon of hope for entrepreneurs looking to launch or grow their businesses in an increasingly challenging economic climate.

The new program customers at The HUB represent a diverse range of industries, from Ice Cream and Bookkeeping to Healthcare. Many of these businesses are at the early stages of development, seeking guidance and resources to help them turn their ideas into viable enterprises. Others are more established, looking to expand their reach, increase their revenue, and stay competitive in a rapidly changing business landscape.

Regardless of their industry or level of experience, the new program customers at the DRCI all share a common goal: to build successful businesses that contribute to the growth and development of the Bluffton community.

At the heart of our success is the commitment to providing high-quality programs and services that are tailored to the unique needs of each customer. From business coaching and mentorship to access to funding and networking opportunities, we offer a wide range of resources designed to help local businesses thrive.

One of the keys to our success is the focus on collaboration and community building. By bringing together entrepreneurs, investors, and community leaders from all walks of life, and created a supportive ecosystem that fosters innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

The surge in new program customers is a testament to our success and the strength of the Bluffton business community. It is also a reminder of the importance of supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs, who are the lifeblood of the local economy.