



## GREAT BASIN FEDERAL CREDIT UNION: SMART OUTREACH ... GREAT MBL!

From time-to-time we come across a credit union with an MBL marketing strategy we believe is worth sharing. Want to increase business community goodwill and your SBA/MBL portfolio at little or no cost? Great Basin Federal Credit Union in Reno, Nevada is doing all that. Read on!

Great Basin began offering SBA/MBL nearly four years ago. And they've hosted free community Let's Talk Business: Small Business Seminars for the past two years, with a consistent audience of local small business owners. So what makes it work? First off, a consistent schedule. In-branch Let's Talk Business seminars are held like clockwork from 5:30 p.m.-7 p.m. on the last Wednesday of every month. People come to expect them and look forward to upcoming topics.

**Next up: Topics.** "Rather than 'push product' we look for topics that will help small business owners run their businesses better," says Nina Hallock, Great Basin's business services representative. "As presenters, we invite local vendors who offer services small business owners can use. We also mix in business lending topics, but they're not the major focus. People come because they know they'll learn something valuable for their businesses." Recent seminars have included such topics as tips on improving website presence, making the most of social media, protecting intellectual property, and buying a building for your business. Upcoming topics include tips from a local CPA and start-up basics presented by SCORE.

**Talk about low-cost marketing.** Great Basin doesn't have a newsletter and doesn't send direct mail for these seminars. For in-person marketing, Nina Hallock networks at small business events, inviting new business owners. Of course there's in-branch signage and website promotion, which has a link to a calendar of business-related webinars and seminars offered throughout the community. Then there's social media. Great Basin has big-time Facebook, Twitter and You Tube activity - and they have a blog. What's more, the presenters invite their customers at no cost to the credit union. In addition to filling the seats, this is a built-in way to establish relationships with businesses that might not be familiar with Great Basin.

**Does all this result in MBL business?** Yep. Some immediate and some down the line. The long-term community goodwill? Priceless. Nina Hallock tells us that Great Basin's vision is to be "member-loved," so they're passionate about building great relationships with small business owners. Offering these resources is just one way the credit union can help local businesses succeed. She adds that Great Basin's community outreach has certainly resulted in new relationships and being member-loved. One food truck owner was so happy with his SBA loan and the credit union's service that he hosted a Great Basin Employee Appreciation event, and continues to co-host a blood drive in the credit union's parking lot every year.

Originality, creativity and solid business strategy add up to a program worth looking at.

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