



# COM-MU-NI-TY RE-IN-VEN-TION

NOUN: a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common who complete a process which changes them so much that they appear entirely new.

*By Megan Gilliland, Communications & Education Manager, League of Kansas Municipalities*

Last fall, I had an opportunity to attend the Destination Business BootCamp® in Longmont, Colorado with my husband for our small business. I was there with eight other businesses from my small community as part of the Community Reinvention Program (CRP). As I listened to Jon Schallert, the business consultant who created the Destination BootCamp Program, and talked with my fellow classmates, the business owners echoed conversations we have at the League with local government leaders in Kansas about creating vitality, encouraging people to support local businesses, and competing in a world of online sales. So, what are Kansas cities doing to impact the business environment on a local scale? Here's a few examples of how communities are re-visioning business development.





Destination Business BootCamp, and specifically the Community Reinvention Program, recognizes that changing the marketplace of a community takes an organized effort that involves a series of incremental changes. By participating in the Community Reinvention Program, community leaders are providing your local business owners with a powerful training experience that can change their businesses and your consumer marketplace.

Over 1,600 business owners in the U.S. have participated in Destination Business BootCamp since 2001. In Kansas, dozens of cities have attended the Destination Business BootCamp program. In communities both small and large, BootCamp graduates are working to change the landscape of their communities through implementing small, incremental changes to be better business owners, increase sales and traffic, and ultimately create more viable businesses.

Destination Business BootCamp is a two-and-a-half-day training with Jon Schallert. Participants meet with experts in the field of marketing and advertising and complete homework assignments each night designed to specifically pinpoint what makes the business unique and set a strategic vision for the future.

"I couldn't wait to get to my hotel each night because my mind was just swimming with information," said Laura Martin with Sew Loved Quilt Shop in Elkhart. "It was worth every penny. We wanted to put as much into practice that I could from Jon. The rate-of-return on my efforts and ideas from BootCamp have been off-the-charts."

Martin attended the BootCamp along with six other businesses and a community coordinator in September 2018.

"Jon had some wonderful ideas for our local businesses when he visited," said Becki Richardson with the Morton County Chamber of Commerce. "The businesses had to be open minded and open to change. We've had three businesses making some pretty big changes after he visited. Some of these changes included big risks they were afraid to take otherwise."

One of those businesses was Angela's Wellness Center in Elkhart, a community of approximately 2,000 people in the most southwestern section of Kansas.

"My dream when I first started my business in 2013 was to have 20 massage clients," said Angela Willey, owner of Angela's Wellness Center. "Now, I see between 30-35 clients a week and I am booked out three weeks in advance."



Angie Anderson, co-owner of Cashmere Popcorn in downtown Topeka, fills bags of fresh-popped, specialty popcorn. Anderson said their business has grown as she continually looks for ways to grow her presence both locally and regionally.



Angela's Wellness Center in Elkhart features health-and-wellness options that aren't available in most smaller communities. The cryogenic chamber, above, is used for pain management.

Willey has taken Jon Schallert's advice to heart. In fact, her dream has grown from being a small business with a relatively small clientele to becoming a business offering a variety of health-and-wellness options for the region. Today, she's drawing in customers from a 200-mile radius around Elkhart.

Willey saw an opportunity to pair her massage business with other services the community didn't have access to at the time. She has taken over a vacant wing of the Morton County Hospital with expanded services to provide cryotherapy, a hyperbaric chamber, infrared sauna, halotherapy, hydrotherapy, therapeutic massage, and fitness training. In addition to her health-and-wellness options, she has brought other services to the community including a salon, barber shop, a dietitian, facials, and more.

Angela's successful venture is exactly what Jon Schallert teaches as part of the Destination Business BootCamp.

"What I teach in Destination Business BootCamp is a low-cost way that entrepreneurs are restoring their communities," said Schallert. "Graduates are making better businesses, keeping people shopping at home, and pulling customers from greater distances. Additionally, destination marketing teaches us that people who come from a greater distance spend more money and outspend local shoppers on a per transaction basis."

Angela's Wellness Center was recently named the Business of the Year by the Kansas Small Business Development Center for the southwest region.

The Elkhart businesses attended Destination Business BootCamp as part of the Community Reinvention Program. With the CRP, each business and the coordinator have four months of follow up with Schallert. Schallert travels back to the community to meet each business and see their location, offers ideas on product placement, in-store displays, and design considerations, and other ideas to improve retail sales.

In Topeka, Angie Anderson, owner of Cashmere Popcorn, attended the BootCamp in April 2018.

"It was life-changing for me," said Anderson. "I took so much away from the BootCamp including the fact to never undervalue yourself or your product. Jon pushed me to stop thinking small. He encouraged me to focus on making our business a destination for



tours, gave us tips for developing a targeted strategy, and take the opportunity to have a strong online presence and use social media effectively.”

One of the lessons you learn in Destination Business BootCamp is to focus on a signature item or service that makes your business unique. At The Sweet Granada in Emporia, owner Kim Redeker has successfully employed many of the strategies outlined in the BootCamp.

“For several years, I have been very mindful of how well my business fit into the concept of a destination business. Once I attended the BootCamp, I created a spreadsheet of ideas from the lessons learned at BootCamp and came back to Emporia and methodically started to work through those ideas,” says Redeker. “First off, Jon said that I needed to work diligently to promote a ‘signature’ product. Our signature is our ‘Pop-Choc,’ a premium buttered popcorn drizzled in milk chocolate and white chocolate. In the first six months of promoting our signature item, sales were up 48%.”

Redeker said her experience at BootCamp resulted in a mindset change about her business and how she manages her small business. Since the BootCamp, she’s put more time and energy into window displays and product placement in the store. She works hard to partner with local organizations and other businesses to promote downtown as a destination for shopping and entertainment. She provides a coupon for a free chocolate bar to each new student at Emporia State University. Redeker tracks the coupon usage rate and said 80% of customers who use the coupons also purchase additional products.

“Using the coupon is a great way to introduce newcomers to our community and The Sweet Granada,” said Redeker. “The students and parents are introduced to downtown and my business early in their college life and they keep coming back. All of the businesses that participated in the Community Reinvention Program are working together as a team to build Emporia as a destination.”

Redeker keeps coming up with ideas that generate traffic, both online and in-person.

“I was very hesitant to enter the world of online sales,” said Redeker. “I have a perishable product that melts so shipping can be tricky. Jon really encouraged me to have a strong online sales presence. So, I made the investment in a new website with e-commerce and it is going well.”

Dr. Lindsay Mitchell, owner of Hoisington Veterinary Clinic, said the Destination Bootcamp helped her define how her business would stand apart from others in the area.

“There are several clinics to choose from in the region,” said Mitchell, “I wanted to position our clinic differently and we are able to do that now. We define ourselves as ‘leaders in minimally invasive surgery, innovators in outreach with our mobile hospital, and are passionate about serving rescue animals and their advocates.’”

Schallert has been teaching businesses how to be successful for decades but his passion is to support small businesses.

“My original intent was just to teach individual businesses to make themselves better, increase traffic, and have a viable business,” said Schallert. “For every \$1 spent educating businesses at BootCamp, the communities were seeing an \$8 to \$10 return on investment. I had no idea this training would alter a tax base in a community; but it has been proven time-and-time again. The impact this has on rural communities and those seeking to find answers to their economic problems is what is really exciting for me.”

Emporia, and several other Kansas communities, sent businesses to Destination Business BootCamp through their use of the NetWork Kansas E-Community Partnership. Other communities have used a variety of economic development funding to pay for businesses to attend.

“Destination Business BootCamp is open to everyone,” said Anne Dewvall, Director of Entrepreneurship for the NetWork Kansas E-Community Partnership. “It was a program brought to our attention by communities in northwest Kansas who had done the CRP program. We valued their recommendation and saw real changes in the communities where the CRP program had been implemented.”

Destination Business BootCamp is just one of many programs and initiatives for businesses in Kansas. NetWork Kansas is a good place to start when trying to determine the economic development resources available for your community. Several communities in Kansas have been selected as E-communities which is a competitive process where communities enter into a partnership with NetWork Kansas with the goal of working together to foster the growth of an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

“NetWork Kansas is a connector and convener,” said Dewvall. “We work to create a deep relationship with communities and volunteers who are committed to entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy. We encourage communities to start to forge a relationship with us so we can start to figure out where you are at and what resources are available for your community.”

The City of Leavenworth was established as an E-community in 2011 and expanded the E-Community program to the entire county in 2016. Since 2011, Leavenworth’s E-Community program has loaned \$1.8 million to local businesses for growth, expansion, and retention programs.



*Dr. Lindsay Mitchell with the Hoisington Veterinary Hospital looks for ways to distinguish her animal practice. The use of a mobile vet clinic is one way she can reach rural communities in Kansas that did not have access to veterinary care.*



"If you drive through any of our commercial areas, I could point out a business that has taken advantage of one of our E-Community programs which has helped businesses improve their stores, hire more employees, or facilitate expansions," said Taylour Tedder, Assistant City Manager for the City of Leavenworth. "The E-Community loans have brought in businesses we didn't have in the community before including a pediatric dentist that takes military insurance, a medical prosthesis company for rehabilitation services, and a Jamaican restaurant."

Like many other Kansas communities, Leavenworth offers a small business grant program and has a portfolio of resources available to the business community.

"NetWork Kansas has been a great asset for downtown to grow and develop their businesses," said Wendy Scheidt, Director of Leavenworth Main Street. "It's another funding source we can offer to our businesses and an advantage for our community in recruitment, retention, and expansion."


Jon Schallert has been teaching small business owners how to stand out and get noticed for decades. Many Kansas communities are benefitting from the lessons learned in Longmont but it has to be a sustained effort when returning home.

"When they put the strategy in place it alters their revenue, their lives, their families, and their communities," said Schallert. "It is more than a class — it can alter the business' future and the community."



The City of Leavenworth uses a variety of small business development tools to spur redevelopment in the downtown. Momo's Knitting Nook is a new business which serves as a community gathering spot and features specialty yarns.

There are many opportunities for local governments to invest in and promote their small businesses. The keys to success seem to be building collaboration amongst local businesses; investing in growth, retention, and expansion programs through economic development partners; and having a community wide strategy for business development. The businesses in your community are an important factor to community strength and vitality and need local support to be successful.

 **Megan Gilliland** is the League's Communications and Education Manager. She can be reached at [mgilliland@lkm.org](mailto:mgilliland@lkm.org) or (785) 354-9565.

# SIMPLY THE BEST IN WATER STORAGE!


## A GLOBAL LEADER IN LIQUID STORAGE.




**ADVANCED DESIGN**  
Our bolted RTP (rolled, tapered panel) tank design is unmatched worldwide. It is the strongest, precision tank design that does not utilize cheap web stiffeners.



**UNMATCHED COATINGS**  
Our LIQ Fusion 7000 FBE™ powder coating system and application technology is unmatched in water storage applications. Our AQUA AGT 2020™ glass/porcelain enamel coating system is superior to other glass coatings in its formulation and two-fire process. Both coatings are exclusively provided by one company, Tank Connection.


**SUPERIOR QUALITY**  
Simply unmatched worldwide. Our facilities are ISO 9001 quality system certified. Tank Connection operates multiple storage tank manufacturing facilities in the U.S. Our storage products and services are requested globally because our quality is recognized as **THE BEST** in the industry!

**INDUSTRY EXPERTS**  
We are the leading experts in storage applications with more years of combined industry experience than any other tank company.






ALUMINUM DOMES AVAILABLE FOR ALL TANK APPLICATIONS



REQUEST A QUOTE AND **GET CONNECTED** WITH REAL PERFORMANCE FROM THE MARKET LEADER, **TANK CONNECTION!**

**TANK CONNECTION** 3609 N. 16th St, Parsons, KS 67357 ♦ +1 620.423.3010 ♦ [sales@tankconnection.com](mailto:sales@tankconnection.com) ♦ [www.tankconnection.com](http://www.tankconnection.com)

**TANK CONNECTION** AN AMERICAN MADE COMPANY