

E Community SPN Entrepreneur Visitation Protocol

Inquiry Area 1 – About the Business. First, we want to gain insight into the business or businesses (there may be more than one) owned and/or operated by the interviewee.

- Name of business: _____
- What year was this business started? _____
- What year did you become the owner of this business? _____
- Which best describes how you came to own this business?
 - Started the business
 - Purchased the business
 - Inherited the business
- How is your business organized?
 - Sole proprietorship
 - Partnership
 - Subchapter S corporation
 - C Corporation
 - LLC
- Which best describes your primary business activity?
 - Service
 - Retail (including restaurants)
 - Finance / insurance / real estate
 - Transportation
 - Business and professional services
 - Wholesale / distribution
 - Manufacturing
 - Construction
 - Other: Please describe briefly _____
- Is your business homebased? _____ yes _____ no
- How many years of experience in this specific business activity do you have as owner, manager or worker? _____

- In an average week, how many hours do you devote to your business? _____hours
- How many employees do you have? _____
 Full-time _____ Part-time _____
- How many family members are employed in your business? _____
 Full-time _____ Part-time _____
- How many family members are investors in your business? _____
- What percent of the business do you own? _____%

Inquiry Area 2 – About the Owners/Operators. The second area of inquiry focuses on the owners/operators.

- Name of the owner:
- Address:
- Phone: Fax:
- Email:
- Website (if applicable):
- Sex: Male Female
- Marital status:
 - Single
 - Married
 - Separated
 - Divorced
- Number of children:
- Highest level of education completed:
 - Eighth grade
 - High school
 - College
 - Graduate school
- How many total years of personal business experience (as owner/manager) do you have? _____
- Were/Are either of your parents ever involved in owning and operating their own business?
 - Yes
 - No

If yes, identify which parent and briefly describe the business activity below?

Inquiry Area 3 – Future Plans.

*Note. The following questions are intended to be a **menu** to probe for insight. It is best to start with the following open ended question and then use the specific questions for probing and clarification.*

Primary Questions

What are your plans for your business (i.e.) in the next five years?

Do you have longer-term business plans? If yes, what are they?

For these probing questions, you can use a scale where 1 = not at all likely and 5 = definitely plan to.

Probing Questions

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Add a new product or service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sell to a new market | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Research new markets | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Expand distribution channels | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Expand advertising and promotion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Invest in new equipment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Move to a new location | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Expand current facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Redesign current facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Seek additional financial capital | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Computerize current operations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Upgrade computer systems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Redesign operating activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Expand the scope of operating activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Seek professional or technical advice | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Add specialized employees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Invest in offsite training for employees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Inquiry Area 4 – Development Issues

Primary Question

Please list and describe the five most important issues/challenges facing your business in terms of your ability to be profitable and/or grow.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Probing Questions

Which of the following business development issues are critical to your business' success and future growth? Rank on a 1 to 5 scale where 5 is very important and 1 is not at all important.

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access to financing or capital | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Access to new markets | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Assistance with business planning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Assistance with business transfer or sale | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Finding affordable health insurance for me & my family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Locating small business attorney or accountant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Providing health care and other benefits to workers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Finding motivated and/or skilled workers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Lack of community awareness and support | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Assistance in improving production | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Access to higher quality telecommunications services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Upgrade computer systems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Lowering local, state and/or federal taxes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Redesigning or expanding the scope of operating activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Seek professional or technical advice | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Add specialized employees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Invest in offsite training for employees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other needs – please add above | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

You have a successful business in this community – would you consider giving of your time and experience in any of the following ways:

- Are you willing to mentor other entrepreneurs? Yes No
- If yes, are you willing to mentor other entrepreneurs?
- One on one Yes No
 - Through an entrepreneurs' network that meets periodically Yes No
 - Through a virtual entrepreneurs' network (on the Internet) Yes No
 - Other Yes No

Please describe _____

Do you think an entrepreneurial or vocational internship/apprentice program would be useful in helping people gain experience in starting their own businesses? Yes No

Would you be willing to participate in such a program? Yes No

QUESTION: To help us understand the business climate in our community, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. Mark a score from **1 - 5**, where 5 means strong agreement with the statement and 1 means little agreement with the statement.

| Statement | Score |
|---|-------|
| People in this community understand that entrepreneurs are critically important to the future development of our economy. | |
| People in this community really support someone who is creating a new or expanding an existing business. | |
| People in this community continue to support an entrepreneur who fails and is trying again with a new enterprise. | |
| There is opportunity for younger people to stay and support themselves. | |
| I would recommend this community as a good place to live. | |
| People in this community are generally optimistic about the future of the community | |

FINAL QUESTION: How can SPN and SPICE help you and your business?
