

Arkansas Business Navigator Podcast

Episode 6: Free Self-Guided Education Platforms,

Arkansas Business Navigator Events around the State



[Kam] Hey and welcome to the Arkansas Business Navigator podcast. It's Kam, and we're kicking off the New Year talking about the tools that will help you complete some of your entrepreneurial New Year's resolutions and business goals with the first episode of 2023. Our primary focus will be free self-guided education platforms that you have access to through the SBA and resource partner organizations. On top of that, we're going to cover events happening around the state this month and answer a question or two about the Navigator program.

[Intro Music]

Running a small business is multifaceted and complex. You need to be able to be a great leader of people, a manager of money and a problem solver. And you need to do those things at a high level. Everyone has innate talent and gifts that are naturally ingrained in them, but not everyone is good at everything. Additionally, people can always learn more about their specific business and industry. With each new year, there are new things happening and developing. Some business owners come from fertile ground with mentorship, financial resources or knowledge capital that make the tough journey a little easier. And some business owners come from barren ground with just a talent or skill and a dream. This is why the business education program I'm about to mention exists, including the Arkansas Business Navigator. Let's identify what part of your CEO you need to strengthen for your businesses to be the best they can be. How valuable would it be to know what you do now, two years ago? What about ten years ago? Or be made aware of some unbeknownst oversight with your business before it could harm you. Some things you can't put a price on and these reputable services are free and convenient. On SBA.gov, learning platforms is one of six tabs at the top of their website. Once you click on the link, there are four options to choose from, two of which are online learning content, and the other two are development programs. The two online learning center platforms are the SBA Learning Center and Ascent for Women. The Learning Center consists of six courses: plan, launch, manage, market, grow and SBA Mentor Protege Program Tutorial. This program is objective driven and consists of short videos, typically less than a minute. But some could be a little bit longer. Each course has two to four topics that allow you to complete numerous objectives that you can

start or stop at your leisure and when they need it. Ascent consist of twelve different journeys that you can explore and challenges the way you think about your business. The nine journeys are: disaster and economic recovery, strategic marketing, your people, your business financial strategy, access to capital, government contracting, managing sales, growing globally, opportunity and innovation, and opportunity assessment. It is super relevant content and equips you for the business world we live in today. Plus, this platform provides you with access to fireside chats with experts, discussion guides for you, your partners and your team, and exercises and tools that force you to apply what you are learning in real life. Natalie Madeira Cofield, made these statements when speaking of the Ascent program:

"Access [to] the digital online training platforms remain critical to support women entrepreneurs with the recovery and knowledge share. Over the last year, nearly thirty thousand women entrepreneurs have leveraged the ascent platform for its online education. As women remain the fastest growing entrepreneurial segment in the nation and complementing our in-person centers, Ascent helps SBA reach more women where they are and when they need it."

I couldn't say it better myself. Oftentimes, we as people have access to all the information that we need, but for some reason we don't use it. It's quite puzzling and disappointing in some situations. Like the old adage says, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink. These courses are a great opportunity for you to grow and strengthen your businesses. I hope you're able to take advantage of.

[Music transition]

Next, we have events that are taking place over the last half of January. They are as follows. We have the small business interest meeting in Monroe and surrounding counties. Do you need help growing or expanding your business? Is your business looking for financial assistance but you do not know what your options are? Is your inner entrepreneur in need of some guidance? Join us at the Brinkley County Chamber of Commerce for a special meeting featuring Arkansas Small Business Technology Development Center's newest program, Arkansas Business Navigator. And let's talk about it. In partnership with the Monroe and Phillips County Extension Service, Brinkley Chamber of Commerce, Arkansas Procurement and Technical Assistance Center, East Arkansas Enterprise Community and the SBA. We're bringing this event to you. For any questions or registration assistance, contact me. Kamelle Gomez. (501) 671-2158. Or kgomez@uada.edu.

[Music transition]

Here's a question I get a lot around the state. Where do I start looking for financial services for my business? Wherever you do your regular banking services is where you need to start. You'll be looking at starting a serious relationship with the institution otherwise, and that process takes a while to be complete. Most people overthink their initial stages in seeking financial services and to start a new relationship with a banking institution. While you can receive basic services, you know, could waste a bit of your time. Most banks are going to have options for business checking, credit cards, and even business loans. So that's 100% where you should start out.

[Music transition]

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