

Plan Outline

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Marketing Vision

The Riverton Business Accelerator allows the organization to look ahead to the next three years to see how it will take its initial success and transform it into a sustainable organization with earned revenue providing a significant part of its budget. By reaching more and more potential clients, RBA will keep its courses in demand, allow the staff to be selective in the choice of clients, and warrant the course fees charged. The marketing plan will give the staff the direction and specific goals needed to focus their work activities on a day-to-day basis.

1.1 Goals

Personal goals for the Executive Director include:

- 50 speaking engagements in Year 3
- Earn Riverton Business Excellence Award (nonprofit division)

Business goals include:

- 3,000 individuals completing core course in three years
- Annual earned revenue exceeding \$450,000 in Year 3

Tactical goals include:

- 100 PR mentions in Year 3
- 1,200 testimonials recorded in Year 3

Strategic goals include:

- 1,500 businesses launched by clients in three years
- 500 full-time jobs created in three years
- 3 store fronts opened in three years

1.2 Purpose

The Riverton Business Accelerator helps convert the creativity and passion of prospective microentrepreneurs into sustainable businesses. With business training and ongoing support, these individuals can soon be supplementing their income and even supporting themselves full-time in their new businesses. In the end the RBA hopes to bring economic revitalization to Riverton by helping to reduce poverty and unemployment in the town.

1.3 Picture

The typical Riverton Business Accelerator client has only a basic concept of how he can create a workable business. He works long hours for little more than minimum wage and does not see many opportunities to better himself because he did not finish high school. At the RBA business training course, he is surrounded by other supportive members of his community, who share the drive to achieve financial independence and exercise their creativity in a way that they cannot do at their day jobs. The business trainer gives practical how-to information to the class as well as a sense of empowerment by showing the students how small businesses are started every day across the country. The client graduates knowing that RBA is there for him as a resource as he moves forward with his business launch.

1.4 Gap Dashboard

The gap dashboard quantifies the personal, business, tactical, and strategic goals of the Riverton Business Accelerator and condenses them in a format easily understood by internal sources. This report will be given to the Executive Director on a monthly basis and the business and strategic results will be shown to donors and other stakeholders.

The Executive Director will become involved when there are gaps between projected and actual results. This may involve strategic overhauls of the communications system, a change in the Director of Communications, or simply more time spent by the Executive Director on the area of marketing and communications.

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Gap Dashboard

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Personal			
Speaking engagements	30	40	50
Riverton Business Excellence Award earned	0	0	1
Business			
Individuals completing core course	810	1,000	1,200
Revenue	\$222,500	\$339,000	\$482,000
Tactical			
PR mentions	52	84	100
Testimonials	900	900	1,000
Strategic			
Businesses launched	200	600	700
Full-time jobs created	120	160	220
Storefronts opened	1	2	2

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Ideal Customer

The ideal client for the Riverton Business Accelerator is a low-income earner, currently employed, who has less potential than others in the community to succeed or achieve advancement in work. This may be due to not graduating high school or attending college, past incarceration, or simply being a member of a minority group. These individuals are not unemployed or unemployable, but have greater creativity and drive than their current job gives them the ability to exercise. These individuals are perfect candidates for microentrepreneurship.

2.1 Market Description

The intended client for the Riverton Business Accelerator has the following characteristics:

- 20 years old and up
- Member of a minority group
- No college education
- Earns less than \$35,000 per year
- Blue collar job holder
- Lives within the city limits of Riverton (required due to grants focusing on serving this population)
- Has ideas for entrepreneurship, but lacks the know-how or skills to launch

Remarkable Difference

The Riverton Business Accelerator is a nonprofit organization which goes beyond the small business help a microentrepreneur would receive from a free business consulting program like SCORE, the local Small Business Development Center, or online classes or resources. Through in-depth training with a seasoned business professional and the development of a network within their class and with other RBA alumni, Riverton clients stand a better chance at launching their endeavor, supplementing their income, and even moving to work full-time on their new business. Rather than focusing on those with the best chances of success in entrepreneurship as decided through traditional methods (good connections, good education, high amount of capital), the RBA chooses clients who do not have these characteristics in their favor, yet have the drive and creativity to make microentrepreneurship work for them.

3.1 Differentiators

RBA stands out both because of the specific market niche it chooses and the unique services it offers for community members in that market niche.

The market niche it serves is an underserved population which lacks the basic prerequisites which other small-business training and mentoring services believe necessary. RBA clients do NOT have to start out with:

- A cohesive business idea
- Finished secondary or postsecondary education
- Capital
- Connections in the business world

RBA clients do need to be members of an underserved population and demonstrate their creativity and drive.

RBA offers a systematized, group training approach to launch a small business, rather than an approach directly tailored to the individual. The purpose of this is to take the aspiring entrepreneur through a process that has been shown to work and teach them the business fundamentals they lack. Beyond that training, the relationship with RBA does not end at a specific point, as ongoing mentorship services and networking increase the RBA client's connection with the organization, rather than setting a specific endpoint to each engagement. The network effect of helping the microentrepreneurs teach each other, share resources and contacts, and negotiate with vendors collectively is something that is not achieved with other entrepreneur training and mentoring services

Core Strategy

The external marketing message of the Riverton Business Accelerator is that anyone with passion can launch their own business and that RBA can help. This is summed up in the slogan "YOU can launch - WE can help." The positioning goal of the organization is to serve those who would not be served by other small business and entrepreneur training and mentoring programs (whether nonprofit or for-profit).

The organization believes that, by the end of three years, it will see these measurable results: UL>

- 3,000 individuals completing its core classes
- 1,500 businesses launched

Riverton Business Accelerator seeks the following results in ten years:

- 8,000 businesses launched
- 3,000 full-time jobs created
- 50 store fronts opened
- RBA-launched businesses to increase income for clients by an average of \$30,000

4.1 Core Branding Elements

To achieve a brand within the community and among funders, Riverton Business Accelerator will develop the following with the help of a branding consultant:

- Logo
- Colors and typeface to tie in to the logo and allow for professional and inspiring materials
- Image collection of clients in action in their businesses and in the training or mentoring process
- Simple microentrepreneur process flowchart to explain the steps to clients, funders, and partners

Product/Service Innovation

The Riverton Business Accelerator offers the following services to encourage and sustain its constituents:

For suspects (potential clients who are in the market niche/underserved population):

- Free monthly newsletter with business tips for microentrepreneurs and aspiring microentrepreneurs (mail and email versions)
- Orientation to the business training course with an overview of the course and guidance on creating the best possible application.

For prospects (those who express interest in RBA):

- The business training course - a 10-week course meeting once per week, held three times per year - September - November, January - March, and April - June.

For clients (business training course graduates):

- Year-round business coaching and mentorship
- Access to RBA business networking website and events
- Loan preparation services
- Small group business support
- Access to market initiatives
- Biannual business expos
- Opportunities for collective bargaining with vendors

For premium clients (those who have moved to work full-time on their business):

- Small group business support with other premium clients
- Featured advertising and locations at biannual business expos

5.1 Price Rationale

The business training course is priced at \$100, \$50 of which is a deposit returned upon successful completion of the class. The purpose of this pricing is both to defray the cost of offering the service and to make sure the clients have "skin in the game." For many of these clients, \$100 is a stretch to come up with. However, it is important to the Riverton Business Accelerator to know that the clients have a financial as well as time investment, and also an incentive to see the class through to the end.

This price is higher than free business coaching sessions, but it is also more in-depth and systematic than what these services can offer. It is significantly lower than community college business training courses, yet offers the same basic curriculum as an introductory entrepreneurship course.

Client services are available for graduates for a \$150 annual fee. There is an additional \$100 space rental cost for the business expo. All of these prices serve the same purpose - to defray costs and to make sure the clients continue to have a financial stake in the services offered.

Marketing Materials

Marketing materials for the Riverton Business Accelerator include a number of different advertisements. The primary information piece is the organization brochure, which details the benefits of taking part in the business training course, what the course covers, and post-graduate services. This is a client-focused brochure which must be printed inexpensively, yet in full-color. These will be given to prospects who don't have access to the Internet in their home. Those with Internet access will be directed to visit the RBA website to peruse the same material there. This will help lower cost of materials and still provide the same information.

Other materials containing the new branding include:

- Staff business cards
- Client social networking site
- Letterhead and envelopes
- Staff name tags for events and classes
- Advertising
- Signage for office location
- Client monthly newsletter
- Donor appeal letters
- Donor quarterly newsletter
- Annual report

Testimonials - both written and video - from clients and graduates are important to build the credibility of the website and brochure. These will be sought out from each graduate in a five minute video interview upon the completion of the course, and then from targeted clients at later dates. The office will have a tripod and basic video camera for this purpose and will not employ a videographer, to keep costs down.

Web Plan

The RBA website serves a number of purposes:

- Establish the credibility and success of RBA to donors
- Court new clients
- Provide services to existing clients
- Inform the general public about RBA services and client businesses
- Give press material for stories about RBA

The website includes the following pages:

- Home landing page, with the latest news
- Mission, Vision, Values
- Founders' Story
- Board list and bios
- Staff list and bios
- Key volunteers
- The Need (donors) - description of the need for this service in Riverton
- The Benefits (donors) - description of how microentrepreneur training and support serves this need
- Objectives and Outcomes (donors) - detailing past measurements of success and future objectives
- Supporters (donors) - Listing of supporting organizations and individual donors (other than anonymous)
- Business Training Course - detailed description of the business training course

- Post-graduate services - with subpage for each service, including images where applicable
- Schedule of upcoming deadlines and events
- Entrepreneur profiles and testimonials - from select clients
- Business directory - Of all client businesses
- Donate - page detailing how to donate
- Volunteer - page detailing volunteer opportunities
- Archived Newsletters
- Current and archived news (including links to appearances in the press)
- Upcoming and archived events
- Press releases
- Media kit download
- Contact Us

The organization's communications associate is tasked with the day-to-day updating of the website's resources.

7.1 Social Media Plan

A business networking site for graduates uses LinkedIn as a jumping off point to allow for discussion forums, posting of calls for help or advice, sharing of resources, and more. Staff takes part in this networking site to facilitate, answer questions where possible, and help make connections between the graduates. Material from the monthly newsletters will be reposted on this site to provide additional ideas to the graduates.

This business networking must happen offline as well. Networking events will be planned on at least a quarterly basis

Lead Generation Plan

New leads are generated for the Riverton Business Accelerator through the following means:

- Referrals from existing clients and word-of-mouth
- Radio spots
- Community flyer campaign
- Newspapers reaching the underserved population
- Visibility of office signage and location in downtown area
- Direct mail distribution of newsletter to target geographic areas

8.1 Advertising

Media Tracking Kits Requested

Advertising Medium	Contact Name	Contact #	Distribution	Cost/Ad	Total CPM
Riverton Free Daily					
El Nuevo Riverton (Hispanic weekly)					
WRTZ Local Radio					
Flyers at local businesses, libraries, city service organizations					

8.2 Referrals

The Riverton Business Accelerator encourages its clients to feel a sense of community with other microentrepreneurs and support each other wherever possible, rather than feeling they are in competition with others. To that end, RBA encourages current clients in the business training course and graduates of the course to refer new leads to attend the orientation or to sign up for the newsletter. RBA has created an incentive for clients to make these referrals by offering a discount on the next annual fee for post-graduate services - 20% off the annual fee for every referral who enrolls in the business training course. When five new clients are referred, the next annual fee for post-graduate services will be \$0. Therefore, referring one client has a \$30 value to an existing client.

Lead Conversion Plan

The primary method of lead conversion for the organization is the orientation session. It is at this session that interested parties meet in large groups with the Executive Director of the Riverton Business Accelerator and one of the business trainers. Over the course of the one-hour session, they describe the benefits of not only the class, but of post-graduate services, and speak in general terms about the power of entrepreneurship to improve the individual's position. There is a 15-minute question and answer session, followed by 30 minutes in which the speakers remain on site to speak to interested parties individually. Class applications are handed out at the session and pointers are given as to how to demonstrate the creativity and drive which RBA looks for in clients. Attention is also paid to the cost of the class and the reason for the cost. It is important to make sure that applicants are stable enough to be able to afford this cost (those who are currently out of work should be seeking more immediate job training services and are not the intended target market for RBA).

All attendees to the orientation sessions are called one week later to encourage them again to apply, if they have not already done so. Applications for the training courses are due one month prior to the class starting date.

At other times of the year, interested parties speak with staff members who give them the basic information about the next scheduled course and encourage them to attend the upcoming orientation session. These callers (and those who email) are tracked in a customer relational management database so that they can be followed up with as the orientation session and application time approaches. Interested parties are added to the email newsletter list, if they provide an email address, or to the mail newsletter list, if they provide only a mailing address.

Service Experience

Quality assurance and listening to clients are important to maintaining a consistently successful service experience for clients. Riverton Business Accelerator goes beyond the expectations it sets through its website and brochure by bringing in seasoned business professionals to speak at programs. Loyalty is encouraged primarily through the wide range of post-graduate services only available to clients who continue to pay an annual fee after the basic business training course.

10.1 Loyalty Product/Service Offerings

Client loyalty is encouraged through the post-graduate services which can significantly further client businesses. The collective experience of these graduates of the business course is put to use through small support groups, consisting of graduates, and facilitated by Riverton Business Accelerator staff. These support groups are good opportunities for idea sharing and mutual support between business owners with non-competing businesses. This peer-to-peer support is much less expensive for Riverton Business Accelerator to administer (a staff member must be present, but does not need to prepare curriculum or any material) and also reduces the burden on other post-graduate services, such as coaching sessions.

Clients who continue to stick with Riverton Business Accelerator even after they have moved to full-time jobs in their new business are rewarded through featured locations at the business expo, at no additional cost, and by being able to join small groups with other business owners at the same stage.

10.2 WOW Process

Riverton Business Accelerator will solicit clients for feedback halfway through the business training course, record video testimonials on its conclusion, and conduct biannual surveys to all post-graduates to rate their satisfaction, remind them about the benefits of providing referrals, and get suggestions on how to improve RBA services. These results will be analyzed through survey software, and a report will be sent to the Executive Director on the programs that are being offered and the satisfaction of clients. The interests and suggestions of the clients are taken into account when the programs are reviewed and revised annually by the Director of Programs and the Executive Director.

Staff performance reviews are given twice a year. Trainers are also evaluated by their students, and the results of these confidential surveys are reviewed by the Director of Programs after the end of each course. Within the run of a course, any problems with the trainer can be reported directly to the Director of Programs. This insures that any egregious problems are dealt with right away, and students are encouraged to report any problems during the course.

To truly wow customers, the business training courses, networking events, and other sponsored events will periodically feature guest business professionals from successful area businesses. These professionals are chosen for their speaking ability as well as for their business success.

Marketing Calendar

The Riverton Business Accelerator Communications department is currently comprised of the Director of Communications and Communications Associate. The Director reviews the key marketing metrics every Monday to determine how well the tactics of RBA are translating into the desired results. She devotes three hours per week to the marketing theme of the month in order to constantly improve the systems that have been established for RBA.

The Communications Associate responds to email requests from media and other partners on a daily basis, serves as a liaison with the press agent and other outside vendors, and executes most of the marketing activities, as directed by the Director. The Communications Associate joins the Director for the weekly review of the key marketing metrics, as well as for a monthly review of the gap dashboard.

11.1 Monthly

Months	Marketing Theme
1	Client Newsletter
2	Client Feedback
3	Public Relations
4	Direct Mail Campaign
5	Advertising
6	Staff Orientation
7	Website

8	Brochure
9	Social Media
10	Client Orientation Sessions
11	Referral Marketing
12	Annual Review

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Milestones

Advertising	Start Date	End Date	Budget	Responsible	Department
New radio ad recording	9/15/2010	9/30/2010	\$250	Communications Associate	Communications
Newspaper ad design	10/1/2010	10/15/2010	\$250	Communications Associate	Communications
Flyer campaign	10/1/2010	10/15/2010	\$250	Communications Associate	Communications
Total Advertising Budget			\$750		

PR	Start Date	End Date	Budget	Responsible	Department
Choose new PR company	8/1/2010	8/31/2010	\$0	Communications Associate	Communications
Create PR plan	9/1/2010	9/15/2010	\$1,000	Communications Associate	Communications
Revise PR mailing list	9/15/2010	9/30/2010	\$500	Communications	Communications

Associate

Total PR Budget \$1,500

Direct Marketing	Start Date	End Date	Budget	Responsible	Department
Purchase mailing lists	11/1/2010	11/15/2010	\$250	Communications Associate	Communications
Design direct mail piece	11/1/2010	11/15/2010	\$250	Communications Associate	Communications
Total Direct Marketing Budget			\$500		

Web Development	Start Date	End Date	Budget	Responsible	Department
Review website	10/1/2010	10/30/2010	\$500	Communications Associate	Communications
Revise website	11/1/2010	1/30/2011	\$2,500	Communications Associate	Communications
Launch LinkedIn group	9/1/2010	9/1/2010	\$0	Communications Associate	Communications
Promote LinkedIn group	9/1/2010	9/30/2010	\$250	Communications Associate	Communications
Total Web Development Budget			\$3,250		

WOW Process	Start Date	End Date	Budget	Responsible	Department
Design client feedback surveys	8/1/2010	8/15/2010	\$250	Director of Programs	Programming
Design staff performance review	8/1/2010	8/15/2010	\$250	Director of Programs	Programming
First biannual staff	9/1/2010	9/15/2010	\$250	Director of	Programming

performance review

Programs

Total WOW Process Budget \$750

Totals \$6,750

Critical Numbers

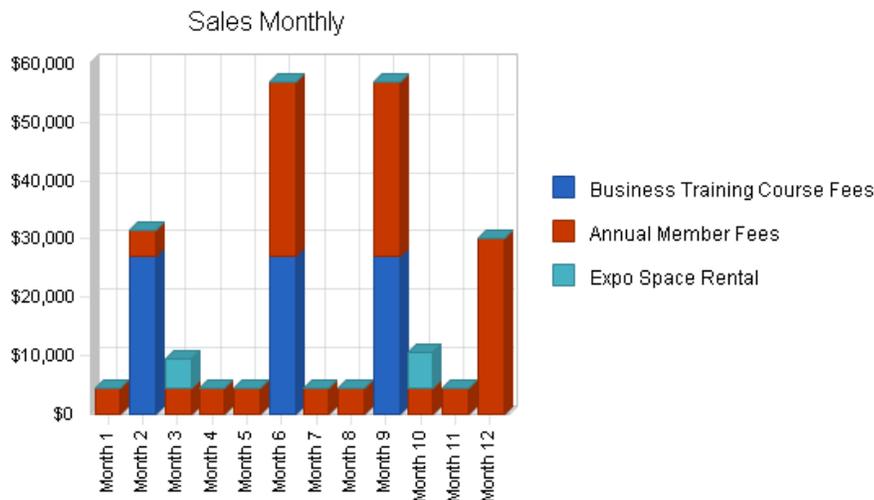
Earned revenue for the Riverton Business Accelerator is largely dependent on receiving a steady stream of leads for the courses, converting those leads, and encouraging the clients to go on to become annual members and take part in the business expo. All of these key marketing metrics are tracked in a CRM system, while the resulting sales and required expenses to achieve these sales are tracked in nonprofit accounting software. The Communications Associate is responsible for the former and the Business Manager for the latter.

12.1 Sales Forecast

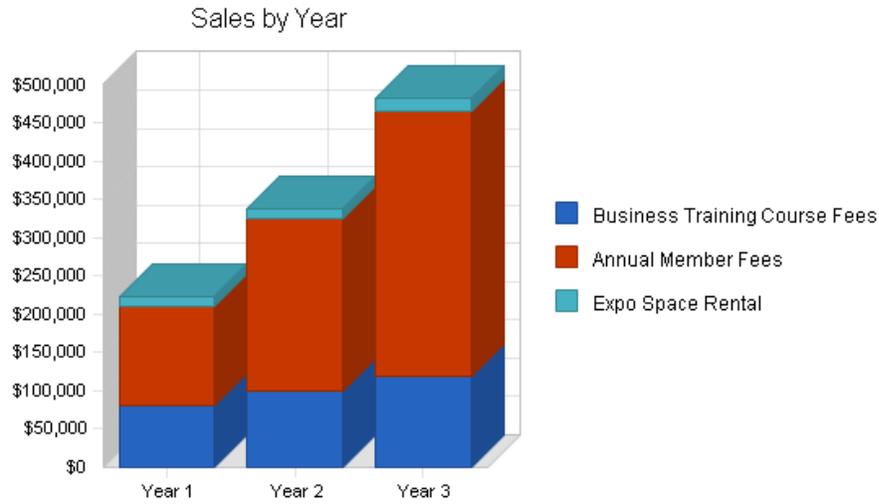
Earned revenue will grow to form an important part of the overall budget of the Riverton Business Accelerator, even though, for each client, it primarily serves the purpose of a psychological motivator to insure that the client takes full advantage of the organization's programs. Business training course fees come in three times per year when the courses begin. Annual fees are generally paid at the conclusion of each course, when those graduates and graduates from the years prior are asked to start or renew a membership for post-graduate services. It is expected that not all graduating students will become members, but at least 75% will. Expos occur in September and April.

Expenses for the training course are 60% of the \$100 training fee, or \$60 per client. This includes the \$50 refund to the client after completion of the course. As described in the Price Rationale earlier, pricing the course at \$100 and offering the \$50 refund is important to the Riverton Business Accelerator to know that the clients have a financial as well as time investment, and also have an incentive to see the class through to the end. The remaining 10% covers the costs involved for materials and for presenting the class.

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Sales Forecast

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Unit Sales			
Business Training Course Fees	810	1,000	1,200
Annual Member Fees	870	1,500	2,300
Expo Space Rental	110	140	170
Total Unit Sales	1,790	2,640	3,670
Unit Prices	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Business Training Course Fees	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
Annual Member Fees	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$150.00
Expo Space Rental	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00

Sales

Business Training Course Fees	\$81,000	\$100,000	\$120,000
Annual Member Fees	\$130,500	\$225,000	\$345,000
Expo Space Rental	\$11,000	\$14,000	\$17,000
Total Sales	\$222,500	\$339,000	\$482,000

Direct Unit Costs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Business Training Course Fees	\$60.00	\$60.00	\$60.00
Annual Member Fees	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$45.00
Expo Space Rental	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$70.00

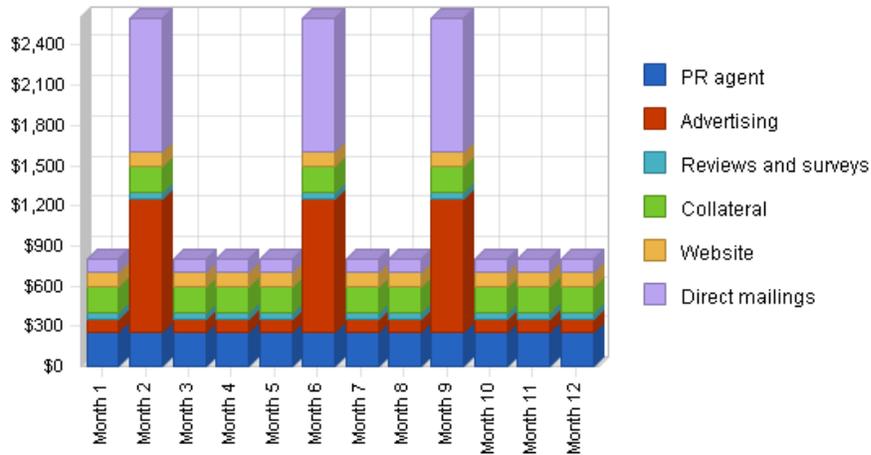
Direct Cost of Sales

Business Training Course Fees	\$48,600	\$60,000	\$72,000
Annual Member Fees	\$39,150	\$67,500	\$103,500
Expo Space Rental	\$7,700	\$9,800	\$11,900
Subtotal Direct Cost of Sales	\$95,450	\$137,300	\$187,400

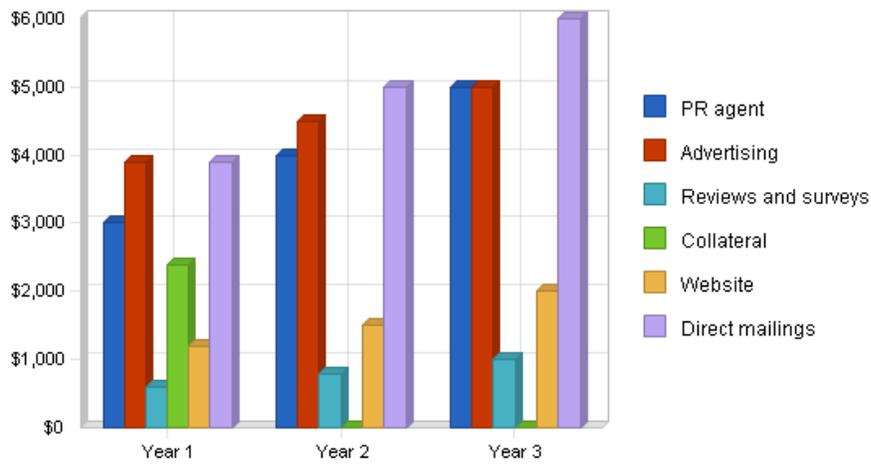
12.2 Marketing Expense Budget

The marketing expense budget is covered by the earned revenue of Riverton Business Accelerator. This budget focuses on marketing to clients and press. Marketing to donors is accounted for in the development budget. The next three years will see rises in the budget to meet the demands of growing programs each year. Advertising and direct mailings are primarily done in the month before each course begins. Other costs are year round.

Monthly Expense Budget



Annual Expense Budget



Marketing Expense Budget

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
PR agent	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000
Advertising	\$3,900	\$4,500	\$5,000
Reviews and surveys	\$600	\$800	\$1,000
Collateral	\$2,400	\$0	\$0

Website	\$1,200	\$1,500	\$2,000
Direct mailings	\$3,900	\$5,000	\$6,000
	-----	-----	-----
Total Sales and Marketing Expenses	\$15,000	\$15,800	\$19,000
Percent of Sales	6.74%	4.66%	3.94%

12.3 Key Marketing Metrics

Leads include all of those who inquire about the training course, including those who simply call or email, as well as those who come to the session and those who enroll. It is expected that about one in three leads will convert in the first full year, and this conversion rate will improve a bit in the years to come as results of the courses become available. Average \$ per customer per year is based on the fact that not all graduates become members after graduation and only some of those members take part in the business expo. Approximately 20% of leads are expected to come from referrals of other organizations and past clients.

PR mentions will increase steadily with the hiring of a PR agent to pursue stories in the media. Testimonials include all video testimonials taken upon the completion of each set of training courses. Of these, a much smaller number will be used on the website, or pieced together into longer videos for marketing or fundraising purposes. Newsletter sign-ups include most of those who start the training course, and other community members, less any who cancel their newsletter subscription.

The Communications Associate is responsible for tracking these numbers through the CRM database and prepares weekly reports of the numbers for consideration by the Director of Communications.

Key Marketing Metrics

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Revenue	\$222,500	\$339,000	\$482,000
Leads	2,700	3,333	4,000
Leads Converted	30.00%	35.00%	40.00%
Avg. Transactions/Customer	1.30	1.35	1.40
Avg. \$/Customer	\$162	\$173	\$184

Referrals	540	667	800
PR Mentions	52	84	100
Testimonials	900	900	1,000
Newsletter Sign-ups (net)	2,712	3,500	4,200

Marketing Training Game

Marketing training for program staff and business trainers begins with new employee training. During training, the new employee will be asked to role-play an interaction with a new client prospect, played by the Director of Communications. Before this role-playing, the employee will be given adequate time to review the website, brochure, course materials, and other marketing material, as well as to shadow existing employees as they speak with prospective and actual clients. The Director will require the employee to repeat the exercise if the results are not satisfactory in terms of knowledge, confidence, and personableness. The employees will not be approved to take calls from clients until passing this role-playing test.

Every six months, existing employees will be asked to repeat this exercise by taking turns role-playing with each other. The Director will observe and review their performance. This will be an opportunity to sharpen their skills as well as to share ideas on how to work with clients.