

CENTER FOR
Women's Entrepreneurship
AT CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

10-Year Report: 2005-2015



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CENTER FOR
Women's Entrepreneurship

AT CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

OUR MISSION

The Center for Women's Entrepreneurship at Chatham University creates economic opportunities for women through entrepreneurial education and training, mentoring, and networking.

Building on Chatham University's tradition of educating world-ready women for over 145 years, the Center for Women's Entrepreneurship at Chatham University celebrates its tenth anniversary providing quality education and training for women entrepreneurs since 2005.

Current funding for the Center for Women's Entrepreneurship at Chatham University is provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, the PNC Foundation, and the Alcoa Foundation. Initial funding was provided by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and the Lois Tack Thompson Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation.



"As the president of Chatham University, I am pleased to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our Center for Womens Entrepreneurship. Ten years ago, Chatham recognized a need for support for women starting businesses in the greater Pittsburgh region, and now, with the wonderful leadership of Rebecca Harris, Anne Flynn Schlicht, and the support of Patricia Decker, this organization, the Center, has reached so many women. More than 400 women have been helped to start or grow their businesses, and more than 3,000 have come for the Women Business Leaders Breakfast Series and networked and connected with some of the most prominent business leaders in Pittsburgh. Thank you to all who have supported and continue to support the Center as we celebrate ten years, and here is to the next ten."

*Esther L. Barazzone, Ph.D.
President, Chatham University*



Q&A with Rebecca U. Harris, MBA

Director of the Center for Women's Entrepreneurship
at Chatham University

Q What would you say are the biggest changes the Center has gone through in the past ten years?

A Over the past ten years, the Center has designed and developed our own women-centric curriculum and created a continuum of services, from start-up programs like our proprietary MyBusiness Startup to those that allow us to work with more established businesses, such as MyBusiness Growth and MyBoard. We are bringing in a wider variety of local and national female speakers, offering more business and networking events, and spending more time in the community, giving presentations and workshops. All of this has increased our visibility, and our membership program (introduced in 2012) continues to grow every year. The Center has also formed strong partnerships with other universities, entrepreneurial support organizations in the greater Pittsburgh area, and a wide variety of departments at Chatham University.

Q What Center accomplishments are you most proud of?

A Over the past three years, we have developed a customized curriculum specifically for women in MyBusiness Startup and MyBusiness Growth. We integrated into this curriculum the specific needs which women business owners face when starting and growing their businesses, taking into account both hard and soft skills necessary to succeed. We are proud of the success that we have had in developing our own programming to support women entrepreneurs, including our MyConsulting Corner program, which offers a field-study experience for MBA students with hands-on assistance for women business owners in the community who are looking for project-based assistance such as a marketing plan or competitive matrix. I especially enjoy the one-on-one strategic business consulting I am able to provide to our members as a part of their membership benefits.

The Center began one of Pittsburgh's first morning networking events for women with our Women Business

Leaders Breakfast Series in 2009 and that successful program continues today, entering its sixth year and reaching over 3,000 participants. In 2015 we also celebrated ten years hosting our annual Think Big Forum, a yearly conference highlighting the achievements of exceptional local and national business women. We are proud of the increased number of women business owners who have continued to collaborate with us, recommending our programs, attending events, and seeking guidance. This has enabled the Center to seek and receive the generous support of many local corporate sponsors and foundations.

The high quality programming we produce is only possible due to the Center's staff, a group of exceptional, hardworking individuals, dedicated to the advancement of women whether they are students thinking about starting a business or experienced women business owners looking to expand into a new market. It was the vision of Chatham University's President, Dr. Esther Barazzone, who realized ten years ago that the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Pittsburgh was sorely lacking women entrepreneurs and who established the Center under the leadership of its inaugural director, Dr. Mary Riebe.

Q What's on the horizon for the Center?

A We look forward to continuing to support women as they start and grow their businesses through our educational programs, mentoring and networking opportunities, and we're excited to continue to contribute to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, providing new programming and opportunities for our members such as our new MyPath mentoring program. As a part of the newly launched Women's Institute at Chatham University, the Center will be able to provide an even wider array of programming to advance and support women in their chosen profession.

Entrepreneurial Training Programs

SMALL BUSINESS BASICS is a half-day workshop offered in partnership with SCORE® Pittsburgh where entrepreneurs and experts provide presentations on business planning, financing, bookkeeping, insurance, marketing, and legal issues.

MYBUSINESS STARTUP is an entrepreneurial training program designed for women in the early stages (0-2 years) of starting their own businesses.

MYBUSINESS GROWTH WORKSHOP SERIES is a customized series of workshops for women business owners looking to strategically position their business for growth and expansion.

In the past 10 years, the Center has:

- Offered 79 entrepreneurial training programs,
- Assisted over 200 women-owned businesses in opening their doors, and
- Worked with over 240 women to grow their businesses in more than 10 Pennsylvania counties and three states.

“The MyBusiness Growth Program at Chatham University gave business owners like myself the opportunity to really focus on relevant business topics, learn more than I’d ever allowed myself time to, and collaborate with other entrepreneurs. The combination of the leadership of the seasoned professionals as well as the wide variety of business owners made for valuable conversation, networking, and growth. I truly found value in the content, which made it easy to commit the time and money.”

— Carolyn Klasnick, Partner & Senior Producer, PostScript Productions LLC

“The MyBusiness Startup class offered at Chatham’s Center For Women’s Entrepreneurship assisted me so very much on my quest to start a new business last year. Not only did the class provide valuable and relevant information, tools and guidance, it more importantly, provided me with an extensive network of excellent resources and new friends pursuing the same entrepreneurial goals as myself. This network of terrific women really helped me be courageous in moving forward with my business plan and I’m so glad I did!”

— Kim Adley, Owner, Passport to Pittsburgh, LLC



“Having worked in the Center for nine of the past ten years, I’m extremely proud of the contributions we have made to the local economy through the education and training we have provided in support of women who are starting and growing businesses in this region. We have extended the training programs we offer over the years to address the needs of the women owned businesses in our community and the diversity of industries in which they operate. The Center has built a strong membership of women-owned businesses who support each other and the Center by volunteering to train and mentor other women on the challenges of business ownership. The Center also continues to foster entrepreneurship with the students at Chatham University, providing them with internships and experience with small businesses and the guidance and training needed to pursue an entrepreneurial career.”

— Anne Flynn Schlicht, MBS, assistant director of the Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship at Chatham University

Anne Flynn Schlicht of the Center (right) and Nicole Narvaez Mann of Nikki’s Magic Wand at the 10th Annual Think Big Forum

MyBusiness Startup 2013 Graduate Rebecca Meehan, Co-Founder & Owner, Embody Physiotherapy & Wellness LLC

Confessions of a 56-year-old Entrepreneur

“You are 55 years old! Why leave a perfectly good job to start your own business?”

“Shouldn’t you be planning for retirement instead of risking your money in a business?”



**Rebecca Meehan of Embody
Physiotherapy & Wellness, LLC**

The statements above are examples of what I heard in 2013-14 as co-founder and owner, Susan Clinton, and I decided after three years of imagining and planning (and a few glasses of red wine!) that the time had come to leave corporate healthcare and to follow our vision of what an integrative, client-centered, and evidence-based physical therapy practice could be. Embody Physiotherapy & Wellness LLC was “born.” We had reached a point in our careers (each, 30 years) that we felt compelled to develop an environment that allowed us to offer different physical therapy, movement, and wellness options to the Pittsburgh public and to expand our services in healthcare outreach. Embody Physiotherapy & Wellness LLC is an integrative practice that gives us the opportunity to be creative with the options that we offer our clients from working with them individually in a hands on and therapeutic setting, to offering workshops and classes (movement and bone health, Yoga as Medicine, core and pelvic health fitness as examples), and wellness.

Although Susan and I are knowledgeable and experienced physical therapists, we knew next to nothing about starting and operating a business. Luckily, in August of 2013, I saw information about the Center’s “MyBusiness Startup” program and registered, one of the best business moves I have made to date. The 12 weeks of class were challenging, showed me how much I had to learn, and offered resources without which, Susan and I truly would have struggled .

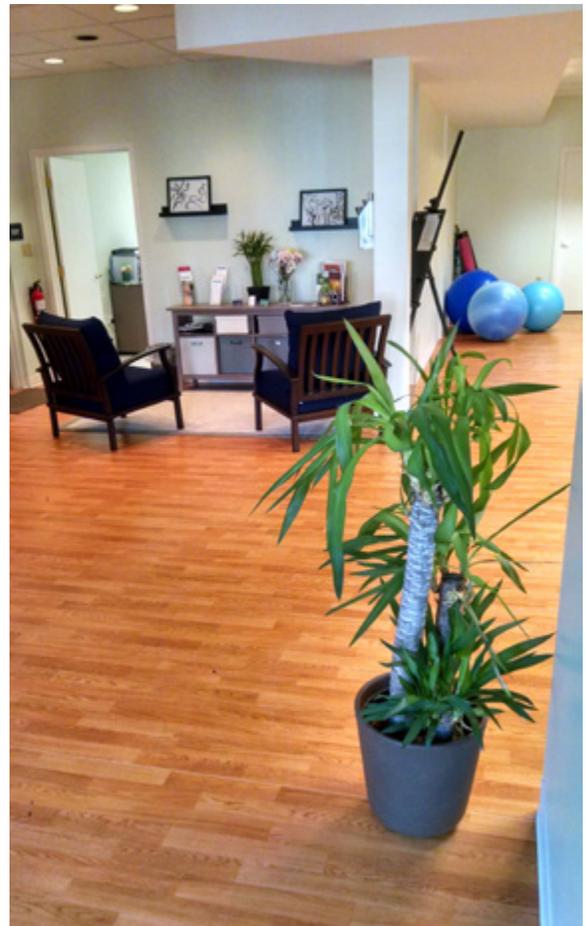


Starting a business is not for the faint of heart, and the mentors and instructors in the class were supportive and honest about the challenges (including financial and time commitments) of a business start-up. They encouraged us but also asked students to examine where we were in the process and if it was the truly the right time or move to make. I enjoy seeing them at Center events and sharing my successes as well as the frustrations and challenges of business. They are always receptive and are willing to share ideas and thoughts.

So 1-1/2 years into this process, where is Embody? We continue to increase our offerings to clients and students, and are seeing our business grow and gain recognition in the public, health care, and wellness communities. We continue to learn about business, including: you can't take it too personally in the business world, someone is always looking for OUR business, and the word SALES is not a "four letter word. We are expanding our promotional and marketing knowledge, strategies, and outreach, and now have a part-time marketing coordinator (staff growth!).

I define myself not just as physical therapist, but as a women business owner and never regret the move that Susan and I made. Each day brings new challenges, new knowledge, and new people!

Rebecca Meehan
Co-Founder & Owner, Embody Physiotherapy & Wellness LLC



Classes, rooms, and studio at
Embodly Physiotherapy & Wellness, LLC

Mentoring Women Business Owners

MYBOARD matches women business owners with a customized advisory board of experienced professionals who take an in-depth look at the business over the course of a year, meeting virtually and in-person to provide business owners with flexibility.



Kate Romane of e2 and her MyBoard mentors

“The commitment, expertise and mentoring from MyBoard has been remarkable. The Center and the mentors have provided me, as a customer and the one being mentored, the same experience I want to provide to our customers and employees at Tazza D’Oro. The Center has been inspirational and has set the bar for how we as business owners need to show up every day.”

— Amy Enrico, Owner, Tazza D’Oro

“MyBoard proved to be a critical source of honest, unbiased feedback. My team of mentors confronted me with the challenging, strategic questions that are so easy to put off in favor of day-to-day operations, and the structure of the MyBoard program helped keep me focused on finding the answers. By the program’s end I had not only taken steps to optimize those distracting daily operations, but gained insight that will help me grow my business in the future.”

— Emily Kauffman, President, Emport LLC

“I have been a member of the Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship since its inception. Through the guidance of key senior staff and resources available through the Center, I restructured and rebranded my business in 2012. The resources available to small business owners are invaluable. In addition to belonging to the Center, I am honored to work with the MyBusiness StartUp class in mentoring start up entrepreneurs. One of the most inspiring events at the Center was the Think Big event featuring Chanda Bell, one of the founders of Elf on the Shelf. The story of their startup through maxed out credit cards to international distribution and battling competition was one I’ll always remember.”

— Autumn Edmiston, CEO, Edmiston Group

In the past 10 years the Center has:

- Recruited 94 mentors for women business owners.

“We’re still in our first quarter with MyBoard, and it’s already been outstanding. The Center walked me through creation of a get-to-know you summary and goal statements, and so, even before the first meeting I was receiving feedback, and investor and customer introductions from MyBoard members. One member even set aside an entire afternoon shortly after the first meeting to coach me in market strategy. The Center really took the time to find MyBoard members that had the right background to address gaps in my small organization and had sincere interest in contributing to our growth.”

— Lisa Weiland, President, Renerge LLC

“I have been involved with the Center for four years, serving on the Advisory Board, participating in the MyBoard mentoring program, as well as providing free legal consulting to members. During that time, I have watched the Center grow exponentially under the astute leadership of Rebecca Harris and her dedicated staff. The growth has been impressive. Equally impressive and inspiring, however, is the development of the members’ businesses as they are educated and embrace and implement what they learn through the various Center programs. Women who are intent on growing their businesses can find no better educational forum than the Center.”

— Beth A. Slagle, Esq., Meyer Unkovic & Scott LLP



Heather Knight of Marilyn Monrobot at the 9th Annual Think Big Forum

Impacting Women Through Networking Events

The **WOMEN BUSINESS LEADERS BREAKFAST SERIES** is a monthly speaker series that combines talks from exceptional regional women leaders on the cutting edge of business with morning networking.

The **THINK BIG FORUM** is the Center's signature networking forum that brings in national and regional speakers to create a discussion around a topic of importance to all business women.

"I have attended Friday morning breakfasts at the Center of Woman's Entrepreneurship at Chatham University for many years. I continue to come for the inspiration I get from the dynamic speakers who are such wise women and accomplished business owners. Their knowledge is tremendously valuable and they freely share it. I also love the relationship building and networking opportunities we get with a community of women entrepreneurs. There is a terrific attitude of give and take – I have both referred business and have had business referred to me because of relationships that developed at these events. The smaller, intimate setting of Friday morning Breakfasts are by far my favorite events to attend!"

— Lynda Waltner Stucky, CCC–SLP, Voice Branding Specialist for Executive Leaders, ClearlySpeaking LLC

In the past 10 years the Center has:

- Impacted 840 businesses through our business networking events,
- Inspired attendees of the Think Big Forum with over 50 successful women speakers from nationally-recognized businesses.

Congratulations to everyone at the Center for Women's Entrepreneurship at Chatham University. The work you have done over the past ten years is so important and you are to be commended as well as congratulated. Until I was introduced to the Center for Women's Entrepreneurship, I was unaware of the vast resources and networking opportunities that were available to women in business in our area. The Center introduced me to programs and people that not only helped me grow my business, but helped me become a stronger, more confident business leader and manager.

— Carol R. Hurley, Owner, Hurley Associates

"Being involved in the Center has provided me with the opportunity to meet many like-minded women business owners where we network and help each other grow in our business. I have been most involved in participating in the Center's Breakfast series which provides presentations from unique and inspiring woman entrepreneurs. My bucket is always overflowing after I attend a Center breakfast!"

— Bobbie Smithco, Sr. Mentor, Tastefully Simple

Photo above right: Deborah Giboa of AskDoctorG.com, blogger Rachel Blaufield, and Kiya Tomlin of Uptown Sweats at the Women Business Leaders Breakfast Series



"I take advantage of every program and networking opportunity available at both campuses! Networking with such high caliber businesswomen is invaluable. This community provides a strong, dependable support system for all of us. The Center is changing the world one woman and one business at a time!"

— Karen Wilson Connor, Realtor, RE/MAX Select Realty

"As far as I am concerned, the Center for Women's Entrepreneurship at Chatham University is the "heart-center" for women in business in Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas. From the inspirational stories from Think Big to the networking events and beyond, the team with Rebecca's leadership continues to support our growth/success and nurture our entrepreneurial spirit."

— Carol Philp, President, CPI Creative

Membership

The Center welcomes all women as members - whether you own your own business or work for a company or organization! Becoming a member of the Center provides many exclusive benefits, including:

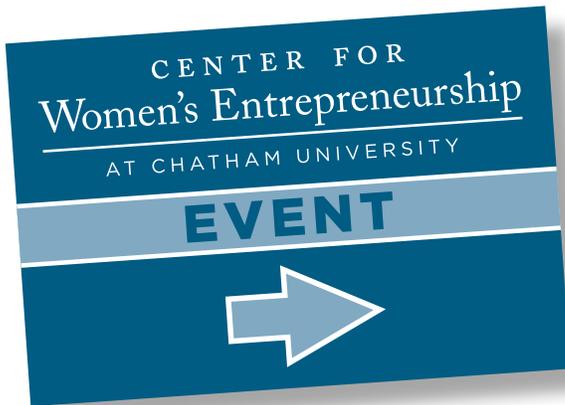
- Access to our online member portal, including a member database, exclusive resources, and recordings of many of our Women Business Leaders Breakfast Series and Think Big Forum speakers
- Live streaming for all of our Women Business Leaders Breakfast Series events
- Free access to our Think Big Forum, Women Business Leaders Breakfast Series, and Small Business Basics events as well as special member pricing on our Entrepreneurial Training Programs.
- Monthly business, legal, accounting, and web/social media consulting opportunities
- Exclusive member networking events, including monthly member coffee hours



Patricia Decker (center), with Anne Flynn Schlicht (right) of the Center, and Dr. Vonda Wright, orthopedic surgeon and researcher, at the Women Business Leaders Breakfast Series

“It has been wonderful to see how the Center’s membership program has enabled us to reach more women and assist them in their goals for their businesses and careers. Developing the membership community and reaching out to women who have attended our programs and events has expanded the scope of what we do at the Center, certainly, but has also inspired us to innovate continuously for our members, stretching ourselves to develop new programs and new opportunities to better serve women in the greater Pittsburgh region. I’m excited to have had a part in creating and serving such an amazing community of women.”

— Patricia Decker, MPW, program coordinator at the Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship at Chatham University



“Congratulations to the Center on your ten year anniversary. With the line-up of speakers I have seen in the past two years, I wish I would have joined from day one. Listening to each speaker and seeing businesses through the lens of each entrepreneur has taught me a great deal. I applaud each speaker for sharing their time and their vision. Thank you Rebecca Harris and team for your efforts in making each Breakfast Series available to us and the opportunity to connect with many business leaders. I am looking forward to continued involvement with the Center in the future.”

— Donna Gobble, Interior Designer, The Design Alliance

Since establishing membership in 2012
the Center has supported 440 women members!

“The relationships that I have developed and encouragement that I have received from the staff and members of the Center for Woman's Entrepreneurship have helped me become a stronger executive in my business and in life. There are times that Rebecca is the voice in my head that says 'you got this!' I especially love the speakers that come to the Breakfast Series. There have been so many dynamic speakers that I couldn't possibly pick one as my favorite.”

— GeorgeAnne Muchnok, President/CEO, Opticom Consulting

“The Center was one of the first places I reached out to when I first moved to Pittsburgh in 2013. I had decided to start a business, and was overwhelmed to take on the task without a support structure. Being able to meet with other women who were trying to start businesses and realizing that I wasn't alone, was a huge emotional anchor to get through the difficult moments (of which there are many!)”

— Rohini Shah, Founder, BluSalt

Chatham University

Student Impact

“The Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship has been very helpful to me as a student at Chatham who is trying to get a foot in the door to the local entrepreneurial community. Not only are their events educational and informative but also provide great exposure to networking. I have been to many events and I went from having no network to a large

network of important people. The Center opened up the doors to multiple opportunities and I recommend my colleagues, friends, and anyone participate in their events and programs because I find them relevant to the majority of people trying to make it.”

— Meis Kadhem, MBA student and marketing program graduate assistant for the Center

“One of the best parts of this experience... was being pushed to attend events that I wouldn’t have normally been interested in. These events took me out of my element, but opened my eyes to new possibilities. I was often surprised by the fresh insights these events gave me, and excited by the new, useful skills I developed. Venturing off-campus to network with entrepreneurs at other University and Institution events has been extremely rewarding. I extended my professional network exponentially, and I was introduced to the countless opportunities available to me as a

female entrepreneur in Western Pennsylvania. At the time of my first visit to the Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship, I had some business dreams, but lacked the knowledge and conviction to pursue them...The advice I took away from successful women entrepreneurs at lectures and events has proven invaluable. I am so grateful for this experience, and extremely proud of myself for working hard and reaching far to achieve this goal.”

— Isabella Igyed ’14, BA in business and winner of the 2014 Business and Entrepreneurship Club Entrepreneurial Excellence Award

- Over 177 students have participated in Center entrepreneurial training programs, with more than 15 students starting businesses, and 567 students have been connected with valuable networking opportunities at Center events
- The Center has connected 31 Chatham University graduate and undergraduate students with internships

MYCONSULTING CORNER

provides women business owners with graduate student assistance where, under the guidance of an Executive-in-Residence, students conduct business research projects such as marketing or product launch plans.



Robert Graham
of the Center

“All students receiving an MBA degree from Chatham University are provided the opportunity to apply, in a real-world environment, their knowledge, skills and talents learned and developed during their educational experience as part of the MyConsulting Corner program of the Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship at Chatham University. Throughout the term, students engage with the business clients, conduct extensive research relating to the business issues, and develop conclusions and recommendations to positively impact the business’s future strategy. The program explores the different aspects of being a consultant and prepares the students for additional career pathways as either entrepreneurs with their own businesses or working within a large corporation or a non-profit organization.”

— Robert Graham, MS, executive-in-residence
at the Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship at Chatham University



MBA students Huong Tran, Neeranuch Thantongdhamm, and Leah Spix

“The Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship has totally transformed my MBA experience. It has allowed me to take my learning from inside the classroom to real world examples shared by leading business thinkers. The Breakfast Series and Think Big Forum serve as inspiration that I can become a woman business leader.”

— Lisa Sobel-Berlow, MBA student and winner of the Business and Entrepreneurship Club Entrepreneurial Excellence Award

“Overall, I am very pleased with my consulting group. They gave me some good information and useful steps in order for me to move forward.”

— Lisa Seligman, Photographer, Images by Lisa Seligman

“My team was awesome and provided clear direction for moving forward. Their insight into who I am was right on target. Good experience.”

— Mj Callaway, Sales Retention Expert, MjC & Company, Rock More Sales

“The team provided an invaluable amount of analysis and legwork for us. We would like to implement the majority of their suggestions.”

— Cathy Chis, President, Power Conversion Technologies, Inc.

“Loved the program and working with the students. Bob was more than accommodating and the whole experience was fantastic. The information gleaned will be put to good use as the concept is a totally new venture for this area. Thanks so much for the opportunity.”

— Eve Salimbene, Founder, The Adopt Shop

Community Outreach & Involvement

“To me, the Center is Pittsburgh’s best toolkit for entrepreneurial women. Through the Center’s programs, I’ve connected with countless dynamic business owners who utilize the Center to not only grow professionally but to share their knowledge helping their peers grow as well. My all-time favorite event, and one that I look forward to each month, is the Women Business Leaders Breakfast Series. I am astounded with the quality, thought provoking speakers, and topics that are presented.”

— Karan Waigand, Economic Development Specialist, U.S. Small Business Administration

Engaged with over 100 community partners and 30 sponsors

“As the Regional Marketing Director of a 170+ person CPA firm, I am always looking for ways to create awareness for our firm as well as ways to train our professional staff in networking skills. I have been able to achieve both through our sponsorship of the Center’s Women Business Leaders Breakfast Series.”

— Beth Bershok, Regional Marketing Director, Herbein + Company, Inc.

“The Center continually has top-notch speakers that are an inspiration to intra- and entrepreneurs that really motivate you through a tough time in your day and in your business. I’ve met so many strong women that have not only referred business to me, but also act as a support network.”

— Janeene Foster, Vice President & Relationship Manager, Enterprise Bank

“The Center has provided UPS a unique exposure to Pittsburgh’s small businesses, in particular women-owned businesses. We are a global organization that cares about the growth and development on local businesses. Think Big and the Breakfast series are both great forums to network and get to spend time with the small business leaders in the Allegheny region.”

— Don Mueser, Small Business Marketing Manager, UPS

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