



PROGRESS REPORT

20 24

2024 Small Business Networking Series

Let's Talk: Let's Share: Digital Marketing!

Join local business owners for our guided discussion about the wins (and challenges) of using digital marketing for your businesses.

We'll talk about...

- Performance based marketing: What's working and what isn't?
- Digital marketing by the year: How is it not so much?
- Budgeting: How much should you spend on digital marketing?
- What are your measurements of success? ROI?

Valuable Networking and Discussion

Topics and dates for our Digital Marketing, Michael Woodhouse

Local in-person event
Tuesday, July 23, 2024
4-6 p.m.
Huron Branch
201 Center Street
South Haven, MI

The South Haven Regional Business Hub provides free support to small business owners in the Van Buren County region.

The July event topics for this year include: with partners support from and partnership with.

Local in-person event
Thursday, May 23, 2024
4-6 p.m.
The Farmer's Daughter
1111 Phelan Street
South Haven, MI



Small Business Networking Series NEW for 2024

Let's Talk About Finding Funding!

Join local business owners at a peer-to-peer guided discussion on the wins (and challenges) of finding funding. We'll talk about...

- What funding options worked best for your small business?
- How did the Business Plan support your funding efforts?
- What tools best supported you in your journey to find funding?
- Share your Success Stories!

The South Haven Regional Business Hub provides free support to small business owners in the Van Buren County area.

Midwest

Debi Brown started her company with zero employees and grew it to 40 in 12 years, then sold it. She has walked an entrepreneur's dream and understood the challenges of owning a business and the emotional challenges.

Sponsored by: **MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**



THE PITCH

Celebrate our region's small business owners as they pitch their growing organizations to community members and investors.

Thursday, December 5
Lakes Michigan College, South Haven
5:30-8:30 p.m.

High-Tech
https://www.southhavenmi.gov

For more information
southhavenregionalbusinesshub.com
Cathy Hove
cathy.hove@shmi.gov
269-207-6747

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

LAKE MICHIGAN COLLEGE



Being part of the Growth Series is a game-changer for Precision Syrups. I'm gaining valuable business skills that feel like getting an MBA crash course. While I know the basics, there are always fresh insights to uncover. Setting clear goals and understanding every part of our business is becoming much easier

-Tiffany Wood, Precision Syrups



GROWTH SERIES 2024

June to October | 20-Week Free Program | 11 Workshops | One-on-One Mentoring | Shared Experiences

For entrepreneurs who are ready to take their business to the next level.

CAN-DO KALAMAZOO

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

JOBS CREATION 2023-24

Our support has enabled 60 small businesses in the South Haven region to achieve significant milestones:

- **24** Total New Business Starts
- **16** New Business Starts 2024
- **198** Total Employees
- **66** New Employees



- Bangor
- Baroda
- Fennville
- Glenn
- Hartford
- Lawrence
- Paw Paw
- Pullman
- Sawyer
- South Haven
- St. Joseph

Our target audience is Van Buren County businesses with 25 or fewer employees, startups, and aspiring entrepreneurs.

GOALS

The Goals of the South Haven Region Business Hub are to increase equitable opportunities for ALL entrepreneurs, but primarily work to eliminate racial disparities in business revenues and empower entrepreneurs to create long lasting businesses that generate wealth.

Our planned outcomes include:

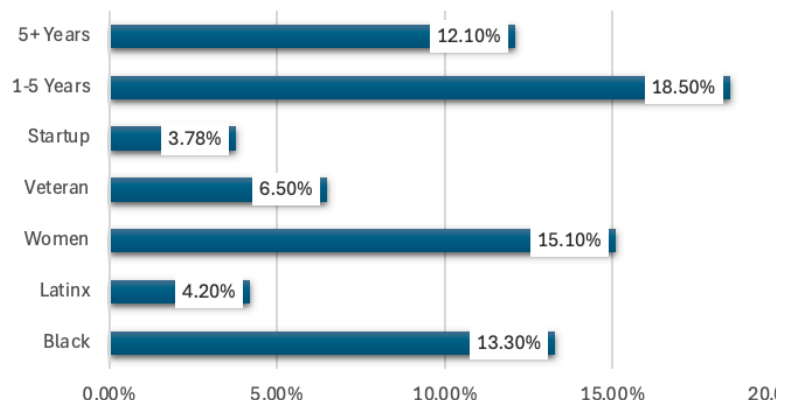
- Increase small business longevity to five and 10 years.
- Increase business scaling opportunities.
- Improve business owner financial skills.
- Increase funding for marginalized entrepreneurs.
- Increase diversity in entrepreneurship.
- Grow sustainable businesses that create jobs and wealth.
- Continue to investigate and deploy solutions for ecosystem gaps.

REACH

The past year, more than 260 business owners have taken advantage of our business events. Of the total registered business owners they, self-identify as:

- 15% Woman Owned
- 4% Latinx Owned
- 13% Black Owned
- 7% Veteran Owned
- 4% Startup business
- 19% 1-5 Year of business ownership
- 12% 5 years+ of business ownership

Workshop Demographics



Each time I go through another milestone, I think back to what I learned, "Keep moving forward!" LOL.

—Nicolas Theoret, Centri Group Inc.

GROWTH SERIES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

2024

PROGRAMMING

- The Growth Wheel
- Your Financials, an In-Depth Review
- One-to-one Live Financial Mentoring
- Leadership Challenge
- Developing your Customer Strategy for Your Product Mix
- Marketing Tactics to Reach Your Target Markets
- Integrity Selling
- Developing Your Internal Processes for Consistency and Success
- The PITCH 2024

During the 22-week Growth Series, participants received one-on-one mentoring and achieved measurable business growth milestones based on the Growth Wheel and mentor and self-assessment. Each participant attended a series of 11 workshops in addition to weekly mentoring meetings for 7 weeks.



The Growth Wheel tool is helping us shift our focus from the day-to-day to exciting future possibilities. Overall, this program is giving me a clear path forward, new opportunities to explore, and a chance to connect with other business owners.

Tiffany Wood, [Precision Syrups](#)



I really appreciate the opportunity to be in the Growth Series. I'm learning a lot and am excited about building my own business. This program has been a lifesaver, teaching me to ask for help instead of trying to handle everything alone."

Jacquie Lea, [Outpost Sports](#), South Haven

For me the biggest takeaway from the Growth Series course has been the little changes that we can make ourselves that we didn't know would be so impactful. Labeling pictures on our sites, email marketing, newsletters, proper keywords, proper branding, marketing just to name a few. We are realizing now just how much we can do ourselves.

Sarah Cox, [Creative Catering Services](#), & GG Sweets



What we like is that it has allowed us meet people like these and tap into those who may have an interest in what we're doing. If you want to grow and are serious about your business, you need to connect with resources.

Karen Koch, [Home Modification Occupational Therapy Alliance](#)

2024 THE PITCH

In July 2024, four local businesses were selected to participate in The South Haven Regional Business Hub's GROWTH Series. Participants attended a series of workshops, received one-on-one mentoring and coaching, and presented their businesses to potential partners, community influencers, local organizations, and the general public at The Pitch event.

Top to Bottom:

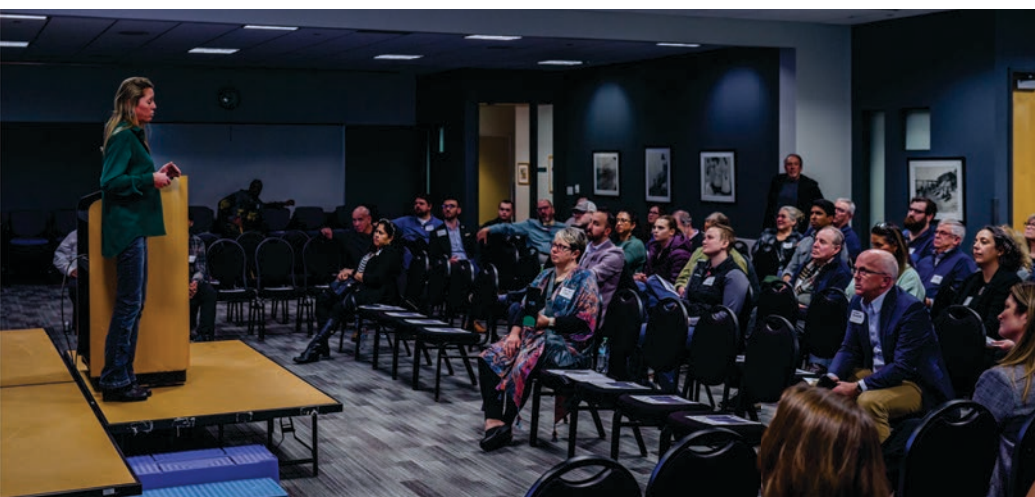
Karen Koch, [Home Modification Occupational Therapy Alliance](#)

Sarah and Zack Cox, [Creative Catering Services, & GG Sweets](#)

Jacque Lea, [Outpost Sports, South Haven](#)

Tiffany Wood, [Precision Syrups](#)

Special thanks to MC Jeremy Burleson, Lake Michigan College, and Gulotta Imagery LLC.

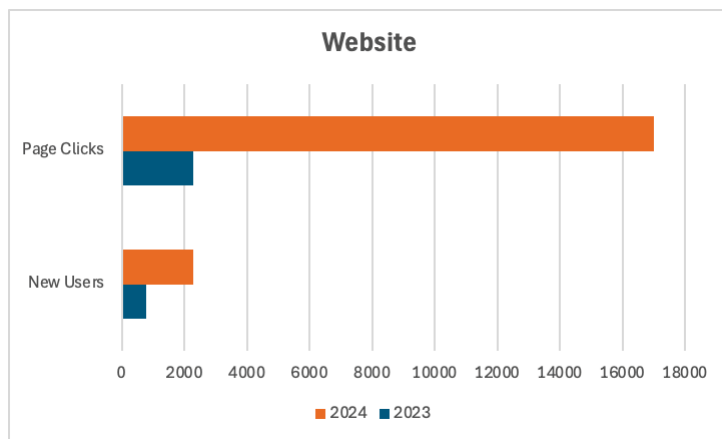


MARKETING AND WEB HIGHLIGHTS

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

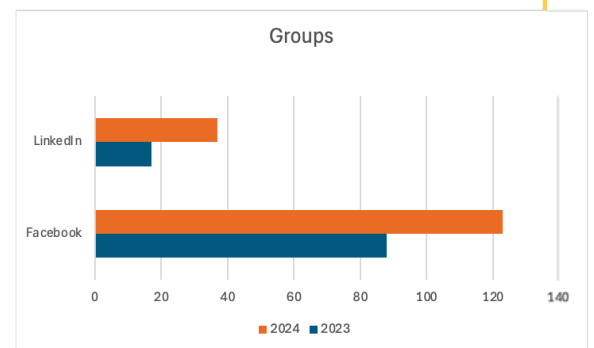
Website traffic

2.3k New Users
17,000 Page Clicks



Social Media Groups

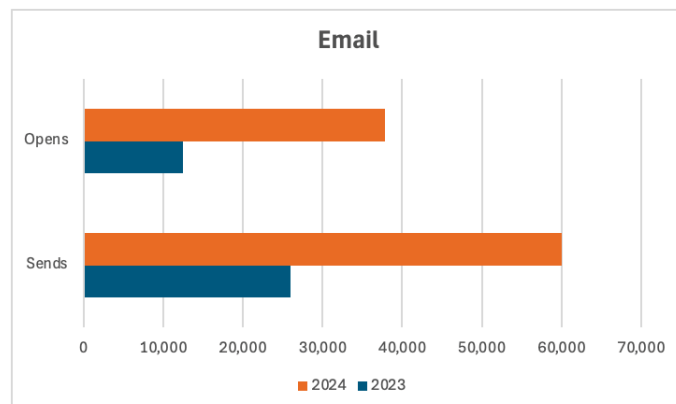
123 Facebook
47 LinkedIn



Email Marketing

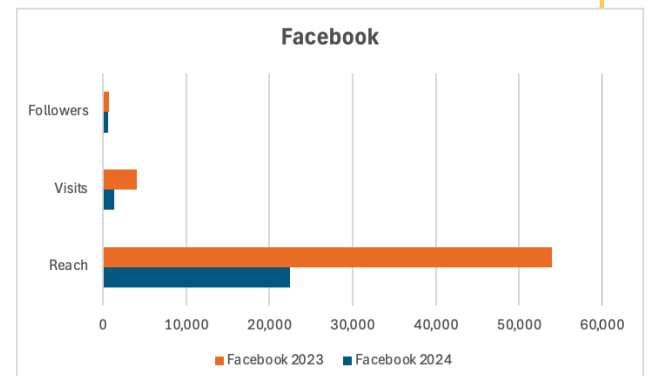
60,048 Sends
37,786 Opens
887 Clicks

Click Rate 2% (1.5% above industry average)



Facebook Page

54k Reach
4.1k Views
657 Followers



2025

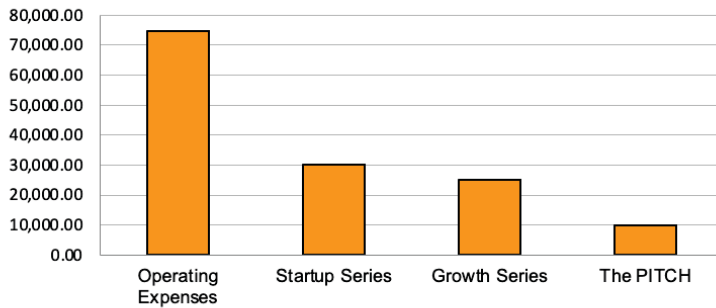
FUNDING REQUEST

- Operating Expenses - \$74,800
- Startup Series (7 Workshops and Resources) \$30,000
- Growth Series (22 Weeks with Mentoring) \$25,000
- The PITCH (Community Highlight) \$10,000
- Total Annual Investment \$139,800

In-Kind Donation (over 3 years)

- Lake Michigan College Venue/Tech \$350,000

Economic Investment



TOTAL ANNUAL
INVESTMENT
NEEDED FOR
CONTINUED
GROWTH IN 2025
\$139,800

CONTRIBUTIONS
TO-DATE
\$92,500

Revenue for 2024

MEDC - \$43,000

City of South Haven - \$3,000

Lake Michigan College - \$117,000 (in-kind)

Pledged for 2025

State of Michigan - \$44,500

City of South Haven - \$5,000

MEDC - \$43,000

Lake Michigan College - \$117,000 (in-kind)

Pledged for 2026

MEDC - \$43,000

State of Michigan - \$44,500

Lake Michigan College - \$117,000 (in-kind)



Donate to Support the HUB: <https://bit.ly/SupportTheHUB>

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Board

Trevor Brooks, Kitchen Tribes
Michael Medema, Keono LLC
Mike Neiss, Michael T. Neiss & Associates,
GB Richmond, Goodbye Money Stress
Steve Whittington, LifeWorking Holdings
Scott Whiteford, Whiteford Wealth Management

Mentor Team

Michele Coy, Michele Coy Enterprises
Prince Covington, MovePortz
Bob Jank, Consultant/Investor
Kathy Merchant, Kathy Merchant Consulting
Mike Medema, Keona Corp.
Janice Varney, Retired
Kevin Whiteford, Whiteford Wealth Management

Subject Matter Experts

Cheri Bales, Hannah/Gold Communications
Jacob Christensen, Great Lakes Bookkeeping
Sandra Cochran, WMed Innovation Center
Jennifer Cohen, EssentialJen Virtual Services
Steve Cummings, SPC Consulting
Valarie Cunningham, Synergy Village
John Kepplinger, SCORE
Michele Mollard, EOS Worldwide

Julie Payovich, Focus CFO
Rosalie Plechaty, Nonprofit Coordinator
Angela Schultz, Value Added Accounting Services
Jennifer Sistrunk, Van Buren County CVB
Maria Sorrentino, Pest Pros of Michigan
Brad Scoffin, Advanced Business Brokers

Community Partners

City of South Haven
Emerge Innovation Hub
Lake Michigan College, SH
Market One
MEDC
MI Manufacturing Growth Alliance
MI Works!
MSU Center for Regional Food Systems
SBDC Michigan
South Haven Township
South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce
South Haven Van Buren County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Southwest Michigan First
Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber of Commerce
WBC at Cornerstone Alliance

Donors and Event Sponsors

MEDC
City of South Haven
Lake Michigan College SH
State of Michigan

We couldn't have gotten this far without your advice and encouragement! Thank you!!
—Sherry Seston, Vintage Inn & Winery

Fresh Coast Sailing: A Successful Launch



SUCCESS STORY

Captain Andy, a seasoned sailor with a decade of experience, embarked on a new adventure with Fresh Coast Sailing in South Haven in June 2024. His dream required a new boat, a fresh business name, and a dedicated customer base.

To attract customers, Andy partnered with marketing subject matter expert Cheri Bales of Hannah/Gold Communications to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy.

This strategy included:

- **Digital Marketing:** Building a strong online presence through a user-friendly website, active social media accounts, and optimized Google Business Profile.
- **Local Partnerships:** Collaborating with local businesses, property agents, and community leaders to generate word-of-mouth referrals.
- **Targeted Marketing:** Implementing email marketing campaigns, running targeted ads, and offering special promotions to previous customers.
- **Public Relations:** Securing media coverage and leveraging online reviews to enhance brand visibility.

The results of this strategic approach have been impressive:

- **Strong Online Presence:** Increased social media followers, website traffic, and positive online reviews.
- **Community Engagement:** Building strong relationships with local businesses and residents.

As Fresh Coast Sailing continues to grow, Captain Andy and his team remain committed to providing exceptional sailing experiences and contributing to the vibrant South Haven community.

Company Information

Fresh Coast Sailing

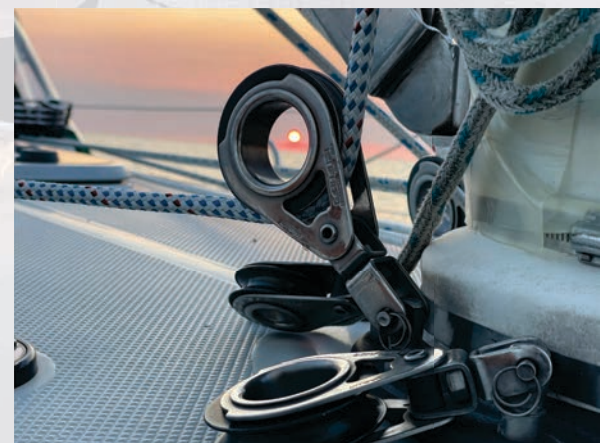
515 Williams St.
South Haven, MI
freshcoastsailing.com

How did the HUB help this business?

With the guidance of the South Haven Region Business Hub, Andy established his LLC and prepared comprehensive financial projections. The Mary Grace, a stunning 36-foot Catalina, launched on June 1, offering scenic day sails and popular sunset cruises.

Successes: A steady stream of bookings and positive customer feedback through the end of his first season.

ABOARD THE MARY GRACE





LAKESHORE CAPITAL CONSORTIUM

Nonprofit and
for-profit lending
support

The Lakeshore Capital Consortium helps small business located throughout Van Buren County and the Lakeshore area to access the capital they need in order to get off the ground or expand.

The Consortium consists of non-profit lenders, for-profit lenders, and other funders who work together with the South Haven Regional Business Hub to improve access to capital resources.

7 Businesses receiving funding:

- South Haven: 4
- Lawrence: 2
- St. Joseph: 1

5 Businesses in the pipeline:

- South Haven: 3
- Bangor: 2

Our Mission: Making the South Haven Region a place where entrepreneurs want to start and grow.

Guiding Principles: Combining collective knowledge, connections, and resources of the community, creating initiatives, and partnerships for ALL our local entrepreneurs.

It takes a community to raise an entrepreneur!

For more information

Debi Howe | Executive Director

debihowe1960@gmail.com | 269-207-0747

Web: <https://southhavenregionbusinesshub.org>

Donate to Support the HUB: <https://bit.ly/SupportTheHUB>