

# Building Together: Celebrating Nine Years of Small Business University

This year, Small Business University (SBU) was a huge success. With 64 attendees receiving a Certificate of Completion, we are keeping the momentum of providing small businesses with strategies to add to their action plans for growth.

In just 8 short weeks, we spent 16 hours diving into real talk, trading growth strategies, and sharing what actually works in the trenches on our interactive virtual platform—resulting in 753 virtual check-ins by busy entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners joining us from all over the region.

SBU is different. Alongside our partners, Kaufman Lynn (KL) and Palm Beach State College (PBSC), our outreach team hand-selects instructors who address critical business topics without the sales pitch you find in other free programming. You won't find anyone here trying to sell you software, marketing tools, or consulting services. Instead, you'll get real advice from entrepreneurs who have been there. They share the grit it takes to keep going when your bid isn't selected, how to rally your team through low morale, and exactly how to pivot when it matters most.

A first-year attendee describes it this way:

*"One of the biggest things I took away from this program is that when you're building a business, you're often learning as you go. You figure things out through experience, ask questions when you can, and do your best to grow with every opportunity.*

*That's why these sessions meant so much to me.*

*Having the chance to step away from the day-to-day, sit down with experienced business owners and industry professionals, ask questions, hear different perspectives, and have meaningful conversations was incredibly valuable. The knowledge shared throughout these sessions—from leadership and financial management to business growth and operations—is something I can genuinely apply to the businesses I'm building and the work I do every day."*

*Darsy Martinez - founder Guard Cleaning Services & Co-Owner of DGD Painting LLC*

We'd like to thank our 2026 instructors who made experiences like this possible:

- **SBU 101 - Strategic Growth Planning & Market Positioning**
  - Dr. Donna Barrett: Professor, PBSC and owner of HomeValue Realty, LLC

- Jeff Zalkin: VP of Development, KL
- **SBU 102 - Customer Experience Excellence & Client Retention**
  - Jeffrey Keller: Professor, PBSC and entrepreneur
- **SBU 103 - Cash Flow Mastery & Financial Stability**
  - Remona Rey: Owner, The Reach Group (*Note: double-check spelling*)
  - Dr. Trish Gifford: President, Blessed Staging & Construction
  - Joe Sarquis: President, Special Developments, LLC
- **SBU 204 - Performance Management, Accountability & Business Controls**
  - Kaydeon Simpson MBA-HRM, SPHR, COSS, MLIS: HR Business Partner and Adjunct Professor, PBSC
- **SBU 205 - Building Scalable Systems & Business Infrastructure**
  - Cristin Peacock: Partner & Architect, Peacock Architects
  - Tamara Peacock: Founder & Architect, Peacock Architects
  - Charles C. Gableman: President, JLRD Consulting Engineers
- **SBU 206 - Business Resilience, Risk Management & Long-Term Sustainability**
  - Josh Atlas, Esq.: Chief Legal Officer, KL
- **SBU 307 - High-Performance Teams, Leadership & Succession Planning**
  - Tayler Kirsh: Director of HR, KL
- **SBU 308 - Strategic Partnerships, Teaming & Alliances**
  - Jeff Zalkin: VP of Development, KL

SBU culminated with our closing ceremony and networking event on Tuesday, July 14, 2026. Certificates were awarded, opportunities with KL, PBSC, and SDPBC were shared, and businesses engaged in matchmaking, not just networking. We wrapped up with a 30-day challenge: each entrepreneur shared one immediate commitment to keep their momentum going, proving the power of SBU.

 Check out the photo montage of the event [here](#)

Missed out on this cohort? Don't wait until next year to start building your action plan. [Click here to join the SBU 2027 Priority List](#) and be the first to know when registration opens for our landmark 10th anniversary class.