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# Nebraska's Entrepreneur Acceleration System

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# CORNHUSKER ECONOMICS

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Lincoln

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Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Department of Agricultural Economics  
<http://agecon.unl.edu/cornhuskereconomics>

## Nebraska's Entrepreneur Acceleration System

On December 8, 2011, 120 Nebraska business owners will complete their first year enrollment in the Entrepreneur Acceleration System (EAS). The program encourages the growth of a business by creating value-based relationships with customers through engaged employees, leading to economic growth and job creation. It was offered in partnership with Gallup, Inc., University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nebraska Department of Economic Development and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce.

Twenty-six individuals from various Nebraska communities and business backgrounds were selected to participate in the EAS mentor training at the Gallup Campus in Omaha, in the Spring of 2011. These individuals learned how to incorporate Gallup research into small business management, using research tools and techniques that help the business owner develop their management team, motivate employees and enhance relationships with their customers. This information was then shared with businesses across Nebraska.

Over the course of six months, business owners and their management teams participated in four Gallup-led training sessions and four to six individualized sessions with Gallup mentors, to address the businesses' behavioral management structures and implementation plans. Assessments were also key to understanding their business environment and subsequent attitudinal/behavioral changes. Owners and their managers responded to a Business Growth™ Survey and took individual StrengthFinders™ assessments. In addition, all employees responded to a business climate survey that provided feedback to management on how engaged employees were within the company. From each of these assessments, action plans were implemented to build upon the company's assets and strengths.

Market Report	Yr Ago	4 Wks Ago	11/11/11
<b><u>Livestock and Products,</u></b>			
<b><u>Weekly Average</u></b>			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.....	\$98.11	\$119.49	126.39
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.....	122.87	153.01	158.46
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.....	111.55	146.62	151.48
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.....	157.79	185.39	189.92
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated.....	62.89	90.59	82.24
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass, 51-52% Lean.....	76.63	97.33	91.19
Slaughter Lambs, Ch. & Pr., Heavy, Wooled, South Dakota, Direct.....	150.50	170.00	167.50
National Carcass Lamb Cutout, FOB.....	348.65	406.82	411.25
<b><u>Crops,</u></b>			
<b><u>Daily Spot Prices</u></b>			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.....	5.61	6.02	6.22
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Omaha, bu.....	5.10	6.32	6.44
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Omaha, bu.....	12.26	12.18	11.60
Grain Sorghum, No. 2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.....	8.37	10.68	10.84
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, MN, bu.....	3.34	3.57	3.39
<b><u>Feed</u></b>			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.....	170.00	190.00	190.00
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.....	75.00	127.50	132.50
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.....	*	92.50	92.50
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture, Nebraska Average.....	160.25	222.00	231.50
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture, Nebraska Average.....	56.00	73.50	76.00
<b>*No Market</b>			



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Core to the behavioral economic management program are five key learning topics:

1. Building entrepreneurial strengths and talents by focusing on strength-based teams.
2. Developing a common vision, goals and plans to achieve those goals.
3. Building a talented pool of employees and structurally planning for employee growth.
4. Cultivating a personal approach and relationships with customers to drive profitability.
5. Developing metrics or performance standards to track progress.

Research has shown that entrepreneurs' own abilities, motivations and attitudes can greatly affect business survival and growth (Fleming 2007). Two of the participating companies in the 2011 EAS Program reported the following positive changes:

- Ward Laboratories, an agricultural testing laboratory located in Kearney, stated the 2011 EAS Program resulted in a focus on individual strengths for greater business functionality, hiring of five interns and a productivity increase of five percent.
- Intellicom, also located in Kearney, specializes in business class technology solutions. Intellicom reported a 24 percent increase in revenue, a 75 percent increase in profit and a 24 percent increase in employee productivity during the first half of 2011 (Gallup, 2011).

## 2012 EAS Business Recruitment

EAS mentors are now looking for businesses interested in participating in the 2012 EAS Program. To be considered, a business must have four to 500 employees, be a Nebraska-based business and be committed to full participation in the EAS Program. Through partner scholarships, there is no cost to a business that is selected into the program.

Selected EAS businesses demonstrate full commitment by:

- Attending four Gallup-led training sessions. Training sessions will be held in Kearney and Omaha with individuals attending the session most convenient to their location. Travel costs will be the responsibility of the business owner.
- Meeting with an EAS mentor. Individual mentoring sessions will be held at your place of business. Sessions will include top key managers and may last two to three hours.

- Completing the assessment tools and implementing strategies focused on customer engagement.
- Submitting four to 16 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on a quarterly basis to an online Gallup research database. The information is confidential and used for research purposes only, unless otherwise authorized by the business owner.

Business owners interested in participating in the 2012 EAS Program should contact Marilyn Schlake or one of the contacts listed below as soon as is convenient. A limited number of companies will be accepted. Business contact information may be shared with other EAS mentors located across Nebraska to best align location and interests.

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## Resources and Readings:

Fleming, J. H. and J. Asplund, (2007). *Human Sigma: Managing the Employee-Customer Encounter*. New York: Gallup Press.

“Impact Summaries submitted from participants in the Nebraska Job Creation Project,” (2011). Gallup, Inc.

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