



ALBER ENTERPRISE CENTER

HEART OF OHIO EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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The mission of the Alber Enterprise Center, located at The Ohio State University Marion campus, is to strengthen the growth, longevity and competitiveness of organizations throughout Ohio by providing specialized resources and customized educational programming. Our programming focus is on leadership development, continuous improvement and innovation.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

• Teaching Teens 21st Century Employability Skills—

Empowering students to develop analytical skills that are critical for today's workforce and for fostering economic growth in their communities was the theme of the 2013 OSU CARES Seed Grant project awarded to the Alber team. The team joined with educators and representatives from Extension, OSU-Marion and Ridgemont High School to formalize Alber's problem solving process into a curriculum for high school students as well as to trademark the process. Dubbed *The BRIDGE* for the ability of the process to connect the chasm between where an organization is now to where they want to be in the future, the process uses simplified versions of business analysis tools and the logic model. Storyboarding and targeted questions from the facilitators engage the students to think creatively, analyze and prioritize choices and work together to solve a real-world issue with specific action plans and a timetable. Ridgemont High School has used *The BRIDGE* for two years with the FFA members. The most recent experience involved FFA members identifying ways in which the high school could connect more closely with employers in Hardin County, with the long-term goal of securing employment.

- Stephanie Jolliff, FFA advisor at Ridgemont, had these comments: "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! *The BRIDGE* process was so powerful for our kids, but maybe even more powerful for administration and myself! Words cannot express my level of INSPIRATION after *The BRIDGE* process! I would like all of my juniors and seniors to 'map out' their own model for the second part of their academic content year in ag curriculum using *The BRIDGE*. Thank you for your dedication to the empowerment of youth!"
- Specially selected students from Ridgemont gained additional experience with *The BRIDGE*. They assisted the Alber program manager, Frank Gibson, with the facilitation of *The BRIDGE* with the Wyandot County Young Professionals (WCYP) to help identify that fledgling group's focus. Gregory Moon of Wyandot County Office of Economic Development made these comments: "[WCYP] have a new sense of where our group needs to focus its direction and create structure to accomplish the stated goals that were derived. The actual plan that we can now create will provide us a clear path to achieve those items. You have a very valuable process in hand that I am sure many more individuals and organizations can/will benefit from."

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- **Leadership Development**—Six employers throughout Ohio enhanced the leadership skills of their front line supervisors, middle managers and executives with the result of improving



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employee engagement, productivity, customer service and profitability. Each company received approximately 50 hours of customized training specific to the needs of their organization. The manufacturing, health care, service and governmental industries were all served.

- **Continuous Improvement**—Projects with another six employers in the health care and manufacturing sectors included the following:
 - shop skills training for entry-level new hires
 - job mastery training and certification
 - quality management system implementation for ISO 9001-2008 certification
 - employee engagement training
 - environmental compliance auditing and training
 - safety compliance auditing and training
 - skills assessments
 - customer service auditing and training