

Everyday Entrepreneurial Leadership in Extension

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Entrepreneurial Leadership

Awareness of entrepreneurial application in **everyday** Extension realities can improve Extension’s impact in a rapidly changing environment. While the term *entrepreneur* is often associated with business ventures, interest in entrepreneurial influences in Extension appear through decades of scholarly literature. With underlying tenets of mission-focused proactivity, agility and accountability, all Extension professionals express varying degrees of entrepreneurial tendencies, including administrators, specialists, agents, educators, office associates, and others who contribute to and support the Extension mission. Regardless of the position, Extension professionals can learn from research and practice related to entrepreneurial leadership.

Entrepreneurial Leader
Models mission-focused entrepreneurial behavior and cultivates a collaborative environment that prioritizes proactive stakeholder engagement, opportunity pursuit, value creation through innovation, resource mobilization, and accountability.
 - Fox, 2024

Examples of Everyday Entrepreneurial Leadership in Extension

Amidst changes in society, technology, funding, and university contexts, Extension professionals learn from entrepreneurial leadership actions that result in improved stakeholder well-being and organizational performance. A series of entrepreneurial actions led to the following innovations and impacts.



Impact: Flipped a challenge into an opportunity for **partner innovation** and **community well-being**

Entrepreneurial Action: Extension fostered a culture of sustainability in Florida’s Tampa Bay Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), working across county borders, engaging with familiar and new partners, leveraging interdisciplinary expertise, and creating educational solutions for valued community certifications.
Contributor: Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, University of Florida



Impact: Mobilized a variety of university and community resources to engage new audiences through **service innovation** for **career well-being**

Entrepreneurial Action: A Rutgers team proactively created pathways for underrepresented youth in central cities to learn about STEM careers and explore college opportunities. Rutgers professors, post docs, graduate students, and undergraduates contribute their time and expertise to guide youth through the 4-H STEM Ambassador Program.
Contributors: Rutgers team – Chad Ripberger, Janice McDonnell, Marycarmen Kunicki, Marissa Staffen, and James Nichnadowicz

4 Key Elements of Everyday Entrepreneurial Leadership

- Engage Stakeholders**
 - Engage in social, political, and cultural contexts
 - Situational awareness, social and emotional intelligence, and adaptation
 - Diverse stakeholder perspectives
- Pursue Opportunities**
 - Formal and informal scanning
 - Make timely decisions
- Create Value Through Innovation**
 - Create social, economic, environmental, and other value
 - Innovation in programs, products, services, processes, and partnerships
 - Adapt constructively
- Mobilize and Manage Resources**
 - Unique combinations of public and private resources
 - Existing resources, reasonable risk, and an understanding that all resource allocations are investments.



Entrepreneurial Action: The University of Idaho Extension Diabetes Prevention Program team created multiple ways for rural and urban adults to learn through onsite and online spaces. The Ohio State University Extension team in Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), led community-wide efforts to support local farmers and increase access to healthy foods at the neighborhood level through Produce Perks, a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) incentive program.
Contributors: Bridget Morrisroe-Aman, University of Idaho; Nicole Debose, The Ohio State University



Entrepreneurial Action: A University of Kentucky Extension agent led the creation of a *Job Club* to provide resources to help job seekers improve employability skills and maneuver a difficult point in their lives. In partnership with the local business community, the university alumni association, and media, the program team continued innovating through COVID-19 and beyond.
Contributors: Dr. Jeff Young, Director for Urban Extension and Diana Doggett

More details on these examples are included in a case study series featured in *Extension and the Social Sciences*, chapter on Extension programming to enhance urban well-being, Cambridge University Press (2024).

Resources: For a relevant, innovative, and impactful future, access additional information, references, and resources, visit go.osu.edu/eele or scan the QR code below.

Invitation: **Explore and develop your everyday entrepreneurial leadership in Extension by downloading the interactive worksheet.**

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