

## P.R.-SBTDC celebrating 15 years of small-business success

BY ALEXANDER LÓPEZ  
alopez@caribbeanbusiness.pr

During 2012, the Puerto Rico Small Business Technology Development Center (P.R.-

SBTDC) has been celebrating 15 years serving Puerto Rico's small-business community. "We are very excited by the recent high-impact results of our clients as is reflected in the Association of Small Business Development Centers' [SBDC]

National Impact Study for Puerto Rico," said Carmen Martí, P.R.-SBTDC executive director.

The P.R.-SBTDC is a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) funded program through a cooperative agreement with Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico as host institution, to establish the SBDC program in Puerto Rico to assist the small-business community. The SBDC program is the SBA's largest matching grant-funded program, providing one-on-one quality services to small businesses.

There are 63 programs that include more than 1,300 service centers. The SBDC program links the resources of federal, state and local governments with needed resources to provide services. The SBDC offers business counseling and training programs, informational tools and other services to small businesses to contribute to the SBA's economic-development goals and objectives, as well as its respective service region and local partners in the region.

The P.R.-SBTDC is designed to provide high-quality and high-impact business counseling and training programs to small businesses and nascent entrepreneurs (pre-ventures) to promote growth, innovation and exports. The focus is to strengthen business models to ensure increased productivity and improved management. The effort is facilitated through 10 offices across Puerto Rico, with resources and certified consultants serving clients one-on-one to identify and meet regional needs and global opportunities.

Since 1997, on a nonfee basis, the P.R.-SBTDC has been providing one-on-one, confidential consultation and guidance services. It assists clients with business planning for start-ups and established businesses for expansion, financial management for owners' understanding and decision-making, developing financial packages and projections (scenarios), and awareness of credit practices and requirements, including those of the SBA, other federal and local government programs.

The P.R.-SBTDC's senior leaders and professional staff are all highly committed to continue serving the needs of the small-business community with high-quality services and multidisciplinary business-solution models to ensure small business' high impact through growth, innovation and export for Puerto Rico's future economic sustainability. Small businesses are the engine of today's economic development. "Our entrepreneurs' testimonies are our greatest rewards and satisfaction," Martí stated.

Over the past four years, the P.R.-SBTDC has served more than 7,500 clients, providing in excess of 82,000 hours of counseling services. This effort has resulted in an increase of more than \$422 million in sales and the creation or preservation of 8,671 jobs. Sixteen SBA and national business winners have been served by the P.R.-SBTDC. At the P.R.-SBTDC, "small business is big business." ■