

Connie Harvey

Efficiency Counts

Hastings, Nebraska



Connie Harvey has witnessed how inefficiency can take down a small business. While working at a bank in rural Nebraska she watched many small businesses struggle and fail because of inaccurate recordkeeping and management. Despite an excellent product or service Connie saw how these small businesses fell prey to late fees and overdraft penalties. In April 2004, after earning a degree in accounting, Connie launched Efficiency Counts, offering data management and accounting services to small businesses.

Three years later in May 2007, Connie had not attracted as many clients as she had hoped. Looking for networking opportunities she went to the Rural Enterprise Assistance Program (REAP), a microenterprise development program of the Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska. Since then she has participated in REAP's MarketPlace Conferences where she networks with other entrepreneurs and attends business training workshops. The conferences have not only increased her contacts and referrals, but have also increased her self-confidence. At REAP she also realized she was not charging enough for her services to make a profit and found help with restructuring her fees. "I feel connected and more professional since working on my business with REAP," Connie says.

In April 2009 Efficiency Counts got a technology make-over thanks to a \$3000 Women and Co.® Microenterprise Boost Program award from the REAP Women's Business Center. The award was used to buy a new desktop computer, printer, computer speakers, accounting software, a Blackberry, and office supplies. The new technology helps Connie practice what she preaches about efficiency. It has given her more time to assist more clients and freed up some funds to hire a part-time assistant.

By June 2009 she brought on four more clients boosting her profits and putting her right on track to achieve a very viable and sustainable business.

"Due to the Women and Co. award I am able to move forward in obtaining more business and in providing a professional office for my assistant and myself," says Connie.

Rural Enterprise Assistance Program

REAP is a microenterprise development program of the Center for Rural Affairs that works with start-up and existing small businesses with five or fewer employees in Nebraska on a statewide rural basis. REAP is the largest full service microenterprise development program in Nebraska and strives to serve all of the state's rural areas.