

# Portland businesses helping students

## Students apply their business savvy in the real world

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The Portland State Business Outreach Program helps both students and Portland businesses by utilizing the knowledge students learn in class to help new companies get off the ground.

"It is a way to apply stuff learned in school, and they like that what they do matters in the life of a small business," said Brad Robertson, director of the Business Outreach Program.

Recently a group of students worked for six weeks on a project for

Bianca Hein, president of a new business named E-Trading Post. She enlisted the help of students to launch a new website, [www.e-tradingpost.com](http://www.e-tradingpost.com), for people to barter goods and services at the low cost of under \$5 a month.

Hein used the talents of the students at Portland State because she felt, after much research, that the business school here had more strength in information sciences than other Oregon business schools. "We had a real good partnership. Not one idea that the students had suggested I didn't use," she said.

New businesses can utilize the Business Outreach Program at no cost. The relationship is beneficial because both students and business profit from the program.

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Students receive course credit and valuable experience, and the businesses can potentially save thousands of dollars in start-up costs.

Hein said she saved a great deal of money by using students to outfit her website with graphics and Java code instead of a website builder, which would have cost thousands.

Gabe Adolf, a Portland State student who helped with the project, has already benefited from his involvement. He wrote several press releases and helped with the technical writing involved with a procedures manual. He recently sold an article to a business journal.

"The website is good for business students," he said. "They can look for jobs there."

Doug Miller, a computer science student, said in an e-tradingpost.com press release, "when you work on a real product for a real customer, you can't shake the feeling that everything you do matters."

The Business Outreach Program was started by the School of Business Administration in 1994. It has offices on campus and two offices off-campus on the east side of town.

According to the program's website, its "goal is to provide long-term mentoring relationships with start-up and emerging businesses." Some of the services the program offers include accounting, market research, inventory control systems and personnel policies.

Mentoring is another important highlight of the program. The website says that "mentoring under this program may span years and is expected to pass through several phases as the relationship develops and the needs of the company change."

Both graduate and undergraduate students participate in the program. The student "teams" do all the work, including running the two off-campus offices in northeast and southeast Portland. The office in northeast Portland offers a computer lab for community members. The lab is staffed by PSU students who also teach Windows and Internet courses.

The Business Outreach Program gives credit for Management 409 or the University Studies Capstone.