



Statement to the
Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Health and Technology
September 14, 2017

Bridget Weston Pollack
Vice President of Marketing and Communications
SCORE Association

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Chairwoman Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen, Ranking Member Lawson, and members of the Small Business Subcommittee on Health and Technology, my name is Bridget Weston Pollack and I am the Vice President of Marketing and Communications for SCORE. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony updating the subcommittee on how technology is enhancing the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) entrepreneurial development programs, including SCORE, at this hearing, entitled “Tech Talks: How SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs Have Evolved with Technology.” Thank you as well to the SBA for their continued support.

First and foremost, I wish to thank the committee for 53 years of support for SCORE, which directly benefits the small businesses owners that SCORE volunteers serve in their local communities.

Several years ago, SCORE began rooting all of our decisions and strategy in facts and data, and we appreciate the chance to use that data to show how we leverage appropriate forms of technology to serve our clients and volunteers with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

ABOUT SCORE: MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

SCORE is the nation’s largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors, with more than 10,000 volunteers across 300 chapters offering free and confidential advice, and free or low-cost educational workshops to current and aspiring small business owners.

A nonprofit resource partner of the SBA, SCORE was founded in 1964 by a group of retired executives, then known as the Service Corps of Retired Executives. In the 1970s, SCORE expanded its services beyond business mentoring, to offer workshops and seminars on a variety of topics related to small business. In 1996, SCORE began to provide small business advice via email through its website. Today, more than 10 million entrepreneurs have been mentored by SCORE or attended SCORE workshops.

SCORE’s mission is to foster vibrant small business communities through mentoring and education, and we envision every person having the support necessary to thrive as a small business owner.

SCORE has a strong set of core values, which we define as:

- Clients Matter: Our clients' success is our success.

- **Small Business Matters:** Small business is the engine of our national economy through business formation, job creation and wealth building. Small businesses are critical to vibrant communities in our society.
- **Giving Back Matters:** We give volunteers, stakeholders and sponsors the ability to give back to communities through their support of SCORE. Successful small business owners understand the importance of giving back to their communities.
- **Volunteers Matter:** SCORE is comprised of volunteer business people helping small business people solve business problems. Volunteers give freely of their time, energy and knowledge to help others.
- **Experience Matters:** The truest measure of our mission and our service is ensuring that our clients have a positive experience. A volunteer's experience also matters, as their relevant knowledge, wisdom and experience serve our clients through mentoring and education. Finally, the volunteer experience with SCORE matters, and we ensure that volunteers find value and satisfaction while engaged with SCORE.
- **Relationships Matter:** In relationships, we act with integrity, respect, honesty, purpose, and professionalism. We listen with an open mind, encourage and openly communicate with all people seeking help from SCORE. Personal, long-term relationships are a driver of small business success. Community alliances are critical to the success of SCORE.
- **Diversity Matters:** We believe in the importance, value and power of diversity – diversity of people and diversity of thought. The diversity of race, gender, ethnicity, geography and experience is important and valuable in SCORE. We strive to achieve diversity of our volunteer corps, staff, board and clients.
- **Lifelong Learning Matters:** We believe that small business owners who are lifetime learners adapt to change more readily and are more successful. Volunteers who are lifelong learners remain active, and achieve personal satisfaction and growth.

SCORE's IMPACT ON AMERICAN SMALL BUSINESSES

In FY2016, SCORE helped its clients to create 54,072 new businesses and add 78,691 new, non-owner jobs to the American economy. The number of jobs created rises to 130,000 when including contractor jobs in our calculations.

SCORE's services help keep our clients in business. 96% of SCORE's 2016 clients who were in operation for more than one year when they came to SCORE remain in business, while 84% of clients who started or acquired a business while receiving services from SCORE stayed in business. SCORE also helped to grow revenue in 64% of its small business mentoring clients.

SCORE remains the most efficient and effective business formation and job creation engine funded by the federal government. Our cost to create a job is estimated at \$133.43, while the cost to create a business is just \$194.35. This efficiency in creating jobs and businesses provides a tremendous return on all federal dollars invested, and, in fact, makes money for the American taxpayer.

- In FY2016 alone, SCORE clients returned an estimated \$45.75 in new tax revenue to the federal treasury for every \$1 appropriated to SCORE. This efficiency far exceeds the

return on investment generated by any other job creation initiative or business creation initiative funded by the federal government.

- SCORE maximizes every dollar received from the federal government, because our 10,000+ mentors and field organizers are all volunteers, with just 25 full-time, paid staff members. These volunteer mentors, many of them small business owners themselves, operate 300 chapters across the U.S.

Other examples of SCORE's powerful impact on American small businesses include:

- In FY2016 SCORE provided 541,526 total chapter services through mentoring, workshops and educational programming, nearly a 9% growth from the previous fiscal year.
- 142,610 unique clients received SCORE mentoring services in FY2016, representing an 11.4% growth in total mentoring sessions.
- SCORE volunteers donated 2.17 million hours to mentoring clients, planning and executing educational workshops, and running their local chapters.

AIDING CLIENTS WITH THEIR TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Advances in technology allow small businesses to compete more effectively with larger corporations; however, the time and resources it takes to keep up with the constant changes can be daunting to business owners. In 2016, a SCORE study assessing client needs, conducted by third-party vendor Sitewire, revealed that more than a quarter of small businesses owners and startups ranked technology as the area of advice that would be most helpful to their business success. This data helps SCORE prepare and provide the best advice, education and resources to help our clients make the right decisions for the success of their businesses.

Today, SCORE has more than 1,300 mentors who are technology experts in various sub-fields of technology, with more than 450 of these mentors available for virtual mentoring. Because SCORE has this connected network, we have the ability to serve all clients and assist them with their technology questions, no matter where they are located. Furthermore, many SCORE chapters partner with other organizations to provide technology-rich guidance in exactly the area of specialty they need. These partnerships include the Small Business Development Centers, various universities and community colleges, and even small tech companies in local communities.

In addition to technology-focused mentoring, SCORE regularly develops and shares the best and most current technology resources and educational materials via our website and distribution channels, which will be addressed in greater detail later in this testimony. Whatever the channel, SCORE is committed to connecting each client we serve with the most helpful resources for their small business.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO MEASURE SUCCESS

Throughout SCORE's 53 years of operations, our central guiding principle of client satisfaction has remained unchanged. Over the past eight years, SCORE has been able to determine our rate

of client satisfaction through data-driven, technological measures that focus on service (outputs), as well as quality and impact (outcomes). At the foundation are three key goals and programs: 1) Service Quality Improvement 2) Client Relationship Management and 3) Economic Impact Measurement.

SCORE continues to shift from defining itself as a “volunteer service organization” to a “business organization led by volunteers.” It strives to manage chapter operations like a business, and focuses on quality service metrics, including client engagement and Net Promoter Scores (NPS). NPS measures client satisfaction based on the quality of the client-mentor relationship, and willingness to recommend SCORE. The survey is issued electronically after a client’s first and fourth mentoring sessions. The results are used to identify and promote best mentoring practices.

Net Promoter Scores indicate that the vast majority of clients are very willing to recommend SCORE services to others. In FY2016, SCORE’s NPS climbed to a new all-time high of 82.26, a 1.86% increase from FY2015. FY2017 data is not yet complete, but the number to date already exceeds that score, at 84.14. To provide context, an NPS score of 50 and above is considered excellent, while 70 and above is considered “world class.” Zappos has an NPS score of 57, while Southwest Airlines scores in the 60s, and Apple leads the way with 89.¹

Performance Data: CORE Reporting Metrics

SCORE’s intranet, called CORE, helps SCORE to run its business activities more effectively and efficiently in a variety of important ways. In utilizing technological solutions to centralize and simplify administrative tasks, chapters are able to devote more time and focus to serving clients and providing educational services.

Under the direction of the field operations team, a variety of management data and current metrics are collected and made available to chapters and individual volunteers in the Performance Data section of CORE, so that they can accurately understand their performance, make better-informed decisions and serve clients more effectively. This reporting begins at the national level, and narrows down to both the chapter level and individual volunteer level.

Specific reports include:

- **Dashboard Report:** Allows volunteers to evaluate the performance metrics and client satisfaction rates of their chapters and districts according to the number of unique clients, historic session and workshop data, client return rates and volunteer demographics and certifications.
- **Client Impact Survey Data:** SCORE’s annual measure of customer satisfaction, also available to volunteers in the Performance Data section of CORE, where the data can be sorted according to individual district, chapter and state.
- **NPS Scores:** Volunteers can access their own personal, up-to-date NPS scores, which measure client satisfaction, while Chapter Chairs can access NPS scores for their chapter members.

¹ <https://npsbenchmarks.com/companies>

- Volunteer Engagement Survey data: Measures volunteer engagement and satisfaction, both across SCORE nationwide, and at the local chapter level.
- Local workshop reporting: Measures attendance and attendee satisfaction, including a national ranking in comparison to other SCORE chapters.
- Management Information System (MIS) Reports: Provide up-to-date information on total services (both mentoring and workshops) and can also be viewed at the individual level in less than 4 clicks.

TECHNOLOGY AND CLIENT-FACING DISTANCE LEARNING

Believing that we must meet clients “where they are” and provide services when it is most convenient to them, SCORE has developed a comprehensive distance learning program that features webinars, virtual conferences and video mentoring.

Live Webinars & On-Demand Training

The SCORE national office provides ongoing workshops in both live webinar formats and on-demand training housed on the www.score.org website. At least once a week on average, SCORE hosts live webinars in conjunction with SCORE volunteers, sponsors and outside subject matter experts. Designed to complement local workshops provided by SCORE chapters, these webinars cover areas that lack robust workshop programs and reach audience members who cannot easily attend a local workshop or prefer to learn virtually.

Clients attended 119,957 online workshop sessions in FY2016. Of these, 82,422 sessions were accessed through the online archives of more than 460 past workshops, while 30,223 attendees watched 55 webinars live. On average, 28% of those attendees went on to request mentoring services from SCORE. 65 webinars were planned for FY2017, with 41,527 attendees attending the 60 live webinars that have already been held to date.

97.3% of the FY2017 webinar attendees who responded to post-webinar surveys answered affirmatively when asked if the webinar helped them.

National Small Business Week Webinars

For the second year in a row, SCORE was proud to host a series of daily live educational webinars as part of the U.S. Small Business Administration’s 2017 National Small Business Week. 21,195 people registered for a webinar, with 7,152 attending live. Topics ranged from small business finance to technology and human resources for small businesses.

Other special programming that SCORE participated in during National Small Business Week included moderation of the Social Media Tips Panel during the kick-off event at the U.S. Institute of Peace and a Twitter chat, described in more detail later in this report.

Virtual Conferences

SCORE's Virtual Conference series allows individuals in any geographic location to remotely participate in an online environment that offers the look and feel of an in-person conference event. Combining the educational elements of a conference with the networking and interactive features of a trade show, virtual conferences allow participants to listen to keynote speakers, visit virtual booths to download materials, meet sponsors and mentors, and ask questions and connect with each other via a live-chat feature. Sessions are also recorded and available on demand after the conference.

This series has had three events to date, all sponsored by Verisign. The inaugural Power up Your Small Biz Virtual Conference on May 26, 2016 drew 1,366 unique attendees. The average length of stay in the virtual environment was 4 hours and 10 minutes. The second virtual conference, held on October 27, 2016 on the subject of technology and cybersecurity, drew 1,297 live attendees.

The third virtual conference, held in June 2017, drew 3,200 live attendees (more than double the attendees at our previous two conferences, respectively), out of 9,770 total registrations. These even greater results can be attributed to continuous improvement from the first two conferences, including better use of technology to leverage the full capabilities of the platform, and more refined online marketing strategies. The average attendee visited three sessions, spending at least two hours online with us, for a total of 7,770 unique online workshop views in one day. We also recorded more than 10,000 downloads of the take-home resources available.

Client feedback on the virtual conference series has been almost uniformly positive. 96.55% of post-event survey respondents agreed that the June 2017 conference helped them, while 98.4% of survey respondents said the conferences in May and October of 2016 helped them.

Specific comments from June 2017 conference attendees included:

“This format was awesome. I can't say enough about how the information has been relevant, the speakers very knowledgeable and the use of technology makes everything easy to access.”

“SCORE has pulled together great companies that provided valuable information. It was informative and I will use the information I gained to take my business to the next level.”

“I've heard about SCORE but never realized just how much information you have and the amount of training. I'm just so impressed.”

“Unbelievable source of free useful, practical, up-do-date information!”

Video Mentoring

SCORE has measured its mentoring impact on small businesses for the past eight years. During that time, data has shown that any mentoring increases the likelihood of client success, but has also shown that mentoring in a personal, face-to-face setting drives higher client engagement than mentoring that occurs over email, phone or for those who attend a webinar.

With the increased availability of video communication, SCORE enlisted the support of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation to develop a video mentoring program and measure its impact on client and volunteer engagement.

The program was designed to expand the reach of SCORE mentoring by serving entrepreneurs who live in remote locations or whose busy schedules require flexibility in attending mentoring sessions outside of normal chapter operational hours. Mentors and clients connected virtually using video chat software such as Google Hangouts, Skype and TeamViewer, with SCORE hypothesizing that such technology would provide the same positive impact as a face-to-face mentoring session, but at greater convenience to our clients.

Video mentoring was promoted to new clients via SCORE email marketing initiatives, SCORE webinars, community partnerships and social media marketing. A three-part Facebook advertising campaign implementing both geo-targeting and reach and frequency tactics ran, on and off, from June to November 2016 and produced 3,580,761 impressions, generating 1,082 program sign-ups.

From May to December 2016, SCORE received 2,554 total video mentoring requests.

Data shows that video mentoring is a more engaging service than any other channel in which SCORE serves clients. Clients reported the highest level of engagement through Client Impact Survey results of 4.30 on a 5-point scale (compared to 4.15 for face-to-face mentoring). NPS scores for mentors from the video mentoring pilot group measured 90.5 on a 100-point scale, compared to an organizational average of 82.

Busy clients appreciated the flexibility and convenience of meeting with their mentors remotely, and the face-to-face nature of the video connection preserved the strength of the mentor-client connection. Clients participating in video mentoring reported higher engagement than other types of mentoring clients, including a control group of clients who received face-to-face mentoring, and a control for mentor variability (with quality defined by NPS score).

One satisfied video mentoring client reported: “I heard of SCORE years ago, but never requested a mentor until about a month ago when I saw a Facebook ad promoting [SCORE’s] virtual mentoring availability. I’m already running around like a crazy person, trying to grow my business, so knowing that I didn’t have to drive across town to another office and had more flexible options available (not to mention I’m a Millennial, so I love using technology to my advantage), I immediately requested a Mentor after seeing the ad.”

Consistent with their clients, SCORE mentors who participated in video mentoring also reported a higher degree of engagement than they did during face-to-face mentoring sessions. This was true for volunteers who were digitally savvy prior to the program, as well as for those who were not digital natives.

The outcomes of the video mentoring project are now the bases of strategic SCORE expansion, including the incorporation of video mentoring training in SCORE’s volunteer training and onboarding and the recruitment of more volunteers willing and able to provide service via video.

Mentoring Widget

In an effort to reach and serve the widest possible audience of small business owners, SCORE created a mentoring widget that lives on our organizational partners' websites. This allows users on these partner sites to request a SCORE mentor without leaving the original site. More than a dozen partners have installed the widget code, including the National Urban League, Her Agenda, Support Warrior Project, the Georgia African-American Chamber of Commerce, and the Association of Immigrant Business Owners. As a result, the score.org national website has seen a correlated increase in referral traffic. The widget also helps to present SCORE branding and services to new audiences without placing any kind of administrative burden on our partner organizations.

TECHNOLOGY AND VOLUNTEER MENTOR LEARNING

Lifelong learning is one of SCORE's officially stated, institutionally-held values, as well as a practical expectation for our volunteer base. We believe that continuous learning drives continuous improvement, which, in turn, drives mentor effectiveness. In this spirit, SCORE volunteers undergo continuing education and training to stay current on industry news and trends, and to continually build on their business knowledge and mentoring skills.

Volunteer learning can take the form of chapter training days and seminars, chapter roundtable forums, webinars, podcasts, courses, reading and independent research.

SLATE Mentoring Methodology

Each year all SCORE volunteers are required to reaffirm their commitment to SCORE's Mentoring Methodology, represented by the acronym SLATE. This online training is mandatory for all active volunteer mentors, and is monitored by SCORE. SLATE stands for:

- Stop and Suspend Judgment
- Listen and Learn
- Assess and Analyze
- Test Ideas and Teach with Tools
- Expectation Setting and Encouraging the Dream

As mentors take the extra time to listen to and counsel their clients using SLATE methodology, they understand each business's unique needs and challenges, resulting in a transformational relationship, as opposed to a merely transactional relationship.

Code of Ethics

Conversations between SCORE mentors and their clients are strictly confidential, with all mentors signing a Code of Ethics and Conduct that addresses the protection of each client's information and business ideas. Each year, all volunteers are also required to read, understand and agree to the Code of Ethics through mandatory online training in the CORE Learning Management System.

As of FY2016, all new volunteers are also required to undergo seven mandatory onboarding modules that introduce SCORE's mission, vision and values. 12,381 volunteers have completed the Code of Ethics training course since its initiation in June 2015, with 2,513 volunteers having completed the course thus far in FY2017.

SCORE monitors the progress and ensures the completion of all new and annual Code of Ethics courses for volunteers.

Learning Management System (LMS)

SCORE's online Learning Management System (LMS) houses volunteer training modules, instructional videos and continuing education materials. The LMS allows SCORE to orchestrate and track course administration and completion, from one standalone training module up to an entire educational track. Once a course or track has been completed, the resulting certifications and/or badges then show up in their volunteer profile in CORE.

The "SCORE Training" of the LMS contains 23 educational modules and accompanying discussion guides. Seven of these are aimed at strengthening the mentoring skills of volunteers, with the ultimate goal of providing stronger service to clients.

The Mentoring Skills modules are:

- Powerful Listening and Questioning
- Facilitation Skills
- Respecting Diversity
- Understanding Generational Divides
- Understanding Communication Styles
- Empathy in Practice
- Tools for Connecting with Clients

Although these modules are relatively new (created between April 2016 and April 2017), 2,648 training sessions have been completed, with more than 1,000 volunteers taking advantage of the training so far.

Volunteer Virtual Conference

As part of the "Lifelong Learning Matters" program, the inaugural Volunteer Virtual Conference was held on March 2, 2017, with nearly 1,000 volunteers attending live educational webinars or accessing the recorded sessions afterwards. Some SCORE chapters held viewing parties to watch the presentations together and facilitate additional discussions.

Special topics included optimizing monthly chapter meetings, developing chapter education and training days, onboarding new volunteers and recruiting subject matter expert mentors.

72% of SCORE chapters (216 total) participated in the live volunteer virtual conference, with 640 unique visitors to the platform, and another 200 participating in groups. Later, the number of viewers exceeded 1,000, as volunteers accessed the conference on-demand.

94.5% of volunteers answered “yes” to the post-event survey question: “Was the conference helpful?” Selected feedback included:

- “Opportunity to learn from others and enjoy the virtual classroom. Thank you.” - Irene Dec, Palm Beach SCORE
- “I feel much more confident sending my clients to the SCORE website in search of information. I love how our clients can choose the formats for learning: attend a local seminar, listen to programs that have been recorded, listen to podcasts, read blogs, etc. I feel SCORE has clearly moved into the 21st century of lifelong learning for both the mentors and the clients. I am proud to be a mentor.” - Dan Martin, Greater Seattle SCORE

National Leadership Conference App

Each year, more than 400 SCORE mentors playing a key role in chapter, district or regional leadership gather for a national networking and training conference. This National Leadership Conference offers updates from the SCORE national office and training on best practices in mentoring from SCORE staff and keynote speakers. It also creates the opportunity to build a network of SCORE leaders with whom to share experience, resources and discussion of how to overcome challenges.

New this year, the 2017 SCORE National Leadership Convention was enhanced by the Crowd Compass app, powered by Cvent. The app served a number of functions that enriched the conference experience for volunteers. Through the app, attendees were able to view the full conference agenda and interactive map of the conference space, familiarize themselves with speakers and exhibitors, download the presentation slides and accompanying documents and resources, network via virtual business cards and a social media wall, and complete post-presentation survey evaluations. 572 users logged in for a total of 27,900 session views, and users rated the app 4.68 on a 5-point scale.

NATIONAL AND CHAPTER WEBSITES

The score.org national website and individual chapter websites serve clients by offering educational resources such as webinars, workshops, customizable templates and tools, and access to mentoring services.

SCORE.org National Website

The national website at score.org was fully redesigned and launched in June of 2016 with improved design and better functionality for SCORE’s audience of current and prospective small business owners. The new website has increased the rate at which clients visiting the website then request a service (either mentoring or a workshop) through improved website design and search capabilities. The website’s main navigation prioritizes SCORE’s core services (mentoring

and workshops) and provides clearer direction to site visitors utilizing those services. Built-in mobile responsiveness greatly improves the user experience across mobile devices, and enhanced Search Engine Optimization (SEO) capabilities that make it easier for clients to find and access website resources. Educational content on the website is chosen based on the topics and trends that matter to clients, as determined by client feedback on individual articles, resources and post-webinar surveys

In FY2017 thus far, the score.org website has received 5,390,000 site visits from 3,271,017 unique visitors, with 14,928,579 page views with more than one-third of those taking place on a mobile device. All three of these metrics represent major growth compared to website data for FY2016 (prior to the site redesign), when the site received 4,573,943 visits from 2,982,519 unique visitors, for a total of 11,462,312 page views.

8.78% of those website visitors took advantage of a SCORE service, such as mentoring or a workshop. This is markedly higher than the commonly-accepted nonprofit benchmark of 2.04%².

Mentoring Profiles

In an effort to connect even more clients with exactly the right mentor, the mentoring pages of score.org were redesigned in 2016, including the mentoring landing page, the mentoring search and request pages, and the mentor profile pages.

Instead of matching mentors and clients by geographic location, as in the case of face-to-face and email mentoring requests, the new mentor profile pages also give clients the option of browsing the nationwide pool of mentors, and the ability to filter their matches according to area of expertise, industry, language spoken, or preferred method of communication. In doing so, the pages make it clearer to the clients how each mentor's background and experience can directly benefit them.

The mentors' profile pages themselves feature a short biography of each mentor that highlights their professional experience, educational background, areas and industries of expertise, a photo, and connected resources and information, including their own clients' success stories or authored webpages. A direct link between these mentor profiles and SCORE's client success stories ensures that each mentor's associated client success stories, also featured on score.org, are automatically displayed on his/her mentor profile.

Currently there are 2,259 live profiles on score.org, and SCORE's long-term goal is to feature every mentor in the online profiles. We believe this is a worthwhile investment based on widespread client demand for this initiative, with our data suggesting that in FY2018, 1,250 clients per month will select a mentor based on a particular volunteer profile.

CORE Calendar

The CORE Calendar provides a centralized scheduling function for mentors and chapter administrators to schedule and manage client appointments. It also includes a feature that allows

² <http://hi.blackbaud.com/luminate/2013-luminate-online-benchmark-report.pdf>

clients to schedule mentoring appointments for themselves using a calendar of mentor availability. The scheduling function automatically sends email confirmations of scheduled appointments to the clients and mentors involved, as well as reminder notifications.

Chapter Website Standardization

Believing that our websites present a powerful first impression on both current and prospective clients and volunteers, SCORE redesigned its chapter websites in conjunction with the score.org national website upgrade in July 2016. These website templates create a consistent aesthetic that strengthens brand consistency and complements the national website. All chapter websites have benefited from enhanced SEO, mobile optimization, and search capabilities that better direct clients and volunteers toward the resources they need.

While still maintaining brand consistency, the websites also allow for greater customization at the local level, speaking directly to the needs of local markets. This customization is accomplished via editable content bands, built-in social media sharing icons, a blog, and email newsletter signup functions. Working with other technology partners has also made it easier for chapters to share and promote their local workshops. A Constant Contact workshop Application Programming Interface provides a direct import of chapter workshop data to both the chapter website and the national website, expanding their reach and attracting more clients. The chapter websites are uniquely connected to the national website at score.org, allowing chapters to automatically share national online workshops and resources if they choose, and enabling easier site maintenance.

Google Analytics site tracking information reveals a 29.58% growth in the number of users, an 18.94% growth in the number of page views, and a 13.47% growth in the number of site sessions, when comparing the time period of February 9, 2017–August 31, 2017 to February 9, 2016–August 31, 2016.

In FY2017 year to date, the chapter websites served 2,474,889 visitors over 1,207,303 sessions, with a recorded 4,094,345 page views.

The positive growth in this data demonstrates how the chapter websites have performed better based on this improved functionality, helping more clients to sign up for mentoring and workshops, and helping more volunteers to sign up to be mentors.

TECHNOLOGY AND MARKETING

National Social Media Marketing

SCORE builds awareness of its services through earned and organic media outreach, public service announcements, and online marketing, including search engine optimization and social media. By meeting our audiences in these digital spaces, SCORE remains top of mind and connected with current and prospective clients and volunteers.

Media coverage of SCORE shows a potential exposure of 12.6 billion readers or viewers in FY2016, with an average of 922 media mentions of SCORE per month.

SCORE connects with small business owners across several social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+ and Instagram.

- SCORE's Facebook page has more than 45,000 likes and earned 927,461 impressions per month in FY2016, with an average of 17,497 engagements per month.
- SCORE's Twitter account has more than 39,000 followers, earning a total of 2,668,400 impressions in FY2016, with a potential reach of 25,437,237 from retweets and a potential reach of 64,732,915 from mentions.
- SCORE's YouTube channel has amassed 512,326 total views.

SCORE has also been testing the effectiveness of online advertising to reach new audiences. This year, SCORE produced the fourth American Small Business Championship, sponsored by Sam's Club. SCORE's marketing department was able to increase applications to the Championship by more than 300%, for a total of 1,566 applicants. 67% of this traffic increase can be attributed to Facebook advertising. The entire application and promotional process was completed online, allowing us to reach audiences across the country at the highest possible value for each dollar spent.

Media outreach from the national press release announcing the Championship, the national press release announcing the state-level winners, and local pitching of the state-level winners' success stories in the media and on Twitter produced 289,089,370 impressions, each of them representing a touch point for someone to learn about, or hear more about SCORE.

Twitter Chats

Throughout FY2017, SCORE participated in seven different Twitter chats in collaboration with the SBA partners and other small business influencers, producing a total of 184,722 total impressions. During National Small Business Week, SCORE hosted a Twitter chat that brought together thousands of audience members for a discussion of best tips and practices for small businesses, producing a total of 26,686 impressions for SCORE's tweets.

Email Marketing

SCORE National cross-promotes its mentoring and educational offerings through a strategic email marketing approach. We issue between one and three client-facing email marketing campaigns per week to a list of more than 150,000 subscribers. Campaign examples include an "eNews" newsletter that shares score.org blog posts and online educational resources (155,138 subscribers), webinar invitations and follow-up correspondence (151,246 subscribers), and special project promotions.

Chapter Social Media Pilot

Knowing how important it is to meet our clients where they are, SCORE implemented a Social Media Pilot program in 2016, with the goal of enhancing and integrating chapters' digital

marketing efforts to improve local awareness of SCORE and achieve chapter goals – namely, increased clients, increased mentor recruitment and stronger workshop attendance.

The pilot centralized social media posting and engagement services for an initial 10 chapters, through the services of a third-party vendor. The purpose was to manage these chapters' online presence, branding, and engagement on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+. After six months of the initial pilot, positive metrics prompted an expansion of the program to 100 additional chapters.

As of July 2017, chapters involved in the Social Media Pilot saw an 8.9% increase in services, compared to non-pilot chapters, which saw a 2.93% increase in services. Social Media Pilot chapters also saw a 26.55% increase in total website visits, compared to a 13.01% increase in total website visits. There were 293,648 followers collectively, across all pilot chapters' channels.

Going forward in 2017, SCORE will create customized local marketing strategies for each social media pilot chapter, prioritizing local content and cross-marketing across all digital channels to improve SCORE's social media following, both in the local chapter accounts and on the national accounts. If funding allows, our eventual goal would be to expand this program to every SCORE chapter.

Conclusion

SCORE exists to help entrepreneurs achieve their dreams of small business success, in turn strengthening the American economy through job creation. Technology is not new to SCORE, but its constant evolution presents a powerful opportunity for SCORE to continue to serve our clients when and how they want to be served. For this reason, SCORE has successfully integrated technology into every aspect of our business practices. We continue to evaluate the technological landscape to assess what forms of technology will truly make a positive impact on the business success of our clients, making thoughtful decisions and implementing smart investments.

We appreciate the support of this subcommittee, as well as your personal support of SCORE.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have, and to provide any additional documentation as requested. Thank you, again, for this opportunity to testify.