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Kelley's Main Street Initiative Blazing New Trail

Generating seven out of every 10 new jobs, small and mid-size firms are responsible for the majority of the nation's job growth. In central Indiana the impact of these "main street" businesses is no different - an impact supported by Kelley Indianapolis' new Main Street initiative. Organized to boost the growth and prosperity of these companies, this effort offers innovative programs targeted to meet the needs of smaller firms.

"More than half of the students in our MBA program work for businesses with fewer than 100 employees," says Roger Schmenner, associate dean of Kelley Indianapolis. "Many of the issues that matter most to these professionals and their employers are areas in which our faculty members have specialized expertise."

One of the major programs introduced as part of Kelley's initiative is the Main Street Institute - a series of seminars sponsored by Kelley and the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce. Addressing a topic relevant to small and medium-sized firms, each session includes a presentation by a Kelley faculty member who is joined by a regional business leader with experience in the particular topic.



Julie Grice, Indianapolis Chamber vice president of membership, says the institute fills an important need for Chamber members.

"We've found our members are more willing to carve out time in their schedules for actionable learning and profitable exchange than pure networking events," says Grice. "Combining Kelley's intellectual capital with the practical perspective of our members has really been a win-win for everyone."

Mary Chappell, director of external affairs for Kelley Indianapolis, says the Main Street Institute is the first partnership of its kind between a business school and a local chamber of commerce.

"In our efforts to support the small business community, it made perfect sense to approach the Chamber to see how our faculty's expertise could benefit their members," Chappell says. "The partnership has been an excellent way to extend our school's involvement with the business community."

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