

EVALUATION SUMMARY



Bureau Of Educational And Cultural Affairs Office Of Policy And Evaluation

Business For Russia Program

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the Business for Russia Program (BFR) on the business practices and skills of program participants in this internship program and on the development of direct links between the United States and Russia.

Key Findings

- **Changes in Business Practices**
 - 76 % of alumni surveyed reported expanded the variety of products and services offered
 - 65 % changed the manner in which they market services
 - 52 % increased the use of print advertising
 - Alumni reported post-BFR profits rose between 14 and 24 percent.
- **Enhanced Business Skills**
 - 82 % of alumni surveyed improved their ability to negotiate and conclude contracts
 - 77 % improved their ability to evaluate potential customers
 - 75 % improved their ability to develop new ideas into marketable products
 - 69 % improved their ability to generate higher revenue levels
 - 59 % improved their ability to sell products in Russia
- **Direct Links Between the United States and Russia**
 - 78 % of alumni surveyed reported continued contact with their host families since returning to Russia
 - 15 % traveled to the United States since the program
- **Russian Partnerships**
 - 61 % of alumni surveyed made useful business contacts with fellow BFR alumni

Project Information: Lehmann Surveys and Research conducted the evaluation from May 1998 through March 1999. In June and July 1998, the evaluators interviewed 1,187 Business for Russia Program alumni and achieved a response rate of 91.6 percent. One hundred of the interviewed alumni were then selected to participate in 12 in-depth focus groups, held in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Voronezh, Yaroslavl, Khabarovsk, and Yekaterinburg in October and November of 1998.

Program Information: The Business for Russia Program, funded through the Freedom Support Act, brings competitively selected Russian entrepreneurs to the United States for short-term individualized internships in local American communities and businesses. The goals of the program are to enhance participants' skills in business and entrepreneurship, to encourage direct links between U.S. and Russian communities that continue after the program experience, and to encourage public-private partnerships in Russia. From the program's inception in 1993 through 2000, nearly 3,000 Russians have participated in the program.

Contact Information: For more information regarding this evaluation, or to request a copy of the 74-page report, please contact the Office of Policy and Evaluation at (202) 632-6325, by email at ecaevaluation@state.gov, or by mail at State Annex 5, 2200 C Street NW, Washington, DC 22301.