WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: Corporate America, Chambers, Local Small Business Leaders Applaud New SBDA Digital Initiative for Entrepreneurs

Launch of alliance geared toward empowering small businesses with digital tools needed to expand their online footprint, enter new markets, and scale

WASHINGTON — Last week, the Small Business Digital Alliance (SBDA) announced its National Members and a slate of upcoming events. The SBDA is a joint public-private co-sponsorship between the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and Business Forward, Inc., connecting small businesses with critical digital tools to start and expand their business to scale for success. The SBDA’s national members are some of the country’s most well-respected companies representing a wide range of specialized industries, from technology and e-commerce and telecom to financial services and benefits.

Members of the SBDA include Amazon, Square (Block, Inc.), Comcast, Google, Meta, PayPal, Principal Financial Group, TriNet, Venmo, Verizon, Visa, and ZenBusiness.

See Below for What They Are Saying around the country:

National Members

Doug Herrington, Senior Vice President of North America Consumer, Amazon: "Over 20 years ago, Amazon made the decision to open our store’s virtual shelf space to third-party sellers. That decision has proven not only to be a win for customers who want vast product selection, low prices, and fast delivery, but also for millions of small businesses that can now reach more customers, increase revenue, and create jobs in their local communities. Today, we are building on that success by collaborating with the U.S. Small Business Administration and Business Forward’s Small Business Digital Alliance as a national member. Amazon's
pioneering e-commerce tools, resources, and educational materials will be available through SBDA to every small business owner who wants to start or grow their business online.”

Teresa Ward-Maupin, Senior Vice President of Digital and Customer Experience, Comcast Business: “We’re delighted to partner with Business Forward and the Small Business Digital Alliance to further empower and strengthen investments in small businesses. As the backbone of our economy, small businesses deserve every tool available to not just survive but thrive. Comcast remains committed to advancing digital equity and providing resources to underrepresented and women-owned small businesses through Comcast RISE. We look forward to working with this new coalition in support of small businesses nationwide.”

Lisa Gevelber, Founder, Grow with Google: “Google wants to ensure that all small businesses have access to tools that can help them recover and unlock new opportunities for growth. We've trained more than eight million Americans on digital skills that have helped them grow their careers and businesses – and we've done this hand-in-hand with a network of more than 8,000 national and local partners across the country who offer free, hands-on workshops. As a founding member of the U.S. Small Business Administration and Business Forward’s Small Business Digital Alliance, we’re helping even more underrepresented businesses access digital tools, training, and resources.”

Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer, Meta: “Digital tools have been a lifeline for small businesses as they’ve navigated the past two years. As we look toward recovery, it’s more important than ever to help small businesses gain access to the tools they need to grow their business online. Meta is proud to support the SBA and Business Forward in this endeavor.”

Jim Magats, SVP Payments and Small Business Solutions, PayPal: “Small businesses are the foundation of our global economy and the backbone of our local communities. They are job creators, community builders, enablers of opportunity and drivers of innovation, competition, and diversity. When these businesses thrive, so do local communities and economies. In the last two years, we have seen the importance of digital payments and commerce tools in enabling small business resilience and growth. That’s why PayPal and Venmo are so excited to join the Small Business Digital Alliance as national members. Through this collaboration with the U.S. Small Business Administration and Business Forward’s Small Business Digital Alliance, we will work together to champion and support our nation’s growing small business sector by hosting educational webinars, participating in policy briefings, and continuing our work to democratize access to the digital payments and commerce tools that small businesses need to launch, grow and thrive.”
Kara Hoogensen, Senior Vice President of Specialty Benefits, Principal Financial Group®: “Principal is excited to partner with the Small Business Digital Alliance. Small businesses are increasingly relying on digital platforms, and our digital solutions help build awareness, improve education and simplify the financial planning experience. We put the customer at the center of what we do, making protection solutions easy and widely available for small businesses.”

Lauren Weinberg, Global Head of Marketing and Communications, Square: “Square is excited to be a part of the Small Business Digital Alliance as we work together to provide technical access to entrepreneurs, specifically through webinars and innovative product solutions for communities across the country.”

Samantha Wellington, SVP, Chief Legal Officer, Corporate Secretary, TriNet: “TriNet has long provided thought-leadership and educational content for small and medium-sized businesses (“SMBs”) through various mediums that align with the objectives of the Small Business Digital Alliance. For us, it is a priority that we share stories and on-the-ground perspectives which shape the future of work and provide timely information relevant to the ever-evolving workplace. We look forward to leveraging our experiences with the SMB community, sharing resources, and partnering with other stakeholders at the SBDA to help SBMs thrive. I am hopeful that the SMB community will seize the opportunities that the SBDA will make available to start, expand, and evolve their businesses.”

Rose Stuckey Kirk, Chief Corporate Social Responsibility Officer, Verizon: “Focused on the economic impact that small businesses have faced, we’ve learned that they need the right tools, resources, and trusted guidance to thrive in today’s digital economy. To help provide continued support, Verizon recently launched Verizon Small Business Digital Ready – a free resource that will be included in the SBDA offering. Developed with small business owners, this online curriculum is open to any business for free. Being a national member of SBDA affords us the opportunity to support even more small businesses as they continue to build out their digital operations.”

Veronica Fernandez, SVP, Head of North America Visa Business Solutions, Visa: “Small businesses are the backbone of the U.S. economy. Those that embraced digital capabilities during the pandemic were able to pivot and survive better than others, and were generally, more optimistic for their futures. By collaborating with the new Small Business Digital
Alliance, we want to continue growing our support of small businesses and provide access to the digital resources they need to scale their business and meet customer needs.”

**Ross Buhrdorf, CEO & Co-Founder, ZenBusiness:** “Helping the next generation of business owners achieve their dreams is core to our mission, which is why we are incredibly proud to be able to bring our expertise to such a critical initiative. Our economy is being re-written by the rise of the entrepreneur, and we look forward to providing the guidance, tools, and mentorship to help these heroic visionaries change their lives and change the world.”

**Local Organizations and Small Business Leaders**

**C. LeRoy Cavazos-Reyna, Vice President of Government and International Affairs, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce:** “As the more than 32 million small businesses in America seek their road to recovery from the global pandemic, now more than ever, digitization, digital literacy, and all tools in the digital arsenal are critical to our economic vitality. The USHCC’s network of more than 260 technical assistance chamber members is embracing programs that close our existential digital divide. Together, we must work to make sure that small businesses have ample access to all avenues of digitization and use it to help entrepreneurs scale.”

**Ned Staebler, President & CEO, TechTown:** "Every business needs digital tools to reach existing customers, open new markets, develop new products, and connect with investors and strategic partners. Bridging the digital divide is a crucial part of TechTown’s work to promote equitable growth, break cycles of intergenerational poverty, and generate community wealth in Detroit. We’re excited to work with the Small Business Digital Alliance to remove barriers faced by small businesses in Detroit."

**Media**

**INC | Need an E-Commerce Makeover? New SBA Resource Hub Has Free Tools for You:** “Working with the economic policy-focused nonprofit Business Forward, the SBA is launching a new initiative called the Small Business Digital Alliance, it announced in a press release last week. The online initiative is expected to offer a variety of free resources for business leaders, all aimed at helping them expand their e-commerce footprint. The site will also aim to help small-business owners stay abreast of policy changes and governmental resources with monthly news updates.”
Small Business Digital Alliance announces national members: “The Small Business Digital Alliance (SBDA) announced its national members. The SBDA is a new public-private co-sponsorship between the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and Business Forward, Inc., a non-profit organization working with small business leaders in support of policies promoting America’s economic competitiveness, focused on connecting entrepreneurs with critical digital tools and resources to start and expand their businesses to scale for success, including in the burgeoning e-commerce economy.

SBA Administrator: ‘We want communities taking advantage of the resources we have to offer’: “The SBA also offers support to small businesses as they continue adapting to e-commerce. Recently, the agency launched the Small Business Digital Alliance. The initiative collaborates between the SBA and nonprofit organization Business Forward Inc. The program will provide companies with digital resources and training to scale their e-commerce business successfully.”

SBA Launches Initiative for Supporting Small Businesses’ E-Commerce Growth: “The Small Business Administration has teamed up with non-profit organization Business Forward for an initiative aimed at helping small businesses expand their reach into the digital world. ... The new Small Business Digital Alliance will train entrepreneurs on how to use various digital technologies for expanding their e-commerce blueprint, recruiting employees from a diverse pool, enhancing business operations and raising capital, SBA said Friday.”

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ABOUT SBDA
The Small Business Digital Alliance (SBDA) is a joint co-sponsorship agreement between the SBA and Business Forward that brings together major players, influencers, and companies in the tech, e-commerce, benefits, and other industries to help small businesses connect with digital tools and reach new customers through expanded opportunities through trainings, tools, and expansion of their digital networks – free of charge. To learn more, visit www.smallbusinessdigitalalliance.com.

ABOUT BUSINESS FORWARD
Business Forward is a non-profit organization working with 250,000 local business leaders from across America who support innovative and market-based solutions to our country’s biggest challenges. With the help of Business Forward, business leaders have briefed more than 650 mayors, governors, members of Congress, and senior Administration officials on how to create jobs and accelerate our economy. Learn more at www.businessforward.org.

ABOUT SBA
The U.S. Small Business Administration helps power the American dream of business ownership. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow, expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov.