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PORT ST. LUCIE — Business leaders across the Treasure Coast are being motivated for success after the economic downturn.

More than 200 business owners registered for the second annual Treasure Coast Business Summit at the city's Civic Center on Thursday as presented by consulting firms Pharus Group LLC and DLF Media Consultants Inc.

Chris Morhardt, the president of the Pharus Group, said the summit had three components: networking, education and motivation.

"The theme for this year is a time for growth," he said. "That's basically saying it's time to get your head out of the sand."

Since businesses already have cut back as far as they can, Morhardt said business leaders should take a proactive approach to developing a growth plan and a sales and marketing plan.

"If you're not growing," he said, "you're dying."

Morhardt said the summit helped get the word out about organizations like the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Service Corp of Retired Executives, the Small Business Development Center at Indian River State College and the college's Corporate and Community Training Institute.

To teach skills and fundamentals of how to be successful in business, the summit included a forum of chief executive officers from across the Treasure Coast.

Dr. Thomas Fullman, the dean at an online business college called Innova World Wide College, led the discussion. He noted the running theme of the forum was how to be prepared for growth.

Business for Rick Schuett of SOL Inc. in Palm City is experiencing double-digit growth in manufacturing solar-powered lights. He prepared for growth by focusing on attracting the smartest people.

"The first step to driving growth is to get the right people in the right seats," Schuett said.

Jonathan Teaford of Digital Doman Holdings in Port St. Lucie, dealt with his growing business by opening a facility in the city and looking to expand into different markets.

RJ Siegel of LoPresti Aviation in Sebastian plans to explore how to improve his existing products, such as to create electrical engines.

But Denny Hudson of Seacoast National Bank in Stuart agreed people should be the focus. He said businesses need to recruit good employees during the economic downturn for future growth.

“This is probably the most opportune moment that we’ve had,” Hudson said.