

Produced by The Small Business Community Network (SBCN)
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Founders Message
Upcoming Events
- 2 Business Education Series
Networking Tips
- 3 How will you Shape Your
Business in 2012
- 4 Security Corner
- 5 Sponsor Spotlight
- 6 Why Choose the Small
Business Showcase?
- 7 Power Questions
- 8 News from SBCN UK
- 9 Social Networking

"Each month, The Hub newsletter will be offering a myriad of exciting articles, tips, an education series and much more."

Founders Message

By *Linda Ockwell-Jenner*

Welcome to the very first *Small Business Community Network* (SBCN) newsletter: **The Hub**.

My name is Linda Ockwell-Jenner and I am one of the co-founders of the SBCN. After eight successful years the SBCN has grown to where we offer membership opportunities, monthly meetings, special events, conferences and trade shows.

We have several chapters: Waterloo Region, Young Networkers of Waterloo Region, and Halton Region—all of these chapters are in Canada. For the first time we are offering online networking via the SBCN UK Chapter, and we are very excited at the prospect of hosting events in the UK in the future. We also have a strong presence on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to enable our members and guests to stay connected to the offerings that enable productive business networking opportunities.

This year TELUS are our Corporate Sponsors, and Digitcom are sponsoring the 5th Annual Small Business Showcase Event.

Each month, **The Hub** newsletter will be offering a myriad of exciting articles, tips, an education series and much more.

We hope you enjoy **The Hub** and I will be back next month.

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Tuesday February 14 th | Monthly Networking Halton Region |
| Wednesday February 15 th | Monthly Networking Waterloo Region |
| Thursday February 16 th | Young Networkers of Waterloo Region |

visit www.sbcncanada.org/events for more details

“networking should be a scheduled meeting whereby every week you allot “X” amount of time in “meeting” people.”

Business Education Series

By *Nikos Rentas*

With the beginning of the 2012 year some changes came to SBCN that I am excited to be part of! Because of the many changes I was invited to begin a 15 minute educational session at the beginning of each monthly meeting. After spending some time thinking of the possible topics, it was obvious that I should start with the introduction of networking, move through to planning, then to sustainability and growth, and finally finishing off a well rounded year of business success.

Our January meeting marked the first event of the year and I was pleased to deliver my first presentation on networking. A recap of the learning session included to observe, listen and learn what others do well while building your own networking rhythm and style. The ability to have accountability for actions made during a networking event includes understanding failures and successes, and spending time improving not only what went wrong but what went right.

I appreciate all the support I have received from many members and friends. I will be adding the PowerPoint presentations on the SBCN website as well as my personal website (nikosrentas.com) which will be available for download and comments. I will also add more articles on points that were brought up during the presentation that had limited detail. With strong feedback and suggestions, I expect to see a great learning year for the SBCN members!

Networking Tips

By *Linda Ockwell-Jenner*

Over the past ten years of me being an SMB I realised an important part of growing any business is knowing “How To”. Knowing how to find sponsors, how to write a book, how to become a paid professional speaker, how to market yourself, how to network, how to gain credibility. These are just a few of the How To’s I have on my list to share with you each month via **The Hub**.

I will offer you the benefit of my experience and share with you some of my tips on How To and cover a wide variety of topics.

For this first edition of **The Hub**, I want to share with you some of the topics we’ll cover over the upcoming issues:



- Start with a plan
- Know your budget
- Market research your business idea, name and target market
- Purchase a domain name registration including email
- Know your brand, make it consistent and memorable
- Build a website
- Gain testimonials
- Build a presence on Google
- Research business networking events you plan on attending
- Learn about Social Media and the different platforms
- Become an expert in your field of expertise

If you take the time to build strong foundations, you have a much better chance of moving forward with your business.

How will you Shape Your Business in 2012?

By Brendan Waller • SBCN Ambassador

It never fails, a New Year rolls around and we all start talking about how this year is going to be “different”. Ironically, most business owners take a very similar approach to their businesses. It’d like to take a moment to talk about how marketing has changed, and how in 2012 there are some very prominent marketing trends you may want to consider:

Social Media: All grown up!

We all know Social Media is the new kid in town; while it was big news for businesses in 2011, it is set to be even bigger in 2012. Think of Social Media for your business as being a direct conduit to your customers. The channels are ways for you to connect, discuss and engage with clients in a fully transparent manner. You can close the gap on communication between you and your customers empowering them to become personal advocates for your brand.

“Think of Social Media for your business as being a direct conduit to your customers.”

“Mobile consumers are savvy, social, often doing much of their research on the go on their mobile.”

Video: Ready for your close up!

Similarly to Social Media, video is ready to take centre stage in marketing efforts. With the popularity of video channels like YouTube and Vimeo, your website can easily be populated with hosted video. The video channels allow your customers to research and learn about your service in a non-aggressive manner. This translates to genuine interest and engagement which can translate to more foot traffic at your door.

Whether you're using video for training videos, product or service videos or as a way to share a corporate event, video is a great method to add intrigue and exposure for your business.

Go mobile: Your customers are!

With over 40% of Canadians now firmly gripping smartphones in their hands and that number ever growing with companion devices such as the Playbook & iPad, the mobile market is hard to ignore.

Mobile consumers are savvy, social, often doing much of their research on the go on their mobile. Make sure that they can find you easily from your device. Mobile-formatted websites, QR code scanning and online loyalty programs are all great ways to reach new customers and retain your existing ones.

It's hard to imagine that only about 5 years ago $\text{Reach} \times \text{Frequency} = \text{ROI}$. Marketing solutions today need to be integrated across all mediums: Print, web, social and mobile. Marketing is about engaging your customers, earning their trust - not just selling to them. This year I challenge every business owner to adjust their marketing formula to: $\text{Reach} + \text{Engagement} \times \text{Frequency} = \text{ROI}$. Make 2012 the year your business keeps your marketing resolution.

- *Brendan Waller, DSGN Network • www.dsgnnetwork.com*

Security Corner

By *Dave Ockwell-Jenner*

I was recently engaged to complete a forensic analysis of someone's computer to look for evidence that someone may have gained access to the computer. Now if this were TV, we'd hire the CSI team, they would press a few buttons on a keyboard and a variety of large screens would show a map of where the perpetrator was. But it's not quite that simple!



"f this were TV, we'd hire the CSI team, they would press a few buttons on a keyboard and a variety of large screens would show a map of where the perpetrator was."

The process involves taking a snapshot image of the hard drive; essentially a perfect copy of everything on the drive. I then use a selection of different tools that can build a picture of what files were accessed, when, in what order, what web pages were visited, what links were clicked, and so on.

After the analysis (which can take several days) it was apparent that the computer wasn't infected with any type of malware. There was no evidence that anyone had accessed the computer other than it's owner (and indeed, the previous owner, who had left some of their data behind!)

Yet, the client was still seeing problems. It's still an ongoing case, but we suspect that someone has accessed the client's online accounts: email, Facebook, etc. This may have been through a weak password, or perhaps they had clicked on a malicious link at some point. This calls for a methodical sweep through all the client's on-line accounts, checking that they are associated to a known-good e-mail account, passwords are changed, security and privacy settings are checked.

I published a short eBook that provides great guidance for small businesses looking to secure their business. You can purchase a copy of this invaluable guide for just \$10 at: www.primeinfosec.com/smbprimer

Stay safe, and I'll be back in the next issue with some more news from the super-glamorous world of computer security!

- *Dave Ockwell-Jenner, Prime Information Security*
www.primeinfosec.com

Sponsor Spotlight

Digitcom

Digitcom Telecommunications Canada Inc. Has been serving Canadian Business for over twenty years, with our offices, Service Control Centre, parts warehouse and training facilities in Toronto. Originally as a Nortel Authorized Partner, Digitcom added the Avaya Product line in 2004, and NEC in 2009. Digitcom continues to service a client base in excess of 2,500 businesses in these platforms.

Digitcom is honoured to have received the "Canadian SME Dealer of the Year" award from Avaya Corporation, and holds the status of "Small Medium System Expert", a designation held by a select few companies in North America. Most recently, Digitcom received the "Partner in Excellence" award (2012) for outstanding customer service.

DIGITCOM.CA

Digitcom recognizes small and medium enterprise sector represents the majority of Canadian business. Our telephone system solutions and financing programs have been designed specifically for you, making our sponsorship of the SBCN 2012 showcase so natural. Our account managers understand your business needs and will find creative, exciting communication solutions to help you get the most out of your communication budget. As a one-stop solution, in addition to turn-key telephone system solutions, Digitcom also provides voice and data cabling installation, telephone lines, internet, long distance and toll-free solutions; Digitcom: One call, for anything telecom.

- Nino Kamber, Digitcom • www.digitcom.ca

"Our telephone system solutions and financing programs have been designed specifically for you, making our sponsorship of the SBCN 2012 showcase so natural."

Why Choose The Small Business Showcase?

With limited budgets to promote your business, why might you choose the Small Business Showcase? Let us give you a run-down of why our event has proven popular with so many small businesses:

- **An excellent location:** we're holding the event in the heart of Kitchener's vibrant downtown, guaranteeing maximum exposure for your business. Our past events have attracted 500+ walk-thoughts from people looking to connect with businesses just like yours.
- **A proven track record:** the Small Business Showcase has been running since 2007 and is backed by the Small Business Community Network (SBCN) - the premier small business networking organization. The SBCN has been leading the way in business networking for the past eight years.
- **Sell, sell, sell:** the event is fully licensed for sales allowing you to sell your products and services directly to attendees.
- **Complimentary membership:** every exhibitor receives a complimentary 3-month trial membership in the SBCN. Find out what others are talking about!
- **Company write-up:** exhibitors will be invited to supply a small write-up about their business, which we'll feature on this site. This is a great way to leave a lasting impression on your potential customers.
- **Promotion:** rely upon the SBCN's impressive network to help promote your business. You'll be featured on our social media channels, mentioned at our networking events and more.

Small Business Showcase
where business and people connect

www.smallbusinessshowcase.info

- **SBCN Connect:** back by popular demand, SBCN Connect is an opportunity to connect with other small businesses. Form strategic alliances, learn from your competitors and build a stronger small business community.

Exhibitor tables are just \$125 (+HST) representing phenomenal value. Put your business in the heart of the small business community, by showcasing in the heart of downtown Kitchener. Register now at www.smallbusinessshowcase.info

Power Questions

By *Stewart R. Marsden*

Chapter 1 - The Easy Way To Gain Business Power

Running any business in the 21st century is complex...

How do successful people solve their business problems?

The short "easy" answer is... they ask the RIGHT questions – at the RIGHT time – then ensure their answers are the RIGHT answers before they take action.

What are the RIGHT questions?

When are the RIGHT times to ask?

How do you ensure you can always find out the RIGHT answers?

This is the story about an ordinary businessperson, a "business success role model" – a hero – that has already started – and lost – a first attempt for business success. Failure was bitter; but it was never to be surrender.

It is time to try again. This time our success seeker will try a different approach.

The local continuing education centre is offering a unique entrepreneur training course called **Power Questions**®. In this business course the modern business person learns how to use questions to build their business better, faster, stronger – simply by asking the RIGHT questions, at the RIGHT time, then ensuring they always arrive at the RIGHT answers.

The purpose of this practical training course (and this newsletter story series) is to advance your business success in three sensible ways: a better business operation, increased profitability, and more money.

"In this business course the modern business person learns how to use questions to build their business better, faster, stronger"

“Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad
litora torquent per conubia nostra,
per inceptos himenaeos.”

This first chapter briefs you about how you can become a business success by using questions that empower you. The story revealed in the chapters to come takes the reader on an adventure that follows a group of entrepreneurs from their first bright ideas to the creation and operation of successful – profitable – businesses.

Along the way, the story's intrepid hero entrepreneur encounters many of the common challenges that threaten financial failure. Armed only with a quiver full of the RIGHT questions, every challenge is faced and defeated by this 21st century business warrior.

This business warrior could be just like you.

Next newsletter: **Chapter 2 – The Journey to Business Power Begins.** The business warrior gets lost; then finds the questions and answers that reveal the hidden “power path”.

*- Stewart R. Marsden lives and writes about business topics in Kitchener,
Ontario, Canada.*

News from SBCN UK

By *Colin Durrant*

Hi, I am Colin Durrant and the new Chapter Director for the UK. I am pretty excited to actually be bringing something a little different to the UK market in terms of networking. So many people come up with networking clubs and call them “with a difference” and guess what, they are all exactly the same.

Having run IT businesses since 1999, I setup this specific business called Colins IT Ltd in September 2009. One of the first things I did was join a networking club (as soon as I had my business cards) that was recommended to me by a friend. I have never looked back. A lot of people don't understand networking, they think you come twice and people will shower you with work, actually it is more like 3 months as the people in the group get to learn about you and trust you. When people see you are consistent and good at what you do and reliable then they will start to give you more work.

I am really looking forward to working with Linda and Dave at the SBCN and see what actual difference we can bring to UK businesses to help them become more successful.

- Colin Durrant, Colins IT Ltd. • www.colins-it.co.uk



Social Networking

Connect with the SBCN on our social networking channels.



sbcncanada.org/facebook



sbcncanada.org/linkedin



sbcncanada.org/twitter



sbcncanada.org/youtube

www.sbcncanada.org • www.sbcnuk.org