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Founders Message

By Dave Ockwell-Jenner

We've reached a milestone! The Small Business Community Network (SBCN) has just celebrated our 10th Anniversary. We're proud that for the past 10 years we've been offering our special blend of networking that we know delivers results.

The SBCN started out with just a handful of guests coming along to find out more about a new type of networking event. Our focus then was on building strong relationships, something we have as our foundation still today. The word 'community' in our name was also no accident. The SBCN's philosophy of finding success by building strong communities is something that we hold dear.

Since we started in 2003, the SBCN has grown to include a vibrant membership program, annual events and conferences, multiple community chapters and so much more.

We couldn't think of a better way of celebrating 10 years of our success, than with all those who helped make it. Our 10th Anniversary Celebration Party was held on November 25th and we were delighted to be joined by members past and present, community supporters and even those eager to see what the SBCN is all about.

Thank you. We look forward to supporting small businesses for another 10 years!



Upcoming Events

December 13th

SBCN Christmas Social - McCabe's Kitchener

visit www.sbcncanada.org/events for more details

Lessons From The Past 10 Years

By Linda Ockwell-Jenner



I want to share with you that the Small Business Community Network (SBCN) has reached a very important milestone, in fact we just celebrated our 10 year anniversary, which when I think about it from my own personal point of view is pretty amazing!

Speaking as a small business owner, and not one of the Co-Founders of the SBCN, I have to say I think it takes guts to start your own business. I think it takes perseverance, determination and a willingness to work 24/7 to ensure your business can be successful. For some businesses you may only have to work 24/7 in the early years, for others it could be an ongoing challenge. I say challenge because it is a challenge where the SBCN is concerned. Dave and I take care of every aspect of the core of the SBCN, we do not outsource much, we simply do not have the budget.

Let me take you back in time and share some of the history of the SBCN so you can get a clearer picture.

My life changed forever when in February 2000 Dave (my now husband and business partner) moved from the UK to live with my 4 children and me. I had been living in Canada since 1993, had been diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997 and I was counting the days to being cancer free. I only managed to reach the three-year mark because a few months after Dave arrived I had a double mastectomy due to being diagnosed with breast cancer for the second time.

Dave and my doctors suggested I did not return to the three jobs I had been juggling at the same time; three poorly paid jobs that offered me no prospects, respect or peace of mind. I returned to school a few months after the operation to remove my breasts, and I signed on for a one-year business administration course. I took the opportunity to change my life for the better but there were many challenges to cope with during that year: health, financial, family, including me struggling with the accounting part of my course, but I did it, I passed my exams and graduated.

The wonderful thing that happened to me during the first 2 weeks of returning to school was that I discovered my true passion and I decided to start a business as a motivational speaker. But at the end of my years course I thought everyone would come knocking on my door telling me they wanted to pay me to speak at their events, and when I found the money to attend my first chamber event I made a complete fool of myself and look back with horror.

"at the end of my years course I thought everyone would come knocking on my door telling me they wanted to pay me to speak at their events"

I realised I knew nothing about my business, I had not done any research and I had no idea what networking was, and the purpose of business networking. At that time the only social media site around was called E-cademy and was UK-based originally. But even though I used the resource I had no idea what I was doing and gave up after a while not knowing the benefits of having an online presence.

But my failures prompted me to move forward, work hard, do my market research, know my target market, know how to get a Google presence and how to find networking organizations and events that I not only enjoyed but that had benefits that worked for me and my business. I did, however, have a nagging feeling that there was something missing in the world of networking. One thing I realised was a lot of the networking organizations were quite expensive to join as a member or even attend as a guest. I then started researching networking organizations and what benefits they offered, and what I liked about them or disliked. This was for my own personal use; at that time I had no idea what the future would hold.

By 2003 Motivational Steps had taken off and was doing really well. I had been in the newspaper and on TV and I knew a lot of people in my local community. I found a lot of those people supported my efforts and wanted to help me. But I also knew that before those people knew me and before I had taken the time to build a relationship with them, no one was forthcoming to help me because they had no idea who I was.

When Dave informed me he had laid off his team at Nortel and then it was his turn I was happy he was excited at the prospect of a new job locally. However, his efforts really did not pay off until he also came to the realization no one knew who he was. Dave, in very much the same way as me, explored some networking opportunities out there and realised that he also did not enjoy a lot of the networking events he attended.

We both came to the realization there was a niche not being looked after. There really was nowhere that offered grass roots networking opportunities for the small businesses out there. Nowhere for startups who had no idea how to start a business, how to network effectively and also very importantly, networking organizations that were affordable.

In November 2003, along with two other people we invited along, we hosted our first even SBCN meeting in Zehrs Community room. I had discovered that Zehrs would be offering the room free of charge if we purchased beverages and snacks so I jumped at this opportunity, as we had no budget at that time.

For about 18 months we hosted network meetings once a month in the





evenings and invited people to offer short presentations to boost their exposure, and we were even lucky enough through Dave's connections to have people from RIM, Communitel and other such well known companies speak at our events.

The rest of this story is history and I have shared the story so many times I am sure everyone knows how we made it to 10 years.

The important part of this story to me and for me is the fact I never gave up once on the SBCN and my dreams and goals to help others. Throughout the past 10 years many personal challenges have come and gone and some stayed around, but none of those challenges made me want to give up. Dave is the other half of the SBCN and his hard work and dedication have also been the reason we have continued, but this article is about me: my personal struggles, my hopes and my dreams.

I continued to work hard to ensure Motivational Steps the businesses I started after returning to school could grow and offer me speaking opportunities. I became a published author, and I kept on adding new products and services to Motivational Steps to ensure growth was upward and continued even when I was sick and unable to work.

There were times (and there still are) when it all becomes a little too much, and when people who know me well, members and friends alike tell me to slow down. It's not a case of slowing down, it's being able to continue even when I am on the road or I have a broken wrist or ankle, or I have to rest due to an operation or other such health reasons.

What's the secret to a successful business? How can you do it all and stay sane, healthy, make a living and still help people and look after your health and wellness needs? And let's not forget you have a personal life, so how do we balance that, too?

- Choose a business you are passionate about and be realistic with your goals. Today the magic number is not 5 years before your business shows a profit, it is 10 years. Not to say some businesses can't do it sooner, but again make sure you know the facts before you jump in head first.
- Build strong foundations, and I know I sound like a broken record because this is something I am always sharing, but it is true. People who fail to plan, plan to fail. If you are in too much of a hurry to sell before you cover some important bases then you will go backwards instead of forwards. I have seen small business owners do this and it is a learning experience or an experience that leaves them so dejected they give up and walk away.

"Customer service is key today,
without customers you have no
business."

- Know yourself before you can know others. Everyone has a different method of selling, people like to be sold to in different ways. Build relationships in order to build trust, people do business with people they like and trust.
- Don't dismiss networking as expensive and a waste of time. Do your research; know what you want, how much time you have to spend on networking and also how much budget you have. Once you know those things then you have to be consistent with your networking and know the benefits.
- Very important to know that if you invest your money, invest your time too! Don't join a networking organization and sit back and wait but never attend events or connect with others. No one knows who you are, you need to be 'seen to be seen'.
- Use social media effectively and sensibly, know what's out there and what works for you. You don't need to be on every platform offered, some businesses don't use social media at all and survive.
- Most of all follow up, follow up, and follow up. Look after your past clients, your present clients and your future clients, and if you do have a budget to outsource, that leaves you the time to concentrate on what you do best.

If you are a small business owner who wants to make a lot of money in the shortest time possible and don't care about anyone else, especially your clients, then good luck to you... but I doubt you will be around for long. Customer service is key today, without customers you have no business. Word gets around, especially with social media, there is always another 'you' out there who can sell better than you and do a better job than you.

The SBCN has continued to grow and help people over the past 10 years and we would not have been able to do that without the support of our members, guests, community partnerships and last but not least our sponsors, TELUS. We do our best to always say thank you and to let everyone know how much we appreciate their help and support. Our business story is not unlike many others and there really is no secret to success, it's plain and simple, as shared in this article.

I am very happy and content managing two businesses and I thrive on hard work and all the fun I have meeting so many people along the way. My work is not work to me it is something I love to do and something I want to continue to do for as long as I can.



If you take anything from this article it is that nothing can stop you turning your dream into a reality. If you do have challenges along the way, don't give up. Ask for help, find ways to make it work and believe it will be OK. Organize your time so that it works for you, and be consistent. Be prepared for those ups and downs the best you can, everyone can relate to those.

- Linda Ockwell-Jenner, *Motivational Steps*
www.motivationalsteps.com / www.lindaaj.me

Competition and Co-Opetition

By Martin Buckland

"Small business owners freak out when another competitor arrives in the area. Why?"

The Olympics is a classic example of human competition. We all know Usain Bolt strives in each stride to outperform his peers and remain #1. He also coaches peers providing his athletic expertise and mental strategy. This is what I call "co-opetition". He cooperates, sharing his talent but still has the will to win.

Mine is a niche business but I do have a dozen or so serious competitors across North America. However, I do not regard them as a true competitor; they are my co-opetition. Why? I have my unique brand, promise of value and niche combined with an exemplary product and service offering, just as they have theirs.

In some shape or form, we all service the same demographic yet we have each found that our designations, will to succeed and brand acknowledgement set us apart. We're not true competitors, as we continue to share our knowledge with each other when we gather at networking events.

Small business owners freak out when another competitor arrives in the area. Why? There are plenty of fish in the sea if you know your co-opetitions product offering and separate your brand from theirs by uplifting yourself to new service levels while remaining cognisant of your uniqueness.

Your downfall as a business owner or business person can be thinking too much about your competition and not thinking about how to cooperate.

- Martin Buckland, *Elite Resumes*
www.aneliteresume.com

Security Corner

By Dave Ockwell-Jenner

The State of Security in SMB's

According to a recent survey conducted by the Ponemon Institute, and sponsored by UK-based security company Sophos, highlights some concerns amongst the SMBs surveyed.

The Risk of an Uncertain Security Strategy study concludes that 58% of SMB IT decision makers do not view cyber attacks as a significant risk to their business. This is in stark contrast to the finding that cyber attacks accounted for a combined cost of \$1.6m to the 2,000 SMBs surveyed.

Some of the reasons cited for this relaxed attitude include:

- Management does not see cyber attacks as a significant risk (58%)
- Not a priority issue (48%)
- Insufficient budget (42%)
- Lack of in-house expertise (33%)

When asked if a cyber attack had occurred in the past 12 months, 75% of respondents indicated it had, or that they couldn't rule it out. 42% had indicated that an attack certainly had occurred. Extrapolating a little, we could say that there's roughly a 50-50 chance that an SMB will experience a cyber attack.

Phishing and Social Engineering attacks continue to top the list of cyber attack methods, with 55% of respondents highlighting this alone. Other top methods include denial-of-service and botnet attacks, as well as advanced malware and 'zero-day' attacks.

Most organizations in the study project that cyber attacks are on the increase, or will stay about the same, with very few suggesting that we're likely to see some type of decrease.

So what does all this mean?

It means that SMBs are still not adequately protecting themselves against a real and present threat. There is clearly work to be done in helping the SMB sector to address cyber security issues and offsetting some of the breach costs we hear about regularly in the media.



What's also troubling for many SMBs is that the most frequent attack methods don't seem to be the things that traditional SMB controls (like firewalls and Anti-Virus) are particularly well suited to mitigating. We need to change our approach. Even if we want to do the bare minimum necessary to protect ourselves, that bare minimum ain't what it used to be even five years ago!

If you're interested in finding out more, the Ponemon study can be found online at <http://sophos.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/2013-ponemon-institute-midmarket-trends-sophos.pdf>. And of course, I'm always here to answer your questions and set things straight about security matters for SMBs!

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

The Age of the Inbox & Effectiveness of Email Marketing

By *Dave Scott*

5 Ways to Generate a List of Contacts

Most businesses depend on two critical aspects to thrive: lead generation and customer retention. Without customers, your business can't operate, but nor can you survive if you don't keep your current customers happy and willing to give you recurring revenue and referrals. Fortunately, email marketing can help with both your lead generation and customer retention efforts, which is why it's an effective tactic for businesses of all industries.

If you're convinced, you're probably wondering how and where to start with email marketing. Since you can't engage with anybody until you have a list of contacts, you need to start by building up an email database!

Here are five ways you can begin to generate a list of email contacts:

- **Ask for it:** ask and you shall receive! You won't be able to engage without any email addresses, but you'd be surprised by how easily people will give theirs up if you just ask for it. Whether in a physical store or on a website, people are accustomed to being asked for their email address, so don't worry about scaring anybody away.
- **Remind them to subscribe:** sometimes people need a little extra





encouragement, so don't be shy to put buttons calling for users to subscribe to your communications everywhere you can. On your homepage, in your blog posts, on social media feeds, in your email signature and even on your "contact us" page. The more you ask, the better chance they'll convert.

- **Provide incentive:** if you're having trouble generating a list of email addresses, consider adding some incentive for those who give you their information. Offering promotions, discounts, or valuable information via a whitepaper or webinar in exchange for email addresses will be more successful.
- **Run a contest:** similarly to providing incentive, you could also run a contest and raffle off a product, service, or just a popular item like an iPad. All you need to do is have people submit ballots that include their email address - if your prize is good enough, you're sure to generate a decent list of contacts.
- **Friend referral:** once you do start sending out communications, a great way to grow your database is to get subscribers to 'Forward to a Friend.' Put a 'Forward to a Friend' link in all of your newsletters and drive subscribers to a page where they can type in their friends' information and you'll instantly add to your list of contacts!

- Dave Scott, WSI Digital Marketing
www.davescott.com

Have You Ever Danced to YMCA?

By Kim Edmundson

This may sound like a crazy question, but in light of the Christmas season upon us I think it's totally appropriate. Many of us will be going to Christmas parties soon and we may find ourselves dancing to the Village People's YMCA. This song has been around since 1978. Are you feeling old? In case you would like to hear this song now - here is the YouTube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CS9OO0S5w2k>

Why would a holistic nutritionist such as myself be thinking about the YMCA? Well... the YMCA has been around for over 160 years! It truly is a Canadian institution. From the very beginning they have promoted a healthy body, mind and spirit along with connectedness.

What makes a holistic nutritionist different from a dietician is that holistic nutritionists look at a balanced body, mind and spirit as a necessity for true health.

As I reflect back on 2013 there were definitely some times where my body, mind and spirit were not in balance. As most of you know, I moved houses and then moved my business very shortly thereafter this past summer. Packing up and moving 15 years of my life and re-setting up my business in a very short time was very stressful and emotional. There was about a month where I did not sleep much or digest very well at all. I was trying to sleep and I was definitely eating but my system was very out of balance.

For a short period of time, we have been designed to be able to handle situations of stress like I went through this past summer; however as I have spent time reflecting back, I have come to realize that many people live chronically out of balance and in chaos all the time. This can lead to extreme adrenal fatigue or depression and often you don't even realize it until you are flat on your back and not functioning at all. Living in this state can put a ton of stress on your relationships and affect everyone around you.

If you are feeling like your body, mind and spirit are out of balance then now is the time to make 2014 different! Deep down inside you probably know what you need to change. It may be as simple as saying "NO" more often or it may mean setting stronger boundaries with your time and carving out more "ME" time. I tell many of my clients that they are human "beings" and not human "doings". You should see some of the looks I get! As we head into the busiest & most festive time of year, I encourage you all to remember that you are a human being and not a human doing. Enjoy the season and take time out for yourself!

- Kim Edmundson, Divine Wellness
www.divinewellness.ca

"I have come to realize that many people live chronically out of balance and in chaos all the time."

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Do you have a story to tell?

We're always on the lookout for great reader-submitted content for **The Hub**. Find out how to contribute at <http://www.sbcncanada.org/the-hub/submissions>.

What To Look For When Buying a New Computer

By *Michelle Serafini*



Computers can be costly, and if you don't have someone that can personally guide you as to what is exactly a good buy you can find yourself ending up paying more than you initially anticipated.

I've put together this list that can be useful as a guide for your next purchase, and to keep it brief I've listed the main things to look for.

New vs Refurbished/Used - If refurbished/used check there is no physical damage. Make sure it comes with any CDs for the operating systems or programs. Realise that many computer manufacturers will not transfer the warranty from the old user to you.

Hard Drive - This is where your files and information go so it should have plenty of space.

Memory - More memory, more efficient the computer will run. 4 gigabytes could be for normal use but you should double that if you do gaming etc.

Processor - Look at all options for computer processors. It controls almost all operations, so how fast do you need it?

Sound Card - If you plan on doing sound editing or mixing look at the sound cards capabilities.

Video Card - If you plan on gaming make sure your video card GPU and video memory meets the requirements.

What accessories does it come with?

Make sure the hardware included meets your needs.

If the computer is unsatisfactory can it be returned to the store? If it was purchased online where would you send it?

What software is included?

Where can I get support?

Is there a warranty and for how long?

It's a lot to consider but doing your homework now will really pay off later. And that's because understanding the features you need (and the ones you really don't) will both save you money and help you choose the best computer that will serve you well for years to come.

- Michelle Serafini, Tek Studio
www.tek-studio.com



SBCN's 10th Anniversary

The Small Business Community Network (SBCN) celebrates our 10th Anniversary in November 2013.

Founded on humble beginnings, and with a simple mission, the SBCN has been helping small business owners connect and grow their businesses for 10 years. We've come a long way thanks to the support of our members, guests, speakers, sponsors and our many community partners.

It has been our pleasure to play a part in the small business community and we're looking forward to continuing to help business owners thrive.

At our 10th Anniversary Celebration Party, we were joined by members past and present, sponsors, supporters and our community connections. The SBCN was presented with certificates from Catherine Fife, MPP and Brenda Halloran Mayor of Waterloo. Stephen Woodworth MP gave the SBCN a beautiful plaque to commemorate our 10 years.

Thank you!





Watch our short video of 10 years of the SBCN on YouTube!

<http://youtu.be/XiPumAwc3CY>

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