

Produced by The Small Business Community Network (SBCN)
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Founders Message

By *Linda Ockwell-Jenner*

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Giving back offers us a chance to say 'thank you.' It's very simple to give our time and our expertise, but not always easy to give money, for many reasons—whatever suits your preference, your budget and your time. It's not how much you can give; it's giving something however small that counts.

This year sees the Small Business Community Network (SBCN) supporting the Sick Kids Hospital Foundation, in Toronto. I have watched the TV programs for many years on the wonderful work Sick Kids does, and children from all over the world come to this hospital for help. I have four adult children, and I know a lot of the SBCN Members have children of all ages; our children are the next generation of leaders. When we support organizations there is always a personal reason, a tug at my heart strings in particular, and this makes the support even more special. In the past we have supported the Mental Health organization, the Humane Society, the Diabetes Association, to name a few.

As the SBCN grows, and thrives we continue to give back, to our members, to our supporters, to our sponsors and to our charities of choice. This brings us back to the beginning, over 10 years ago when we came up with the idea to start the SBCN – to help others.





Fresh Perspectives

By *Linda Ockwell-Jenner*

Have you been in business for a while and have no idea you are stuck in a rut and do not realise the times are changing?

Have you been struggling with marketing and communication issues but have no idea where to turn?

I know how you feel! Whether you have been in business a couple of years or longer we can fall into the comfort trap, and here are a couple of examples of what I mean:

- You have been in business a couple of years and after the initial getting known and gaining referrals, you became really busy and could not keep up with the work. Your budget did not yet allow for you to hire anyone. You got left behind by not being able to keep up with new trends, ideas or even the work you know needed to get done, but had no time to do it.
- Your business has operated successfully for 10 years or more and you failed to realise new concepts, social media, and other such related changes in the business world have made your competitors life easier, but not yours?

It is really difficult being a jack-of-all-trades, being everything to everyone and maintaining a level of excellent customer service.

Recently I was a judge at the annual DECA Conference held at the University of Waterloo and this year Dave and myself were judging together, something we had never done before. It was an enjoyable experience and we came away with a lot more than we went with!

The students are from Universities across Ontario and as judges we take on the roles of imaginary CEO's of large corporations and the student has a task in hand to fulfil and explain to us their strategy and marketing ideas.

We realised that we were learning a lot of new techniques, and gaining a lot of new ideas and information from the students and we, the SBCN, like any other business needs to assess and re-evaluate how we can move with the times and come up with new ideas etc.

Another benefit of being a judge is that we have the time after the event to network and build relationships with the students and other attendees, always a beneficial thing to do.

“the SBCN, like any other business needs to assess and re-evaluate how we can move with the times”

Many of the students are looking for part time work, volunteer based or otherwise and work experience in different areas. We were able to connect with the students we felt would be a fit for our businesses and further the conversation by connecting with them on LinkedIn, as an example. Our plan now is to meet with the students in question, see which one would be a good fit to work with, and also see if they wanted to work with us also. It is a two way process.

Often as not we have no idea we are falling behind for whatever reason we are so busy doing the work, working in and on the business, it is not until we lose clients or fail to gain referrals that we step back and realise we have to take action.

You can gain fresh perspectives in many ways:

- Attend seminars of your choice
- Network with like minded individuals
- Research online
- Listen to podcasts or watch videos

There are lots of different opportunities for you to stay fresh, motivated and keep up with new business ideas, once you identify that's something you are ready to do, and are willing to do the work involved.

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

It's Back: The Challenge

By *Dave Ockwell-Jenner*



TELUS and The Globe and Mail have once again teamed up to bring us The Challenge, an opportunity for a small business to receive a grant of \$100,000.

As in past years, the contest is open to small businesses across Canada and invites our entrepreneurs to share their biggest business challenges and how a cash injection would help them overcome them.



Not only will the winner receive \$100,000 from TELUS, but they'll also have their business profiled in the Report on Business section of The Globe and Mail – amazing exposure as well as the grant!

To find out more, visit: tgam.ca/the-challenge

Security Corner

By *Dave Ockwell-Jenner*

Bye Bye Windows XP!

Unless you're in the IT business, you might not place much significance on the date of April 8th. However, for those in the know, this date has been marked on our calendars for quite a while.

On April 8th, Microsoft will cease supporting Windows XP—the operating system that many of us have relied upon for years. It's also worth noting that on the same day, support also ends for Microsoft Office 2003. This is newsworthy because after April 8th we'll no longer be able to receive updates to Windows XP and Office 2003 to correct problems.

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information security

From a security perspective it's even more critical, because it means the end of security fixes for these products. This means that if hackers discover weaknesses in XP or Office 2003, they aren't going to get fixed. Unfortunately, there are still a significant number of computers running XP, so they represent a huge target when hackers find a way to attack.

So what should we do if we're still running Windows XP? Microsoft's recommendation is to upgrade to a more recent version, such as Windows 7 or 8. This is certainly the wisest option since you'll then continue to receive fixes for several years to come, as well as enjoy some new features. There is cost involved here... upgrading isn't free, and it might not just be the cost of the new operating system we're talking about. Older computers might not run the newer versions, meaning you have to shell out for a new system and spend time migrating your files and applications. On that latter point, some older applications may not work correctly on the newer system either. Likewise, old hardware (particularly old printers and scanners) may no longer work.

“For most desktop and laptop computer users, I usually recommend looking at Ubuntu”

The other option we might have is to isolate our Windows XP computer from the Internet. Don't use it for browsing the web, for downloading files, etc. It's safer this way, but far less practical. However, it's not a bad choice if you have to keep using older software or hardware that's incompatible with Windows 7 or 8. Maybe keep the old XP system around for a few tasks, and invest in a new, modern, system for day-to-day tasks.

Another option is to consider a free operating system called Linux. You can best think of Linux as a family of operating systems, each slightly different but sharing a common core. There are names such as Ubuntu, SUSE, Red Hat and more – each is a particular 'flavour' of a standard Linux base. For most desktop and laptop computer users, I usually recommend looking at Ubuntu as some effort has gone in to making it relatively easy to use from some of its more technical cousins.

Linux isn't an easy choice, however. It's completely free, but doesn't run Windows applications (actually it can run some, but let's keep this simple!) You might find yourself needing to use alternate applications to achieve tasks you're familiar with. For example, there is no Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) on Linux, but there is LibreOffice – a free alternative that is similar. On the positive side, there is a massive catalogue of free software available for Linux which means you may well find a free application to do just about anything you want to do from graphic design, audio and video editing, email, etc.

There isn't a one-size-fits-all answer to what you should do, but in order to maintain a good level of security, we must do something. If you're still running Windows XP and would like some suggestions on what options might work best for you, don't hesitate to get in touch!

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

About the SBCN

Our organization offers monthly networking events, special events, education and training.

If you want to attend professional B2B network meetings, where you are guaranteed to connect with like minded professionals who want to build relationships and share referrals, then the SBCN is the place for you.

We are an established organization who, have helped hundreds of businesses navigate the many realms of networking successfully. As an organization we have 10 years experience of assisting and working with SMB's to help them promote, via social media and traditional face-to-face networking, their businesses and build their brand in order to be recognized as experts in their field.

The purpose of consistent networking is to build trusted relationships and build partnerships, alliances and gain referrals.

[Find out more by watching our video!](#)



Dave Ockwell-Jenner

Co-Founder, Small Business Community Network (SBCN)

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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>.

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SBCN Membership

By Dave Ockwell-Jenner

Did you know that the Small Business Community Network (SBCN) has different membership options? Here's a quick at-a-glance view of some of the major membership benefits we offer:

Benefit	Corporate	Regular	On-Line	Associate
Number of Members	5	1	1	1
Attend all Chapter monthly networking meetings for free	✓	✓		✓
SBCN Member badge for your web site	✓	✓	✓	✓
Listing in Members Directory	✓	✓	✓	
Free mentoring	✓	✓	✓	
Contribute to SBCN web site	✓	✓	✓	
Post to SBCN mailing list	✓	✓	✓	
Attend Christmas Social for free	✓	✓		
Attend Summer Social for free	✓	✓		
20% discount on special events	✓	✓		
\$20 member referral bonus	✓	✓		
Free display table at monthly networking	✓	✓		

Find out more at:

www.sbcncanada.org/benefits



the future is friendly[®]

Visit TELUSTalksBusiness.com



Social Networking

Connect with the SBCN on our social networking channels.



sbcncanada.org/facebook



sbcncanada.org/linkedin



sbcncanada.org/twitter



sbcncanada.org/youtube

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