

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

By *Linda Ockwell-Jenner*

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I feel a great sadness and I am sure the rest of the world feels the same. World events are tragic, with Ebola, terrorists in Europe and closer to my home in Canada, the death of a Canadian Soldier in Ottawa.

How to carry on, how to move on, how to keep the faith and hope in our hearts is a difficult task and one which many people will find more difficult to do than others.

I am a firm believer in bringing people together and building communities, large and small. My belief that a problem shared, does in some way help, and I even though I know we can't right the wrongs of the world, what we can do is look to each other for support.

Business owners large and small who connect with others to build relationships, offer support and work together create stronger communities and that's what the Small Business Community Network (SBCN) offers you. We are a hub, a club, a group, a network – essentially it matters not what we are called, it matters how we can assist you, support you and share with you so that you can move on, you can succeed and you can build even greater success.

We can't give up, we won't give in, and especially where our passion and love is concerned, we will stay strong and stay committed and connected!



Networking With a Purpose

By Linda Ockwell-Jenner



I believe business networking is misunderstood and unfortunately, the people who do not see the benefits of consistent networking are losing out.

Many years ago groups of people sat around kitchen tables and got to know each other, from these small groups grew well-known organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Women's Institute.

Since then people realized the benefit of getting together with like-minded individuals to build relationships of trust, work together and in many cases, gain referrals.

I think that because there are so many choices out there where networking organizations and events are concerned people are overwhelmed and often get confused and fail to do their due diligence to see what their needs are and what would work for them.

If we make a list of our needs first and foremost my list would look something like this:

- I need to meet new people and build relationships in order to become memorable and recognized as an expert in my line of work.
- I want to build trusted relationships with others in order to be considered to partner with them, and also receive referrals.
- I want to keep up with new trends in the small business world and to gain new ideas to market and grow my business.

My list, above, will not be the same as yours, everyone has a different reason for networking and are at different levels in their business.

Today more than ever students, people in transition, and people thinking about starting a small business are recognizing the benefits of networking. But, sadly, small business owners are under the misconception they don't need to network, or are too busy to network, or as I pointed out earlier are confused by the many offerings and walk away from networking completely.

A couple of things to consider when looking for networking opportunities:

- Your budget – cost to attend events
- Time of day of networking events

"Consistent networking pays off big time."

- Who will be attending the networking events
- Know the reason you are attending various events

Consistent networking pays off big time. You become memorable, your brand is recognized, you build relationships of trust and you are the person who gains referrals.

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

Adaptive SEO

By *Dave Scott*



If you own a business and have a website, there's a chance you've developed a negative stance toward SEO. Maybe you had a bad experience with an "SEO company" or you just spent too many dollars without seeing or understanding the return you got on your investment. It's true that there was a time where shady SEO techniques were employed and then subsequently penalized, which left many businesses angry, confused and jaded about the merits of SEO. But it's also true that those times are well behind us and a new era of SEO - called AdaptiveSEO - is being ushered in. Moving forward, businesses need to embrace the progressions of the digital landscape and start re-focusing on SEO, regardless of their past experiences.

Publish Content That Your Prospects Are Looking For

More than ever, SEO is now about integrating various digital marketing tactics that work cohesively toward accomplishing one goal: highlighting your business's value to Internet searchers. It's no longer about "ranking #1 on Google" using any and all tips and tricks at your disposal because many of them don't offer value to searchers. Think about it from the customer's perspective in a real world example. Let's say you own a store and create an amazing billboard that's visually appealing and includes a great offer. Customers see the billboard and visit your store, but the problem is your store is messy, unorganized and doesn't match the image your billboard portrays. Trying to rank well in the search engine results pages (SERPs) with a "fancy billboard" not only doesn't work, it'll also drag other aspects of your digital marketing strategy down. You need substance, value and an open mind to do great SEO in 2014.

Content marketing was the big trend in 2013, and while an ever-shifting market means you need to be cautious with hot topics and buzzwords, content really is the lifeblood of AdaptiveSEO. A good content strategy means getting into the minds of your potential customers and determining searcher intent. This means coming up with the personas that are most likely to be interested in your brand and then figuring out what they're interested in and why. Next, you need to create great content around the topics that are most relevant to your potential customer base and ensure to deploy it with good technical SEO and a social media plan. If you can produce high-quality content that meets those requirements on a consistent basis, you'll be well on your way to laying the foundations of a great AdaptiveSEO strategy.

These are only some of the many reasons you should invest in and embrace AdaptiveSEO. Laying the groundwork of a strategy that will always bring value to your customers is the only surefire way to SEO success. For more information or guidance on how to better understand and implement AdaptiveSEO, get in touch with me!

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



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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>.

Security Corner

By *Dave Ockwell-Jenner*

Security and Small Business

It's not uncommon that I hear small business owners tell me that information security isn't a priority for them, because they're just a small local business. The argument makes seemingly perfect sense: who'd want to hack some little business in a small city someplace?

This might come as a shock, but a recent study by the US-based National Small Business Association claims that **nearly half of small businesses have been victims of cyber attacks**. Worse still, **the average cost associated with each breach reaches almost \$8,700** (US Dollars).

This means that if you're a small business, you have a 1-in-2 chance of being a victim of cyber attack. Furthermore you'd better have access to some significant financial resources to deal with the fallout of the attack when it comes.

Of course, you can chalk this up to being 'just another report' but my own experiences would suggest the headlines are true. I've seen many business treat things like getting a virus on their computer as a mere annoyance—some even go so far as to leave the computer infected and rather work with the 'annoying virus' than take action. What most don't realize is that today's modern malware (Viruses, Trojans, Worms, etc.) is quite different from the 'annoyance' of the past.

Even simple viruses can be a sign of greater danger. Like the tip of an iceberg, they could represent a mere taster of what other badness your computer has going on. It's not uncommon for more sophisticated malware to be installed on your computer by piggybacking on more simple viruses. Once your computer is infected with one piece of malware, it typically downloads and installs many more. The end result is that your computer may only exhibit the annoying behavior of the simple virus, but behind-the-scenes, an attacker has full control of your computer and your business network.

This really does happen. Unfortunately, many 'IT repair' companies treat the initial viruses, the ones they can find with Anti-Virus software and tools, and return the computer back to the customer. More advanced malware is much more difficult to find and relies on techniques you wouldn't expect your average Best Buy or Staples technician to use. The end result: the annoyance is gone, the cyber attacker isn't.

prime 
information security

"221 of the Fortune 500 companies have had passwords for company accounts found on sites like PasteBin."

Let me share a quick tip. This is actually a technique used in the world of Threat Intelligence—the practice of discovering what cyber attackers are up to, and how they're doing it. A site called PasteBin (www.pastebin.com) allows users to save text-based notes and share them with others. Whilst it is used legitimately by programmers, IT professionals and many others, it's widely used by hackers too. Visit the site, and try searching for your e-mail address, or your web site address. You might be surprised to see if it pops up on a list of compromised accounts posted by a hacker.

It was recently discovered that 221 of the Fortune 500 companies have had passwords for company accounts found on sites like PasteBin. Why not see if you small business is hanging with the big boys... I'll let you get creative with what to search for!

As always, I'm happy to chat about security matters for your small business, drop me a line!

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

SBCN Christmas Social

The time has come to think about the holiday season, and for those of you who do not have a Christmas Party at your place of work (or even if you do) we have the perfect party just for you!

We invite you to join us, celebrate the best of the year and look forward to what we can accomplish in 2015!

You can look forward to a wonderful evening in the company of friends, colleagues and perhaps even new business connections. As always we'll feature our SBCN Quiz and have a few surprises in store!

Find out more, and register at:

sbcn.info/xmas





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