

Small Business Success

February, 2012



Community
Futures Newsask



News from the General ManagerJudy Childs SaskatchewanA cold place..... so unpredictable, but so many Opportunities!

Last year I was in Texas in early December. I mentioned to my cousin just how much I enjoyed their weather. She responded that she found it cold with temperatures between the ranges of 23°C – 26°C. She went on to say that Texas is extremely hot during the summer months. Her observation is that we try to avoid the cold winters in Saskatchewan and the Texans goals are to avoid the extreme heat of their summers. I thought this was an interesting analysis. Having said that, our 2011 winter has been reasonably warm, although we did get reminded of the unpredictability when the thermometer dipped during the week of January 16, 2012.

This year has been busy at Community Futures Newsask. We have been lending to various business people across the region; assisting clients with their business plans and researching information to create good business plans. We continue working on community economic development projects such as: hosting YBEX (Youth Business Excellence Awards) for the 11th year which encourages our youth that entrepreneurship is a career option and we have encouraged community groups and municipalities to enter the “Challenge 4 Communities” event. This competition encourages community groups to submit an essay of approximately five hundred (500) words outlining the benefit of a project to the group or municipality. The second challenge is to create a Facebook page to promote the idea and market it to the region. The third challenge is to create a YouTube video promoting the project and the final challenge is to create an audio advertisement for a 30 second radio commercial to be submitted in writing as well. The overall strategy is to encourage community groups/municipalities to use various social media marketing. The public determines which projects are in the lead by a series of online voting. The end result is an opportunity to compete for funds for community projects that normally do not receive funding.

Why Create a Good Business Plan - at Newsask we want small business to succeed. We will go the “extra mile” to ensure that the clients have valuable and useful information to complete viable business plans. A business plan is in part, a feasibility study. There are occasions when an idea may not be viable and we help advise the clients. Perhaps there are other options or ventures that they may wish to consider. A study done by *Inc.* magazine and the National Business Incubator Association (NBIA) revealed that 80 percent of new businesses fail within the first five years. Our Board of Directors and staff maintain the philosophy that if a business fails it does not serve the client, the community or Community Futures Newsask. Until next month, we wish you success in your business planning venture

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Video Conferences Available at the Newsask Office

Newsask is committed to offering citizens in the region video conference training, seminars and workshops that are made available through the Saskatchewan Video Conference Network. There are many sponsoring entities including: Canada Business Infosource, Women Entrepreneurs, Canada Revenue Agency, and the Province of Saskatchewan. An amazing variety of video conferences are available to anyone interested but they must register in advance with the Community Futures Office. Learn from professional and experienced presenters in a casual classroom environment, via video-conference to our boardroom here in Tisdale. There is a \$10.00 charge for each session to cover costs and any handouts. The facilities are also available to community groups for a reasonable rental fee.

Newsask is utilizing a Facebook page to list the Video Conferences available, the dates and a short description. To access the information, log onto Facebook, and search for: "Community Futures Newsask."

*For information or to register, contact our office at 306-873-4449 OR 1-888-586-9855.
E-mail: admin@newsaskcfdc.ca or checkout the website at www.newsaskcfdc.ca*

3-Feb	11:00-2:00	Understanding Financial Statements	SBBC
3-Feb	3:00-6:00	Pricing and Costing Your Products	SBBC
4-Feb	8:30a-1:00	La Communication Interculturelle	cmbssc
6-Feb	3:00-6:00	Powerful Marketing for Small Business	SBBC
6-Feb	2:15-3:15	Intellectual Property- Trademarks- lunch series	SBBC
6-Feb	11:00-2:00	Sales Strategies for Small Business	SBBC
7-Feb	10:00-12:00	Business Opportunities and Ideas- Choosing the Right One!	cmbssc
7-Feb	11:00-2:30	Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)- Income Tax	SBBC
7-Feb	12:00-1:00	" Saskatchewan Pension Plan"- A Plan for Retirement	CSBSC
7-Feb	3:30-6:30	Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) GST/HST	SBBC
8-Feb	12:00-2:00	Attracting and Hiring Top Talent	SBBC
8-Feb	3:00-5:00	Social Media and Online Marketing Tactics	SBBC
9-Feb	11:00-2:00	Growing Your Consulting Business	SBBC
9-Feb	12:00-2:00	Lunch and Learn: How to Brand your Small Business	cmbssc
9-Feb	11:00-2:00	Start Smart 1	SBBC
10-Feb	11:00-1:00	Saving Energy is Smart Business- Energy Efficient Lighting 101	SBBC
10-Feb	3:00-5:00	The Power of Email and Engagement Marketing	SBBC
14-Feb	10:30-12:00	Payroll Basics	TBL
14-Feb	1:00-5:00	Recruitment & Selection	cmbssc
14-Feb	3:00-6:00	Tax Tips from an Accountant	SBBC
15-Feb	1:00-4:00	CRA- Payroll Information Seminar	cmbssc
15-Feb	12:00-1:30	MNP Financial Statements	CSBSC
15-Feb	2:00-3:30	Selling a Business- Lunch Series	SBBC
15-Feb	2:30-5:30	Start Your Business!	TBL
16-Feb	10:00-2:00	Marketing Essentials- Positioning Your Business for Success- Two day Power class	cmbssc
16-Feb	11:00-2:00	Start Smart 2	SBBC
16-Feb	1:00-12:15	Getting to Know Your Industry (webinar)	cmbssc
16-Feb	1:00-3:00	New Importers: What you Need to Know	TBL
16-Feb	7:30-9:00p	Incorporating in Alberta: What You Need to Know	TBL
17-Feb	10:00-2:00	Marketing Essentials- Positioning Your Business for Success- Two day Power class	cmbssc
17-Feb	11:00-2:00	Getting Incorporated- Essential Steps and Legal Tips	SBBC
17-Feb	3:00-6:00	Moving from a Proprietorship to Incorporation- Tax Concerns	SBBC
20-Feb	3:00-6:00	PR and Media Opportunities for Small Business	SBBC

21-Feb	10:30-12:30	Income Tax Basics for the Incorporated Business	TBL
21-Feb	3:00-6:00	Doing Business with the Government of Canada- Half Day Condensed	SBBC
22-Feb	1:00-4:00	CRA: Small Business Tax Information Workshop	cmbssc
22-Feb	11:00-2:30	Canada Revenue Agency(CRA)- Payroll	SBBC
22-Feb	2:30-4:00	Secrets of Successful Selling	TBL
22-Feb	3:30-6:30	Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) E- Services	SBBC
23-Feb	1:00-3:00	Facebook for Business	cmbssc
23-Feb	9:00-10:00	EI Special Benefits for the Self- Employed	CSBSC
23-Feb	10:00-11:00	ROE on the Web	CSBSC
23-Feb	11:00-2:00	Market Research for Your Business	SBBC
23-Feb	11:00-2:00	Starting a Consulting Business	SBBC
23-Feb	1:00-2:15	Getting to know Your Market (Webinar)	CSBSC
23-Feb	1:00-3:00	Exploring International Markets through Trade Missions	TBL
23-Feb	3:00-6:00p	Are You Thinking of Importing?	SBBC
23-Feb	7:30-9:00p	Scoring Big Success with Your Financial Requirements	TBL
24-Feb	11:00-2:00	Branding- More than Just a Logo	SBBC
24-Feb	3:00-6:00	Powerful Marketing for Small Business	SBBC
28-Feb	10:30-12:00	Small Business Accounting Basics	TBL
29-Feb	5:30-8:30p	Are you Ready to Be an Entrepreneur?	cmbssc
29-Feb	2:00-3:30	Business GPS- Growth, Planning and Succession- Lunch Series	SBBC
29-Feb	2:30-5:30	Preparing a Business Plan	TBL
29-Feb	4:00-6:00	Greening Your Small Business	SBBC

Check out Community Futures Newsask on [Facebook](#) to access detailed descriptions of our workshops & seminars.



Simply Accounting Premium 2012

Community Futures Newsask is offering training for Simply Accounting Premium 2012.

The time: 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. (3 hours)
The dates: March 26, 28, April 2, 4, 11, and 2012. (5 sessions)
Registration deadline: **March 12, 2012 (we need to order the manuals.)**

The Level 1 courseware covers:

1. Introduction – Setup and the General Journal
2. Inventory & Services
3. Accounts Payable
4. Accounts Receivable
5. Payroll
6. Reporting, Miscellaneous & Period End Procedures



The cost: Tuition - \$215.00; Manual - \$36.00 (including GST)

If participants bring their own laptop for classroom use, they can download a free student version of Simply that runs for 14 months.

Your laptop system requirements would be:

- Processor operating at 1.0 GHz or higher (2.0 GHz recommended)
- 512 MB of RAM (1 GB recommended)
- 1 GB of hard disk space (additional 400 MB needed for installation)
- Internet Explorer 6.0 or later
- Microsoft® Windows® XP, Vista, or Windows 7 (with latest updates from Microsoft)
- 256-colour or higher SVGA monitor, optimized for 1024 x 768; supports 800 x 600 with small fonts

**Your computer would need to have internet capability either through Wi-fi or an Ethernet connection.

Course prerequisites: You must have basic computer knowledge and be able to open, close and save programs.

[Note: Newsask has a limited number of extra computers or laptops that students may use if they don't have access to their own laptop. Register early to reserve one.]

Go to our website at <http://www.newsaskcfdc.ca/Simply.html>, drop into our office or contact us for registration information.

Phone: 306 873-4449 (in Tisdale) or 1 888 586-9855 toll free

Email: admin@newsaskcfdc.ca

Become a Home-Based Business Professional

People work from home for all sorts of reasons; some run home-based businesses because they can't afford, or don't want to spend money, on expensive office space. Others work from home because they prefer the lifestyle, still others are looking after young children, so have no choice if they want to keep their business, or career, moving forward.

Whatever your reason for working from home, and whether you do so full, or part time, here are a few of the things I've learned over the years that make me more efficient - and hey, I'm still learning.

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Treat your home office like a "real" workplace - don't wander down to your office in your PJs, plunk yourself in front of the computer yawning and start trying to focus. Instead, grab a shower, have some breakfast and dress at least semi-smartly. You will feel better about yourself and perform to a higher standard - I promise!

Separate your business space from the rest of the house - and have a door that closes. Your business and personal lives may happen under one roof but the line between them shouldn't get blurred. When my children were young they always knocked on my office door before entering - in fact my wife still does!

Set hours - set breaks - it's too easy when working from home to get up from your desk, wander into other parts of the house and start picking up toys, or magazines and plumping cushions. You need to discipline yourself, and the best way to do that is to be at your computer by a set time every morning and have coffee breaks and lunch at set times. Of course, you may have to go to a meeting, or you may need a stretch in between, but having a routine will help keep you on track.

Switch off at the end of the day - while many people find it challenging at first to focus on business at home, others become workaholics and don't know when to stop. There is always the temptation to wander back down to the office after dinner, or at the weekend. Of course, sometimes when there are deadlines to be met, this can be necessary, but it can be counter-productive if it becomes a habit.

Get out and about, and network - one of the things that stimulates us when we work in an office, or in a team, is the interaction; it helps with our creativity, motivation and



prevents us from feeling isolated. So, don't become too insular; go out and meet business associates for coffee or lunch regularly. Attend your local business association's networking sessions - Chambers of Commerce are a great place to start. Another idea is to get to know the other "home workers" in your neighborhood and arrange a monthly coffee meet.

Purchase professional equipment - just because you're working from home doesn't mean that you should buy home-use, or low end, computers, printers and other equipment. Did you know for instance that printers designated for office use, use a great deal less ink? They are probably three to four times the price of those giveaway home printers, but you'll save in the long-term by buying fewer ink cartridges (for instance I just purchased an office quality printer that gives 2,200 sheets per black and 1,800 per color cartridge). The same goes for computers and screens; I have two large monitors on my desk to maximize my ability to work on several documents and in multiple programs, but I know home-based people struggling with slow, antiquated computers with insufficient memory which constantly crash. Be professional with your equipment and you'll be far more efficient.

Get connected - in this day and age of super-connectivity there are many ways to offset working from a remote office. Skype allows us to meet with people face-to-face electronically, and there are many video conferencing services such as gotomeeting.com, imeet.com, or joinme.com that allow you to share screens, make presentations, perform demonstrations and even collaborate on documents in real time.

Just a few years ago working from home was challenging, but today there are hundreds, if not thousands, of cost effective programs and online services, not to mention high-end equipment, that allow home-office heroes to be just as professional as those working out of flashy offices.

Marketing Your Green Credentials

I'm sure I'm not the first person to talk about eco marketing, but I should imagine there are as many definitions of the term as there are people talking about it. So, do I have a definition of eco-marketing? Sort of... to me eco marketing is understanding the new zeitgeist we find ourselves in - one where sustainability is taking an increasingly important role in consumer decision-making - and through this understanding, tailoring our company and its products and services to make them more attractive to today's green-aware buyer.

So, how do you adopt the new green marketing reality? Here are a few ideas that might help stimulate your creative juices!

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Repositioning what you sell - you may not be inherently green, but there may be a way to reposition what you sell to highlight its green credentials. Take BMW's Mini, a fun, sporty and chic car, but today the fact that it is also economical has become an integral part of the marketing message. How can you make what you sell take on a tinge of green?

Giving green status - Green Status is all about promoting your unique "greenness" and then allowing your customers to revel in it. For example; a report showed that the number one reason people purchased a Toyota Prius was because of what it said about them. How can your product or service confer green status on your customers?

Status stories - with green status comes the ability to tell stories and spread the word. People like to tell stories, so give them a chance to tell the story of the products that you sell. Many of us have been buying fair trade coffee for some time and feeling good about it, but these days you can scan your pack of coffee beans with your smart phone and hear all about the farmer who grew the beans. Marketing

your product or service by creating a story around it and highlighting its green credentials will keep you ahead of your competitors.

Promote your use of sustainable raw materials, or green packaging - Consumers are starting to look deeper into the products they purchase and want to see products and services where eco-friendly is more than skin deep. Restaurants are buying local produce, grocery stores are using reusable, or compostable bags - what are you doing to promote sustainability? How can you let your customers know about it?

Be generous with the green stuff - at Seattle airport owners of electric vehicles can recharge their cars free of charge. As these forms of transportation become more common this may be a wonderful marketing initiative for companies that have large car parks. IKEA in Copenhagen offers bicycles with trailers for customers to enable locals to get their flat packs home. Think about what your company could offer to help your customers in their green efforts.

Support, or align yourself with green causes - not all of us are in a position to make our product or service more eco-friendly but we can all corporately support green causes. Sponsor a local eco-organization and improve your eco-marketing credentials!

I'll leave you with the ultimate new green idea, which I discovered while researching for this article, is a new font. How on earth, I hear you say, can a font be eco-friendly? Well Ecofont was developed by Dutch communications company SPRANQ and was designed to save you money on those annoyingly expensive inkjet cartridges that always run out when you are on a deadline, and in the middle of an important print job. The Ecofont is like Swiss cheese (sorry to switch countries on you) - it has holes in it. Like all ground-breaking ideas Ecofont is based on a simple premise; how much of a letter can be removed before it becomes difficult to read? Well as it turns out, about 20% - that's how much less ink you will save when adopting Ecofont (www.spranq.eu).



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