Small Business Success

November, 2011

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

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7-Nov	**11:00-1:30**	**Start Smart 1- Resources and Registrations**	**SBBC**
7-Nov	**1:30-2:30**	**Start Smart 2- Business Structures**	**SBBC**
7-Nov	**4:00-5:30**	**How to Do Business with the Federal Government**	**SBBC**
8-Nov	**7:00-10:00p**	**Small Business Sales Strategies**	**SBBC**
8-Nov	**1:00-4:00**	**Understand Yourself, Your Coworkers, and Stress**	**C/MBSC**
9-Nov	**10:00-12:00**	**Microsoft Office Word 2007- Tips for Small Business**	**C/MBSC**
9-Nov	**1:00-3:00**	**Microsoft Office Excel 2007- Tips for Small Business**	**C/MBSC**
9-Nov	**12:00-1:00**	**How to Hire a Web Design Company**	**WE**
9-Nov	**3:00-5:00**	**Social Media and Online Marketing Tactics**	**SBBC**
9-Nov	**7:00-10:00p**	**Starting a Consulting Business**	**SBBC**
10-Nov	**10:00-12:00**	**PowerPoint 2007- Tips for Powerful Professional Presentations**	**C/MBSC**
10-Nov	**1:00-3:00**	**Starting A Home Based Business**	**SBBC**
10-Nov	**11:00-2:00**	**Are You Thinking of Importing?**	**SBBC**
14-Nov	**11:00-2:00**	**Start Smart 3- Protecting you and Your Business**	**SBBC**
14-Nov	**4:00-5:30p**	**MERX- The Government Electronic Tendering Service**	**SBBC**
15-Nov	**10:00-12:30**	**Seminar for New Importers**	**CSBSC**

15-Nov	**1:30-2:30**	**Seminar for New Exporters**	**CSBSC**
15-Nov	**3:00-4:00**	**Importing Vehicles and Trailers into Canada**	**CSBSC**
15-Nov	3:00-6:00	**Growing Your Consulting Business**	**SBBC**
15-Nov	**7:00-10:00p**	**Business Viability 1 -The Break Even Analysis**	**SBBC**
16-Nov	**12:30-3:30**	**GST/HST Seminar- Information Seminar for New Registrants**	**C/MBSC**
16-Nov	**11:00-2:00**	**Tax Tips from an Accountant**	**SBBC**
16-Nov	**4:00-6:00p**	**Greening Your Small Business**	**SBBC**
17-Nov	**8:00-10:00**	**It will Never Happen to Me- Not! Protecting Business Records and Document Recovery Solutions**	**C/MBSC**
17-Nov	**5:30-7:30p**	**Facebook For Business**	**C/MBSC**
17-Nov	**11:00-2:00**	**Getting Serious With Social Media**	**SBBC**
17-Nov	**3:00-4:30**	**Cloud Computing- Prepare for the Future of Your Business**	**SBBC**
18-Nov	**12:00-2:00**	**Legal Tips for Your Online Business**	**SBBC**
18-Nov	**3:00-5:00**	**Ecommerce and Understanding Online Payment Systems**	**SBBC**
21-Nov	**11:00-2:00**	**Start 4- Market Research**	**SBBC**
21-Nov	**4:00-5:30**	**Understanding the Gov. of Can. Procurement Process and Responding to Bids**	**SBBC**
22-Nov	**12:00-2:00**	**Small Business Strategies for USA Marketing and Trade Initiatives**	**SBBC**
22-Nov	**3:00-6:00**	**Retail Distribution- Move Your Product Line to Retail Market**	**SBBC**
22-Nov	**5:30-9:30**	**Recruitment and Selection**	**C/MBSC**
22-Nov	**7:00-10:00**	**Business Viability 2- The Cash Flow Forecast**	**SBBC**
23-Nov	**11:00-1:00**	**Getting Your Business Online: A Website**	**SBBC**
23-Nov	**1:00-3:00**	**How to Buy a Franchise**	**C/MBSC**
23-Nov	**1:30-3:30**	**Measuring the Success of Your Website- Web Analytics and SEO**	**SBBC**
23-Nov	**5:30-8:30**	**CRA- Payroll Information Seminar**	**C/MBSC**
24-Nov	**10:00-1:00**	**Are You Ready to Be an Entrepreneur**	**C/MBSC**
24-Nov	**2:15-3:15**	**Intellectual Property- Trademarks- Lunch Series**	**SBBC**
25-Nov	**4:00-6:00**	**Young Entrepreneurs: Business Plan Resources and Financing Options**	**SBBC**

Check out Community Futures Newsask on Facebook to access detailed descriptions of our workshops & seminars.

Saskatchewan Video Conference Network

Challenge 4 Communities

Remember to vote for your favorite Community Project **Challenge 4 Communities** at www.newsaskcfdc.ca.

4 weeks, 4 challenges, 4 winners, 4 prizes.
1st - $3,000; 2nd - $2,000; 3rd - $1,000; 4th - $500

Challenge 4 Communities 2011

Simply Accounting Premium 2011

Community Futures Newsask is offering training for Simply Accounting Premium 2011.

The time: 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. (3 hours)
The dates: Jan 16, 18, 23, 25, and 30, 2012. (5 sessions)
Registration deadline: January 4, 2012 (we need to order the manuals.)
Please note: our office is closed Dec 26 – 30, 2011
The Level 1 courseware covers:

- Introduction – Setup and the General Journal
- Inventory & Services
- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Payroll
- Reporting, Miscellaneous & Period End Procedures

The cost: Tuition - $200.00; Manual - $36.00 (including GST)

For complete course information and computer requirements, 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

Video Conference Equipment and Room Rental

Do you have meetings throughout the province requiring travel time, expenses and meals?

The Community Futures network in Saskatchewan has 12 offices equipped with Video Conferencing equipment that can save you travel time and expense to have your meetings. You can see and talk to your co-workers or make presentations for clients in another region of the province. Our Video Conference can be linked with non CF offices as well.

Save considerable time and expenses by having meetings in your community or region.

The Ministry quotes, “Over the past few years, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture has held a number of successful video conference meetings and presentations. The Ministry has been able to connect directly to producers across Saskatchewan and save substantially on staff travel costs.”

Community Futures Offices in Saskatchewan with Video Conference Facilities:

Community Futures Newsask (Tisdale)
Community Futures South Central (Assiniboia)
Community Futures Sunrise (Weyburn)
Community Futures Visions North (LaRonge)
Community Futures Beaver River (Meadow Lake)
Community Futures Meridian (Kindersley)
Community Futures Prince Albert & District (Prince Albert)
Community Futures Sagehill (Bruno)
Community Futures Southwest (Swift Current)
Community Futures Ventures (Yorkton)
Community Futures Northwest (North Battleford)
Community Futures East Central (Broadview)
Community Futures MidSask (Outlook)

Check with each location for their rental fees. Our website at www.newsaskcfdc.ca has “Links” for each CF office.

Other locations with Video Conference equipment may be able to link in as well. In the past, our clients have had presentations from other sites such as Calgary — eliminating the need for the expense to bring in a speaker or presenter.

Community Futures Newsask has to offer…

YES, Newsask will come to your community & complete the following workshops for as few as four people.

- Introduction to Business Management
- Introduction to Entrepreneurship
- Introduction to Marketing
- What is a Business Plan
- Branding your Business

Once Upon a Time… How Story Telling Can Grow Your Business

If you were asked to tell your favorite story, what would it be? Would you recall a favorite fairy tale from your childhood? A book you have loved since you were young? A movie that inspired you? A true-life story that was told to you by your grandfather, or your father and that you now tell to your children? Everyone loves a great story. Stories are timeless, ageless, and compelling. They draw us in, make us feel something, connect us and inspire us. So what does this have to do with your business? A lot!

Published in cooperation with Blue Beetle Books

As long as people have populated the earth, they have been telling stories. While storytelling, even business storytelling is not necessarily new, there is a growing trend in the corporate sector that recognizes the power of telling stories to promote business. Most successful companies like Nike, 3M, Costco, Mary Kay, and FedEx use corporate storytelling extensively, and would tell you their success is in large part, due to their ability to use their corporate story to motivate, inspire, and yes - sell.

Corporate storytelling is about getting to the core of a company's value proposition, and developing narratives that simply and compellingly relate "the story" to customers, prospects, investors, media, employees and others in a way that motivates them to think, or act, favourably. In her book, "Around the Corporate Campfire", Evelyn Clark says this: "Business leaders need to clearly and passionately communicate their organization's values and vision so they can draw everyone into the fold: prospective recruits, employees, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders." Clark has built a successful career on helping companies identify, craft, and communicate their corporate stories as part of their business strategies.

Stories are being told about your company all the time. Unless you have never had a customer, someone somewhere is talking about your company. When they do so, they are speaking with passion either for or against your business. When a customer experiences your company, they leave with an impression. If they were offended, hurt or feel they did not get good value, they will passionately talk about (create the story of) their perceptions of your business. Likewise, if you exceeded their expectations, they will also talk about that story. When a person hears one of these customer stories about your business, do you have your own equally passionate company stories with which to counter or confirm what they have heard?

Storytelling, in corporate communications, gives sense and meaning to your company and its staff. It inspires and gets people moving in the same direction and is an opportunity to recount the values of your company. Think about all the great things that happen in your business - the way you meet customer needs, create exceptional products, or live out your values. Are you telling those stories to show people what kind of company you are? A simple story can go further than any advertising or marketing campaign. In fact, if you're smart you'll be using stories IN those campaigns, because stories sell, stories connect, and stories motivate. Here are some thoughts on telling YOUR business story.

1. **Tell your story with passion.** Passion is powerful, and no one is as passionate about your business as you are, so tell your story with all the enthusiasm you can muster. "Don't tell me that you're "passionate about the perfect cup of coffee at your coffee shop." says corporate storyteller and coach, K. Sean Buvala (www.storyteller.net). "Rather, through business storytelling, show me your passion by telling me the story of how you spent a year travelling the country to find the best and most unique roasting machine. I want to see that look in your eyes as you tell me about the best/worst coffee you ever had that led you to start your own business. Let me laugh with you about your obsessive interviewing and auditioning in order to find the perfect baristas. Help me to feel your focus as you tell me about going through a dozen suppliers (and their unique personalities) looking for the perfect coffee beans."
2. **Train your employees to tell your story.** Your employees are the second best people to tell your story (after you of course). Gather them together regularly to share their stories. What meaningful encounter did they have with a customer? What choice did they make, even though it was hard, because it aligned with your values? Where have they seen success? How has your business made a difference in the lives of your customers? The more you can get them to tell stories to each other, the more likely they will be to share them with others.
3. **Start small.** Don't force people to participate, but lead by example. Get people excited about one story. Then tell it over and over. Companies who are most successful in using storytelling often tell the story about how the company began, they talk about the founder, the founding principles, the company's values. It doesn't have to be complicated to be a great story.
4. **Make your story flexible.** "The elevator speech is dead," says Buvala. "For any size company, learn to tell each of your stories in a variety of time formats such as two minutes, six minutes or fifteen minutes. Always be ready to tell potential customers about your work. Your preparedness will help convey your passion."
5. **Make a personal connection with your story.** Take every opportunity to be in front of customers or employees to tell your stories. Digital storytelling, print advertisements and social media are all fine tools, but they can never replace the benefits of experiencing your story passionately told live and in person. "Story is more powerful than brand," says management guru, Tom Peters. "because the best story wins." Storytelling evokes emotion and involvement. Your corporate story is the engine behind your internal and external communications. Successful stories help people see, taste, feel, and touch your company. It makes tangible what is sometimes intangible, and creates a connection far greater than any brochure, print ad, or other form of advertising can. So tell your story! It's good for business.

Risk Management for Your Small Business

Have you ever lost sleep over the "what if's" that could happen to your business? What if you were in a car accident and had to be away from your business for six months? What if your biggest client decided to go across the street to your competitor? What if there was a large-scale natural disaster that affected your digital systems and information? What if your most valuable sales person who's bringing in $250,000 a year in business suddenly quit? What if the bottom dropped out of the market for your product or service? Or what if you suddenly got a huge order that could double your revenue, but you weren't equipped to take it on?

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Business risk management focuses on risks to your business operations, systems, and processes. Those kinds of questions are at the core of risk management, and a risk management strategy is about asking those questions, and creating plans to deal with your worst case scenarios. Unfortunately, not a lot of small business owners go into business thinking about worst case scenarios, and strategic risk management often gets lost in the shuffle of doing business every day.

Here are some of the typical risk areas a small business faces:

- Financial - reliable suppliers, quality products, large business loans, economic stability, cash flow, business growth
- Relationships with clients - too many, too few, too many large clients that control business viability, loyalty
- Employee (HR) - turnover, theft or fraud by employees, specific skill sets that are valuable and difficult to replace, human error, quality control

- Economic fluctuations - local, regional, national and world
- Technology - new technologies, social media, equipment

The goal of business risk management is to know exactly what kinds of risks exist in your specific business and figure out how to prevent them, or minimize their impact on your business. Risk management is often done using the following five-step approach.

1. **Identify the risks involved in all aspects of the business** - ask yourself the hard "what if" questions using the areas listed above as a starting point. The answers that scare you the most, the ones that have the largest potentially negative impact on your business, are the ones you need to pay most attention to.
2. **Review the probability of negative events occurring** - now that you've identified the risks, try to determine the probability of those risks occurring. For example; an earthquake that destroys your business systems might be possible, depending on where you are located, but how probable is it? How much time, money and energy should you put into mitigating that risk based on that probability? Or, your business is strongly linked to the American economy. With all the upheaval going on financially across the border, how likely is it to affect your business? Create risk priorities based on the issues that are most probable.
3. **Come up with a plan to decrease the risk** - once you've prioritized your risks and know which are most likely to occur, create a plan to minimize those risks, should they happen. Think strategically, and don't be afraid to visit your worst case scenario. Make your actions as specific possible. "If A happens, we will do this. If B happens, we will do that." Having those strategies in place will not only give you peace of mind for now, but will also give you a place to start if the worst case scenarios are realized.
4. **Put the plan into action** - some of your risk management strategies will only need to be implemented when the "what if" occurs. Others might require plans that are put into place now to mitigate those "what if" scenarios. Look at your highly probable risks - are there things you can be doing right now to begin minimizing those risks? Think about that sales person bringing in $250,000. Losing them would be a worst case scenario, but could you mitigate that risk by training up other sales reps to become senior revenue generators? In addition, could you begin connecting with some of those clients yourself? Then if they lost their rep, they still have a strong relationship with your company.
5. **Monitor the situation to see if the plan is effective, or if it needs to be altered** - your risk management strategy isn't a one-time only document that you put on a shelf and hope you never have to use it. It's a living, breathing workplan that needs to be monitored regularly. As things change in your industry, in the world or local economy, or in technology, continue reviewing your risks. You may find that something that was a low probability last year, is suddenly a high probability this year. Some of the risks may drop right off the list, and you may need to add new ones. As you continue being aware of the potential risks your business faces, you'll be so much better prepared to deal with them if they occur.

   Having a risk management plan in place not only helps in the event of your worst case scenarios, it can also help to organize the allocation of resources and capital by helping to standardize the way that priorities are set. This will help with decision-making and planning, as well. Make sure that your business has a plan for dealing with all of its risks!

Community Futures Newsask

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