

Small Business Success

May, 2011



Community Futures Newsask



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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10-May	10:00-12:00	Utiliser Facebook en Enterprise	C/MBSC
11-May	1:00-4:00	CRA - Payroll Information Seminar	C/MBSC
12-May	12:00-2:30	GST/HST Registrants Seminar	SVCN
12-May	10:00-12:00	Selling and Negotiating to Win	C/MBSC
17-May	1:00-5:00	Performance Management	C/MBSC
18-May	12:00- 2:00	Legal Specialist- Joel Dudeck	Guest
25-May	12:00-2:00	Banking Specialist- Michaela Pirlog	C/MBSC
8-Jun	12:00-1:00	How to Involve Your Business in The Community	SVCN
22-Jun	7:30-8:30am	Be A Successful Blogger	SVCN

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



Remember to check out the **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



Spring Cleaning Your Office

With spring just around the corner, most of us feel a tug to do some spring cleaning. Spring brings freshness and a new light. When the weather starts to warm up, people can be seen washing windows, cleaning closets, organizing spaces, getting rid of clutter, cleaning their yards...but what about your office? When was the last time you spent some time giving your office space a good overhaul? After all, it is where you spend a lot of your time, and represents your business to others. What kind of impression do you make on potential customers or clients with binders piled up on the floor behind your chair, files strewn about as if they're not important enough to have a home, a desk piled high with papers, books and coffee mugs from the last three days? What goes through the mind of the customer on the other end of the phone line when you say, 'hang on just a minute while I locate that file', and leave them on hold for 5 minutes while you're looking? A cluttered, disorganized work space not only reflects poorly on your ability to manage your business, but actually may prevent you from working efficiently and effectively. Even if you don't have the spring cleaning bug, take the initiative to give your office a good spring clean. You'll notice the results right away. Here are some ways to get started.

Filing

Physical Files - This includes everything currently on your desk, in your in-basket, sitting on trays or in stand-up files. Everyone is different when it comes to what system makes the most sense for them, and the system may also be dependent on their industry or business. The point behind this is to ensure that all your files have a place, and that you can quickly and easily find anything you need. There should never be pieces of paper or folders on your desk that don't have a home, unless you're actively using them. It doesn't really matter which system you use, as long as it works for you and that you keep it up to date. Get those files off your desk and into their rightful place.



Contacts - Go through your Daytimer, business card file and address book. Cross off or store any contacts you know are outdated. Update any information that needs to be updated (i.e. that new phone number for Joe's Body Shop you scribbled on a napkin should be transferred to your address book). If you keep your contacts on your computer or smart phone, do the same. Go through each contact and check that all the information is updated.

Computer - Does your computer desktop look like someone's filing cabinet exploded? Can you quickly and easily track down any file on your hard drive whenever you need it? Take a look at how your computer files are organized. Are there files you can delete? Are there items that have been saved to the wrong file? Keeping your desktop relatively neat and being liberal with folders and sub folders may help you to feel less stressed. It's the same as getting the physical clutter off your desk. Also, take a look at your browser bookmarks. Are there some you can delete? Is there some way to organize and categorize them to make finding sites easier? What about your email? When was the last time you deleted unnecessary messages? Have you created email sub-folders to make searching for that specific email from Company X simpler? Take the time to clean up your computer files. You'll appreciate how much time it saves you in the end.

Physical Space

Desk - How much unnecessary stuff is on your desk? Does your desk look like a photographer's showroom with pictures everywhere? The clearer your workspace, the more efficiently you will work. Consolidate and simplify what is on your desk. Put away what you can in drawers to leave a clean, neat working surface.

Bookshelves - Are your books organized in some kind of order so you know where to look when you need something? Are they neat and tidy or have they become the receptacle for everything you don't know what to do

with, photos from the Christmas party, the outdated company envelopes you can't bring yourself to throw away, disks and CD's you don't know what to do with? De-clutter as much as you can, and put the rest away.

Floorspace - Nothing says 'inefficient' like stuff overflowing onto your floor. Try to get everything off your floor that isn't a piece of furniture or equipment. It may be time to purchase another bookshelf or storage cabinet. A de-cluttered space leads to an increase in productivity.

Office Equipment

Computer and Accessories - When was the last time you took your computer in for a cleaning and service? What about your printer, scanner, keyboard and mouse? Do they need a dusting or service? Your fax machine? Keeping your office equipment well-serviced and maintained will save you hours of frustration as they won't break down as readily.

Are you feeling inspired yet? Get to it. If you can't afford to set aside a day during the week, do it on a Saturday. You won't believe what an impact it will make on your attitude and the feeling you'll have when you go back to work on Monday. Increase your efficiency, create a space that's a pleasure to work in, and impress your customers and clients - a little bit of effort will go a long way!

Youth Business Excellence Awards 2011- YBEX

Our 10th Annual YBEX Awards took place May 7, 2011. Awards were provided in the Business Plan Category and the Business Venture Category. Divisions of Grade 6 – 9; Grades 10 – 12; and Out of School Youth Under 30 each had the opportunity to submit as individuals or groups. There were 55 submissions involving 69 youth. Following are the prize winners.

• Business Plan Individual Category Winners

Grades 6 – 9

1st place winner – Breanna Thiessen, “Heart Felt Cards”, Nipawin

2nd place winner – Jessica Vik, “JV Wear”, Nipawin

3rd place winner – Mitchell Doerksen, “M D Gundesigning”, Nipawin

1st place winner – Karissa D. Collison, “Devilish Goodies™”, Carrot River

2nd place winner – Callum Bradley, “Bradley Beef”, Naicam

2nd place winner – Tiffany Guttormson, “Dance Mania”, Naicam

3rd place winner – Stephanie Parry, “Books for You”, Naicam

Out of School Youth

1st place winner – Erin Heffernan, “Gypsy Juice”, Melfort

2nd place winner – Amber Becker, “Beauty Basics”, Naicam



• Business Plan Group Category Winners

Grades 6-9

1st place winners – Rachel Slusar & Tara Verklan, “Ray and Tay’s Craft Camp”, Nipawin

2nd place winners – Matthew Major, Ashton Olson, & Lucas Wood, “Dirt Snow & Hurt”, Nipawin

3rd place winners – Megan Stonehouse & Taylor Walcer, “M.T. Mares”, Nipawin

1st place winner – Rylan Morris & Amanda Dyck, “A & R Marketing”, Carrot River

Out of School Youth

- 1st place winner – Victoria Hipkins, Stephanie Hankins & April Leibel, “ABC Daycare”, Bjorkdale, Melfort & Tisdale respectively
 2nd place winner – Joshua Dufault & Silviu Moldovan, “Roadside Motors”, Naicam & Melfort

• **Business Venture Individual Category Winners**

Grades 6 – 9

1st place winner – Tysen Rachkewich, “U Pick it Pumpkin Patch”, Rose Valley

Grades 10-12

1st place winner – Jordan Becker, “Snow Shovelin’ & Lawn Lovin’”, Naicam

• **SPECIAL ACHEIVEMENT AWARDS**

1st Special Achievement – Kelsey O’Brien, “Gelous Nails”, Naicam

2nd Special Achievement – Shawn Meekins, “Meekins’ Marksmanship Center”, Naicam

3rd Special Achievement – Katelyn Gaetz, “Rockin’ Rhythm”, Naicam

4th Special Achievement – Thomas Rowlett & Trent Kozun, “T’ n’ T Golf”, Nipawin

5th Special Achievement – Nial Christiansen & Jesse Anderson, “Xavier Technologies”, Nipawin

Agricultural Business Award –

Grade 6 – 9: Megan Stonehouse & Taylor Walcer, “M.T. Mares”, Nipawin

Grade 10 – 12: Callum Bradley, “Bradley Beef”, Naicam

Infosource Award – Ty Kehrig, “Optimistic Mobile Apps”, Bjorkdale

Mike Butler Memorial Award – Emma Weighill, “Sacred Souls: Smoothie Lounge and Fitness Center”, Carrot River.

This project is funded by many community minded businesses. Community Futures Newsask is committed to working in the north east to achieve development in business and communities. Department of Western Economic Diversification Canada partially funds the non-profit organization.

The 7 Secrets of Top Producers

In the world of sales, there are account executives who seem to soar and stay on the list of top producers year after year, and others who remain average producers or who struggle to stay on the grid. What makes the difference? Training and business solutions experts, Wynn Solutions, conducted a study of 5,000 top producers over a three-year period. Their results are interesting, and perhaps telling, about what makes a top producer tick. Following are their findings:

This article provided in cooperation with [Blue Beetle Books](#)

"Contrary to popular belief, the most successful salespeople were not those who made the most phone calls or were the best presenters and closers. There seemed to be no common ground with best practices. We saw many top producers who had low closing ratios but set ten times more appointments and made more money than their competitors by being in front of more people. Also, we saw many number-one salespeople who could not cold-call or even work their referrals that well. They went where their customers were: to networking meetings, golf courses, and so forth. They met face to face with fewer people but were very successful.

We saw people who managed their time well and many who did not, but who made up for it by what we can only refer to as 'wasting their time with the right people'. What they had in common went beyond best practices. They focused on their strengths and were more competitive by getting better at what they already did well.

Wynnism: The key to success is doing very little of what you do badly.

We found a group we called the strugglers - people who work very hard to produce average results. We saw them working on their shortcomings over and over again, hoping for a different result. As it turns out, hope is not a strategy. The difference is that the top producers used their strengths to improve a weakness.

Wynnism: If you do nothing but focus on your weaknesses, you will ultimately feel weak.

We did, however, uncover seven beyond-best practices that we believe may be the keys to sales success.

1. They explain the value of their service clearly in about 20 seconds.
2. They develop simple and easy to maintain organizational processes that create client care.
3. They are able to stay persistent because they have clearly defined outcomes.
4. They spend approximately 50% of their time building relationships with top customers.
5. They leverage existing relationships by being a solutions provider.
6. They survey their customers to find out what services they like best and then focus their offering in those areas.
7. They manage expectations and emotions by setting those expectations and making sure their customers feel heard.

Think about your sales efforts and those of your sales team. Are you using the 7 beyond best practices mentioned above as you deliver on your sales plan? Learn a lesson from top producers on how to increase the impact of your sales efforts and boost business sales.

Strategies for Managing Part-time Employees

As a small business, you've likely come face to face with the dilemma of whether to hire part-time employees in your business. Maybe you're just beginning to expand and know you need some help but can't afford a full time person. Maybe you've got several full time people but one has approached you about the idea of reducing his or her hours to achieve a family balance. Maybe your business tends to hire younger workers who are in school or university and they can't commit to full time. Traditional thinking says that part-time workers don't have the same degree of involvement or commitment as full-time workers. That's not the reality any more. Due to cutbacks from the recession and employee work/life balance choices, the ranks of part-time workers have risen to permeate all staffing levels, including more senior, strategic positions and white-collar professionals such as doctors and lawyers. By offering the option of part-time employment, you can retain a high performing team.



This article provided in cooperation with [Blue Beetle Books](#)

Part-time employment can be a win-win for companies and employees. Employee management can take on all shapes and forms in today's economy. When a company's sales slow down, managers typically seek to keep labor costs down and rely on part-time workers and freelancers to fill gaps. But as businesses add more part-timers to their workforces, they must adapt to changing dynamics in everything from productivity and customer service, to meeting deadlines. Here are some tips to managing a part-time workforce to ensure productivity and engagement stays high, your customers' needs are being met, and your business continues to flourish.

1. **Make sure part-time jobs have an adequate job description**

Both the business owner and the part-time employee should be on the same page when it comes to the time commitment the job requires. There is a temptation with part-time employees to fly by the seat of your pants and apply those workers to whatever jobs need doing. This isn't fair to the employee, and it's not

good for your business. Part-time employees must have a clear sense of what their role is, and what your expectations are. This clarity will create motivated workers who are willing to give you 100% while they are there, knowing what you need them to do and how they fit in the organization.

2. Create opportunities for part-timers to feel like part of your team

Even though part-timers are not in the office all day, they are still part of your staff, and you should make sure that part-time employees are in the loop with company communications. It's also important that your staff shares this attitude. Encourage part-timers to attend company social events and make sure you schedule staff meetings during times when your part-timers are able to attend. This minimizes any division between full- and part-timers and creates an environment where part-time employees are perceived as equals and in turn will be equally committed.

3. Know how to reach part-timers when they are not working

One of the challenges with part-time employees is that inevitably, there will be days when something urgent comes up and your part-time employee is out of the office. Most part-timers understand the need to make themselves available during off-hours, should an urgent matter arise, so make sure you know where to reach them when they are out of the office--and make certain they are clear about when they need to answer the phone. You can't expect your part-time employees to be on call at all times when they are not working, but there should be a clear understanding about your expectations for when they should be available, and how to handle things when they are not.

4. Include them in your meeting schedule

Regular staff meetings should be an extremely important aspect of your business strategy, and making sure part-timers are included in your meeting schedule is vital. If possible, they should attend weekly or monthly all-staff meetings, but you should also schedule other meetings that have a direct impact on their jobs, during times when they are able to attend. This makes them feel invested in the projects they're involved in, as well as connected to the remainder of your team.

5. Understand the relevant employment laws and benefits requirements for part-timers

Each province has its own laws when it comes to employment standards, unless you are in an industry that is governed by federal employment legislation. Make sure that either you, or someone on your team is well versed in what part-time employees are entitled to in terms of vacations/vacation pay, breaks, statutory holidays, overtime, etc. Getting yourself into hot water in this area can be costly, so knowledge is money in this area. Also, know what your insurance carrier (if you have one) requires to bring an employee on to an existing benefits plan, as the requirements will vary from company to company.

Part-time employees can be a great human resource solution for small businesses. Use these strategies to manage your part-timers so that they are productive, vital members of your team and contribute to your business growth and success.



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