YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR

## Kimberly Hall

"I love that real estate is always a challenge and I constantly get to work with new people *doing something that I love.*" p12

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## **DISCIPLINE DRIVES YOUR BRAND**

"If you have never fallen you have never challenged your potential." – Gerry Visca

BY GERRY VISCA

any entrepreneurs that I coach often ask me how I am able to stay focused and help so many others create their lives. I tell them the key to driving my brand and my actions is daily discipline. Sounds easy, right? Sometimes it's the simple things that when executed on a consistent basis will drive your success forward.

How long does it take to form a new habit? I receive several answers from audiences ranging from 20 to 60 days and everything in between. Based on my experience, I have found that the formation of a new habit will take the average individual approximately 30 days. Following the consistent application during this period of time will encourage the mind to accept it as a new form of behavior. Ask any successful person and they will tell you that success is defined by replacing bad habits with really good ones. The key here is to "focus" on creating new and better habits to replace the old habits and align all of your actions to pursuing your goals.

The key words here are consistency and persistence. Ask any professional speaker or entertainer how they are harness their energy. They need to recondition their mind and body for better physical and mental shape.

They need the ability to summon their inner energy upon demand. They strive to form new success habits; preparing themselves physically with disciplined physical fitness and a healthier diet. They look great, feel great and have the physical energy to live life to the fullest. The audiences can sense their high energy the minute they pounce onto stage! They address the audience with great enthusiasm and passion and engage them within the first 10 seconds. Imagine being a leader in your organization that continually inspires and engages its employees to become the best that they can be? What would this look like? Your employees would be encouraged and inspired to strive for personal greatness in all they do.

Just think about it for a moment. What could you achieve in that one hour of time every morning? It's only one hour right? I know. You convince yourself that you really need that extra hour of sleep and you can't function without it, right? That is the habit you have created for yourself and you have conditioned your mind in that manner. The key is to stick to a consistent plan that is best for you.

The key to discipline includes the following attribute: Patience—a strong focus combined with...

PAGE :



#### SPECIAL FEATURE I

#### Women Who Mean Business

These women make the Hamilton–Halton community a rewarding place to work and live.

PAGE 10

#### FRONT RUNNERS

#### Leslie J. Smith Professional Corporation Barrister & Solicitor

"For me, it's all about trying to level the playing field."

PAGE 15

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## SIX TIPS FOR SELLING YOUR BUSINESS "Selling your business doesn't have to be a bumpy process."

BY STEVE SKRLAC MBA, CFA

f you want to sell your business, there are some tips that you might consider to help you have a successful transaction. Selling a business requires discipline, a sound strategy and experienced advisors. While these tips certainly won't guarantee that your business will be sold, they are some good points for you to think about.

#### 1. Prepare yourself personally for the sale

Think about the challenge that is involved in selling a business. The transaction is much different than a real estate deal and it does involve patience and perseverance. Are you truly ready for the work that is involved to sell your business? A business sale can rank among one of life's most stressful activities so be sure that you are up for the task.

#### 2. Prepare your business for the sale

One of the biggest issues that confounds business owners is that they do not properly plan a clear exit strategy early on. Talk to your chartered accountant and lawyer, get your financial documentation in order, record all of your "cash" sales, renovate if necessary, and so on. Also, if you can implement some strategies to improve growth or profitability, do so. It is better to show actual growth to buyers instead of simply talking about the theoretical future "potential" of a business.

#### 3. Don't wait too long to sell your business

Selling your business while it is still growing or while it still has much upside left is advisable. Too often, business owners wait a few years too long, past the point that they "should have sold" and realize that the value for their business may have declined. Timing is everything—especially in a business sale.

#### 4. Run your business properly

Don't lose focus when you list your business for sale. Selling a business is a time-consuming process and it is possible to focus so much attention on

the process and neglect the actual business that is being sold. Think about working with a business broker to sell your company so that you can focus on the operations.

#### 5. Be reasonable about the selling price

It is one thing to get as much value as you can from your business—it is quite another to be unrealistic about the selling price. Talk to your advisors to get a sense of what a fair selling price is. A business broker, a chartered business valuator or a C.A. can help you with this. They might even give you some advice to increase the company's value. Simply setting a high price on your business and waiting for a buyer to come along and purchase it is not a sound strategy.

#### 6. Be flexible during negotiations

Be flexible during the sale negotiation and try to compromise on the items that aren't deal breakers for you. For instance, if the selling price is an issue for the buyer then perhaps you might offer some vendor financing to make the deal workable for both sides. The point is, be prepared to budge on deal points that you are willing to bend on and offer creative ways to add value to your purchase. Give and take is a good approach to take.

Selling a business is a process that many business owners are unclear of. Work with a business broker and your lawyer and accountant to assist you through the transaction and help you avoid costly mistakes. You'll find that with the right help and planning, selling your business doesn't have to be a bumpy process. BL

If you are a business owner and have questions about the business sale process, I'd be delighted to help you. Please call or send me an email.

Steve Skrlac, MBA, CFA is the broker of record for Keystone Business Brokers Inc., Brokerage. He can be reached at 905.592.1525 or by email at steve@keystonebusiness.ca. For more information visit www.keystonebusiness.ca.

### **Discipline Drives** your Brand



Continued from page 1

...harmonized thoughts. This allows you to get into flow and learn how to balance your energy levels. Person-

ally, I find the morning the best time for me. I love getting up with enthusiasm before the world is awake. It is my time to get myself mentally and physically focused organized and ready to face new and exciting challenges. My morning routine also provides me with the physical and mental energy needed to stimulate creativity. I actually find sleeping in makes me more tired. My routine starts with a twenty minute run followed by another twenty minutes of muscle conditioning followed by a meditation exercise. I encourage you to start tomorrow. You will feel great and be surprised at what you will be able to achieve with this type of daily disciplined conditioning.

The second attribute to discipline is: Passion—If you're not passionate about what you are doing, how can you expect to engage anyone around you?

As you start to form new habits you will be in a better position to manifest the things that you want most. Your mind is more in tune and ready to accept the transformation. This creative principle is also geared towards helping you laser focus on the things that you want most in life. Incorporating daily discipline is a very powerful principle in your personal transformation tool box. BL

Gerry Visca is an international speaker, author, creative director and a creative inspiration to over 100,000 people worldwide. For more information contact Redchair Branding® Inc. at 905.528.6032, email gerry@redchairbranding.com or visit www.gerryvisca.com and www.redchairbranding.com.





## **SIP TRUNKS...**

# The future in telecommunications services.

BY PHIL MOSTERT

IP Trunks are a new way to connect to an old network. SIP trunks connect an IP PBX phone system to the traditional phone network (Public Switched Telephone Network or PSTN), just like Business Lines and PRIs. They also can connect to other IP PBX systems using the internet. This is a pretty simple description but there are many levels of confusion as to what that really means. Despite the confusion, the real question for most of us is really this: what value does it bring our organization?

The first way to understand what SIP trunks are and how they can work for you is to segment them into service provider SIP Trunks and Wide Area Network (WAN) SIP Trunks. With service provider SIP Trunks, there are service providers who use the internet to deliver dial tone and service providers who use their own private networks to do so. There are literally hundreds of providers (for the most part small organizations), who use the internet, but very few of the traditional phone Telecom companies are actively selling SIP Trunks. The Shaws and other Telecom companies of the world, who do sell SIP Trunks, use their own private networks to connect their customers to the PSTN. The Telecom providers adhere to the PSTN system guidelines such as enhanced, or location based 911, as well as directory details and long distance boundaries. Internet-based providers do not. The internet-based providers have had some success but for the most part, have not captured any significant market share with quality of service and interoperability being the main problem. Massive user adoption will take place when the Telecom providers can deliver a reliable IP based (read SIP) connection at a cost-effective price with enhanced feature sets.

WAN SIP Trunks are connections between IP PBX systems within the same organization. A company with multiple locations would look at their branch

offices and use their own networks or the internet to consolidate dial tone. This technology has been around for a number of years and has been relatively successful in reducing cost and increasing functionality. For the most part, however, the vast majority of these companies still have a traditional cluster of Business Lines or PRIs to connect to the PSTN. The head office would have the bank of phone lines and the branches would use those same lines, but are located remotely. Think of a sprinkler connected to your home; it is outside your home, but uses a hose to connect to the home water system. The internet represents the hose and the home represents the head office connected to the phone lines.

The primary reason as to why the WAN SIP Trunk works well is this: a company with a WAN environment phone system, is from a specific vendor such as Cisco Systems, Avaya, etc. When you have Cisco or Avaya communicating with Cisco or Avaya phones in the branches, they all speak the same language. Each vendor, until recently, had their own version of what the SIP language meant. When companies tried to mix vendors and connect them all together prior to this ratification, there were inevitable problems, such as calls being answered but not being able to disconnect.

So what's different now? The answer is that the vendors have ratified a common version of SIP. This means that interoperability is much less of an issue for IP phone systems. This means that the Telecom Company's switch can now effectively communicate with the customers PBX and connect to the PSTN in the same reliable fashion that they do today with Business Lines and PRIs.

Service Provider SIP Trunks are still not a common offering from most of the Telecom Companies but it will be in the near future. Service Provider SIP Trunking offers benefits like overflow calling, direct inward dialing, flexibility with how many talk paths you have, and other things that can reduce cost and enhance the functionality of your IP phone system. Whatever provider you choose, make sure they have done the interoperability testing with all the major hardware vendors and have a list of customers who use the service. This will ensure a good experience and a healthy business relationship. **B**L

Phil Mostert is manager for Shaw Business in Ontario. For more information call 905.667.7453 or 1.877.SHAWBIZ, email phil.mostert@sjrb.ca or visit www.shaw.ca.





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## WHAT IS THE CLOUD?

BY RYAN BARICHELLO

he simplest way to think of the cloud is to think of it as a utility like hydro. When you plug a device into a wall outlet, electricity flows. You didn't produce the electricity yourself. In fact, you probably don't know, and don't care where the electricity was generated. It's just always there when you need it.

The "cloud" works in a very similar fashion. Through an internet connection (equivalent to a plug in the wall for electricity), you can access your business' apps. How this software gets to you, stored, and works doesn't matter for most businesses. The thing that matters most is that it works great and benefits their business—just like electricity.

There's a multitude of benefits in using the cloud. To keep with our hydro analogy, if your IT department does not run on a cloud, it's using its own hydro generator which is risky. Electricity generators can break, leak oil, they're required to be regularly maintained, and if the service engineer is sick or hires someone new, it could suffer. Since the costs of expanding and maintaining a cloud service is spread over the entire client base of the service, a quality and cost-effective service is possible. **B**L

For more information contact Ryan Barichello at 905.385.0536, email ryan.barichello@linxsmart.com or visit www.linxsmart.com.



# THE FIVE WS AND H OF INDEMNITIES

"...don't think that because you've seen one, you know them all."



BY MOIRA WALLACE B.A, M.A, LL.B

eople see an indemnity clause in a contract and their eyes glaze over. The clause is one whole sentence that is ten

lines long, clear as mud and not well understood by the parties signing it. Here are some basics you should know:

- What: An indemnity is a promise to make good on losses or damages suffered by another person, as a result of your contractual relationship with Party X. You are expected to compensate Party X for your actions or inaction, whether negligent or wilful, which causes a loss. If you do subcontract work for Party X and forget to add a screw to a furnace that later blows up, the furnace owner will sue Party X, who will expect you to pay the furnace owner's damages.
- Who: The indemnity is always meant to protect Party X. Ideally, you should ask for a reciprocal indemnity from Party X, which would protect you from Party X's actions that cause loss or damage to you. Unless you are solely responsible for and have control over the goods or services you provide, an indemnity clause should make both parties responsible for their respective negligence, actions and inaction. Otherwise, you assume liability for risk beyond your control.
- Where: Wherever your product or service goes, so too does your indemnity. Party X may be sued by anyone with whom it connects your products or service. If you indemnify your landlord, make sure the indemnity relates to space over which you have control and responsibility. You shouldn't indemnify the landlord for incidents in the parking lot, if the landlord is responsible for snow removal and hasn't complied with its obligations.
- When: The indemnity comes into play once Party

X suffers a loss or damage itself or a third party sues Party X because of damages it suffered. Your obligation can last the term of the contract or for a number of years after the agreement ends. It's best to limit the time and your exposure.

- Why: No one wants to pay for losses they didn't cause or weren't responsible for. Indemnities are meant to transfer liability from Party X back to you because you caused the event that resulted in damages. If you manufactured a faulty product sold through a distribution agreement, Party X who only sold the product will want to transfer its responsibility back to you if sued. If Party X alters the product in any way before sale, you'll want the reciprocal indemnity, in case its alterations were the cause or partial cause of the damages.
- How: Commercial General Liability insurance covers losses you or a third party suffers as a result of your goods, services, actions or negligence. It may not cover Party X's negligence, which caused damage to a third party but for which you gave an indemnity. You supply product to Party X that has an expiration date, but Party X sells it after expiry and injures the customer. If your CGL policy doesn't protect you from Party X's negligence, you'll be stuck paying those losses out of your own pocket because of the indemnity.

Indemnities can vary, so don't think that because you've seen one, you know them all. It's best to have a lawyer review the indemnity, so she can guide you through the snakes and ladders of exposure, risks and liability contained within it. Don't get bitten because you didn't understand what you read. **BL** 

For more information please contact Moira Wallace BA, MA, LLB, Chief Loophole Advisor and Notary Public at 905.575.0732, email moira@wallacelaw.ca or visit Moira's website at www.wallacelaw.ca.



# IS IT POSSIBLE?

"The 'anything is possible person' stands out. A rare bird. Based on Einstein and Edison, we could conclude that they do amazing things."



#### BY DENNIS O'NEILL

instein and Edison both worked in the patent office for several years while they were young men. What does

that tell us? Those were the formative years. It answers the question...where did they learn their creative mindset that was different from the average Joe?

#### Learning a different outlook

In the patent office you would see patents come across your desk every day for things that no one thought could be done. Day after day you find that there really is a way to do something. In time their thinking transformed. Surely they adopted the mindset of "anything is possible."

"Can we start acting with the mindset that 'all things are possible?' Where would you apply it?"

#### **Doing great things**

The "anything is possible person" stands out. A rare bird. Based on Einstein and Edison, we could conclude that they do amazing things.

We just lost an "anything is possible person." Steve Jobs. Just about everything he did couldn't be done. But look what he produced. He told his team to do something, not to come up with reasons it couldn't be done.

John F. Kennedy said in 1961..."I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth."

#### A new thinking system

We may not all want to go and work in the patent office. How else can we change our mindset?

What do you program into your mind? What do you watch? What do you read or listen to? Do you surround yourself with "anything is possible" people?

Can we start acting with the mindset that "all things are possible?" Where would you apply it? In your life? In your business? In your leadership? In your many activities?

Is anything impossible? You should have asked Steve Jobs.  ${\bf R}\! {\it L}$ 

Dennis O'Neill is The Business Growth Coach. For more information on how to grow your business please call 905.641.8777, email dennis@dennisoneillcoach.com or visit www.dennisoneillcoach.com.

## **ENTREPRENEURS HAVE NO REGRETS**

Insight on Entrepreneurship provided by CFIB (THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS)

If I had the opportunity to go back in time, I would choose to go into business again (% response)

AGREE » 83%

DISAGREE 12% | DON'T KNOW 5%

Source: CFIB, Point of View survey on CFIB's 40th Anniversary, December 2010 (8,901 responses) Running a business has been a rewarding career choice.

(% response)

AGREE > 92%

DISAGREE 7% | DON'T KNOW 1%

Source: CFIB, Point of View survey on CFIB's 40th Anniversary December 2010 (8,901 responses) I would encourage young people to go into business today.

(% response)

AGREE » **78%** 

DISAGREE 18% | DON'T KNOW 4%

Source: CFIB, Point of View survey on CFIB's 40th Anniversary, December 2010 (8,901 responses)







#### **BUSINESS SALE AND ACQUISITION EXPERT**

QUESTION

#### I want to sell my business how much is it worth?

ANSWER

One of the most confusing (and important) issues when selling a business is coming up with the selling price. Setting the selling price too high might discourage buyers from enquiring about the listing. Setting a selling price that is too low is not good in that you might be leaving money on the table.

Here are some things to consider when trying to determine what your company is worth:

- 1. Talk to a business broker that is active in the marketplace. A business broker is a professional that assists his or her clients sell their business. If you would like to get an idea of where the marketplace is today for your particular business, a broker should be able to give you their opinion of price. A seasoned business broker should also be able to give you examples of recent sales activity and what other companies sold for that might be similar to yours.
- 2. Get professional advice. It's always a good idea to talk to a professional advisor when selling your business. When you do, make sure that the person has the right background and experience to help you. For example—if you work with your C.A. find out how much experience they have in business sales or if they have additional credentials such as the chartered business valuator (CBV) designation.
- **3. Think about the potential your business has.** A business buyer certainly cares about the past performance of a business but also cares deeply about its future potential. Think about new opportunities or investments into the business that can yield a return. This is important information for buyers need to know and can build value into your business.

One thing that nearly all buyers have in common is that they will not buy an overpriced business. By putting an unrealistic selling price on your business you will have fewer enquiries and the prospects that you do get will probably walk away rather than putting forward an offer. Most buyers will be comparing your business to several others and if it is overpriced they will stop considering it at a very early stage.

For a **FREE** 1-hour consultation on selling a business contact Steve Skrlac. **B**L

tel: 905.592.1525 steve@KeystoneBusiness.ca 541 Brant Street, Suite 8, Burlington ON www.KeystoneBusiness.ca

Keystone Business Brokers Inc., Brokerage | Steve Skrlac – Broker of Record



Darryl A. Willer

#### FAMILY LAW EXPERT

DUESTION

I'm paying child support every month, and my ex wants extra help for hockey and daycare. Do I have to pay more than the monthly amount?

ANSWER

Basic child support is calculated using tables in the Federal Child Support Guidelines, and is usually a simple calculation. This is

meant to cover the basic necessities of living, such as food, clothing and housing, based on the payor parent's income. A further contribution may be required for special and extraordinary expenses. Contributions are usually proportional to the parents' respective incomes.

Special expenses for younger children include expenses for daycare, medical and dental insurance premiums, and health-related expenses that aren't covered by insurance. Extraordinary expenses include private school tuition and tutoring and extracurricular expenses. A court has discretion to award extraordinary expenses based on whether the expense is a reasonable one, considering all the circumstances of the children and the parents.

When children get older, special expenses will also include expenses for post-secondary education. These may continue after the child is eighteen, and can be quite costly. In some cases when children are living away from home, regular child support may decrease, and payments may be made directly to the children or their school.

In most cases, it is in the recipient parent's interest to request a contribution from the payor parent before the expense is incurred, and to consult the payor in decisions about special and extraordinary expenses. **B**L

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Kyle Melko, RIBO

#### LICENSED INSURANCE BROKER

OUESTION

I live in a rural community. Shouldn't I be paying less for Home and Auto insurance compared to someone from the city?

ANSWER

Generally, due to higher rates of vandalism, theft, and accidents, people living in urban areas pay more for insurance than those in small towns or rural areas. However, more than just your address, or what you drive, affects your rates.

If you feel you're paying too much for home, auto, or commercial insurance, whether you live in a rural or urban area, try these six tips in order to lower your premium:

- $\textbf{1.} \ \ \text{Package all your insurance with one company. Discounts range from 5-15\%.}$
- 2. Make your Broker/Agent aware of your lifestyle. There are discounts for retirees, certain professions & associations, non-commuters, etc.
- **3.** Shop Around! Although it is not advisable to constantly be jumping from company to company, if considerable savings can be made, it may be worth the switch.
- 4. Ask your Broker to review your policy: Hamilton and especially the surrounding communities have recently become very competitive with some companies.
- 5. Improve your business security: Having a monitored fire and burglar alarm system on your property may gain you access to more competitive markets. These systems aren't cheap, but can save you money long-term. Before you buy such a system, find out what your insurer recommends, how much the device would cost and how much you would save in premium.
- 6. Consult an Expert. **R**L

tel: 905.643.8000 ext: 204 kylem@acumeninsurance.com 589 Barton Street, Suite 202, Stoney Creek, ON www.acumeninsurance.com



#### BRANDING AND MARKETING EXPERT

QUESTION .....

## What is the minimum recommendation for marketing your business?

Jim Albanese

President

You don't need to invest a fortune to market your business. Here are some key steps to get you started.

- **1.** A professional website it is likely the first place prospects will look to find you or to learn about your business.
- 2. Business cards and a corporate brochure that you would be proud to hand out!
- $\textbf{3. Choose a local business organization like the Chamber of Commerce} \\ \textbf{--network and get involved}.$
- **4.** Social Media Facebook, Twitter, Blogs—"low cost" and effective for staying in touch and building relationships.
- 5. Eblast and Electronic Newsletter connect with people who already know and trust you with relevant information and specific call to action offers.
- **6.** Hosting an event is an effective way to engage clients and prospects, where they can appreciate your hospitality and get to know you and your business.
- $\textbf{7. Contact Albanese Branding}-our \ team \ of \ Marketing \ Experts \ can \ help \ you!$

Building Exceptional Brands and Marketing for Greater Success.  ${\bf R}\!\!\!\!\!L$ 

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## IS A FRANCHISE FOR YOU?

"A franchise does not guarantee success...You need to be sure you are comfortable following the franchise rules."

### SUBMITTED BY THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF ONTARIO

rom coffee and fast food to cleaning services and hair salons—franchises are everywhere. If you want to run your own business, a franchise offers many positive benefits including brand recognition, training and support.

"However, franchises aren't guaranteed to succeed and they're not for everyone," says Fellow Chartered Accountant Marvin Martenfeld, a partner with MNP LLP in Markham. Here are Martenfeld's tips on how to determine whether a franchise is right for you:

Understand the difference between a franchise and a non-franchise business — "A franchise is a business already established by someone," he explains. "That person has developed a brand and a following. Businesses that work best as franchises are ones that can be easily replicated in other locations and maintain their success."

Be prepared to follow the rules – "The person who established the franchise has developed an operations manual covering every aspect of the business operation," says Martenfeld. "The fran-

chise agreement spells out that the franchisee must follow the operations manual. So franchises are not a good fit for entrepreneurs who want to do things their way."

**Recognize the pros and cons** – "The pros of a franchise are that the business is already out there, is recognized and is a proven success," says Martenfeld. "As well, because the operations manual is

"Businesses that work best as franchises are ones that can be easily replicated in other locations and *maintain* their success."

in place, you can get up and running immediately, the learning curve is short and you are likely to make fewer mistakes." The biggest con, Martenfeld adds, is the lack of opportunity to be creative. "Another possible con is that some franchisors require you to purchase all your products through their company instead of from local suppliers."

**Do your homework** – "A good starting point is

the disclosure statement from the franchisor, which will include the franchise's financial position, how many franchises have opened and how many have closed," advises Martenfeld. "If some have closed, ask why." In addition to researching the franchise on the internet, Martenfeld suggests speaking to existing franchisees. "You would be surprised how open they are and how much you can learn by listening to a franchisee, especially an unhappy one." Many franchises also have franchisee councils. "If there is one, try to connect with it," adds Martenfeld.

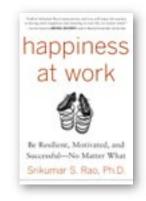
**Figure out what you can afford** – "A franchisor will expect you to invest some of your own money," says Martenfeld. "Typically, there are three types of payments involved: the initial franchise fee; a royalty paid to the franchisor, based on revenues; and an allowance paid to the franchisor for local and regional marketing."

Know yourself — "A franchise does not guarantee success," says Martenfeld. "You need to be sure you are comfortable following the franchise rules. Be prepared for long hours and hard work." 

▶
✓

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#### **BOOK REVIEW BY JOHN STORM**



#### **HAPPINESS AT WORK**

By Srikumar Rao McGraw-Hill Publishers

n a similar theme as the book described above, Happiness at Work offers a different perspective on our attitude. In essence, Rao says we often fall into the trap of thinking we will be happier with a new car, home or computer. An 18-year-old young man might be delighted to have a 15-year-old car that barely starts. When he turns 50, he's not happy until he has his Mercedes, and later might even want a Ferrari—and still not be happy. What is strong in this book is the call for personal accountability. I recently spoke with the president of the University of Western Ontario and he said our schools must do much more to teach responsibility. We live at a time when many young people feel entitled to the iPod or the university degree. They will soon discover the real world in a tough economy will demand they are held accountable personally for their own wealth and happiness. **B**L

#### **ASK THE EXPERT**



#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EXPERT

QUESTION

## What does our company have to consider when getting into social media?

ANSWE

Social media presents unprecedented business opportunities for marketing, customer service, brand building, and consumer relationships.

An astute organization will put together a policy for dealing with these new media opportunities. In general, such a policy should guide your employees and protect your

organization and your customers from risk. Note that you should have a social media policy regardless of whether or not your business is actively engaged. While it's not necessary to develop best practices for each of the dozens of social media outlets, you should have one for each of Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Every employee is a PR person, and it only takes one rogue Tweet or Facebook post to unravel your brand image. Without the proper resources to educate employees how to represent your organization on the social web, your social media policy is useless.

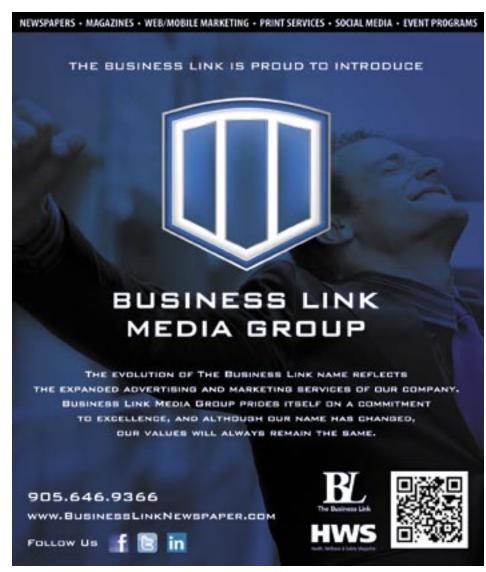
There are monitoring tools of various degrees of sophistication. Regardless of which you use, monitoring is a must for everything from shaping consumer sentiment about your brand to heading off a potential PR crisis. Your company should also have a crisis management plan outlining how to deliver a quick and appropriate response to any negative blogs or events.

The social media landscape is evolving at lightning speed, and your policies and best practices should evolve right along with it.

Feel free to contact us about this and other computer related issues.  ${I\!\!L}$ 

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# PRODUCTIVITY AND INNOVATION—BUZZWORDS OR REALITY?

"Daniel Goleman author of Emotional Intelligence (EI) argues that almost two-thirds of the success of any initiative is based on the EI of the individuals involved—almost twice the impact of IQ and expertise."

#### BY DEBRA PICKFIELD

t's rather discouraging when you realize that words and concepts you passionately believe in such as productivity, innovation, creativity and collaboration are considered to be buzzwords by most, and therefore can be/should be/must be ig-

nored. You want to shout "No, these are real words with great potential." But the screams would be heard as blah, blah, blah—so I zip it and soldier on thinking, "There has to be a way to break through this buzzword perspective."

One friend clarified for me that productivity means how efficiently they booked their meetings.

Well, yes, in a valuable way our efficiency contributes to productivity, but how we learn and problem solve together (yes, that is innovation) can have far more impact than whether I shorten my travel times.

Daniel Goleman author of Emotional Intelligence (E.I.) argues that almost two-thirds of the success of any initiative is based on the E.I. of the individu-

als involved—almost twice the impact of I.Q. and expertise. If this is even close to being true, how we engage with each other to solve challenges and opportunities has a significant impact on the success of an initiative. It sounds so simple and obvious—but it's the component that is easily ignored. We presume we know how to play in the sandbox together.

Often we think that by designing a strategic plan complete with objectives and tactics the initiative will work. The reality is most initiatives are not completed to the satisfaction of the individuals and the organization—ask the authors of Fake Work who state that 87% of workers are not satisfied with the results of their work. Commitment runs into roadblocks when people are frustrated with the experience, project or colleagues. The vision, passion and energy begin to dissipate, and the project if and when it's completed is half-hearted or dies a slow death. Should we even be surprised?

"Innovation is only a buzzword if you want it to be. Labeling innovation subtly provides permission to keep ignoring how to do things differently. We need courage to start naming things as we see it..."

One of the conditions for success of any initiative requires focused attention on how each of us engages with each other and the team. It needs the commitment and input from everyone and the time and opportunity to listen and consider the insights. Watch for the cliques (well, if they say it I'll just agree since I'm in good company); watch for people who dominate with their personality (all talk no action); and watch for people who hold back since they are quiet or reluctant to share their insights (or perhaps hiding from taking a risk). It requires wisdom by the team to discern what is going on in-between the spaces—talk is cheap, yet meetings are constantly filled with people asserting their opinions and not necessarily sharing their knowledge and wisdom.

Innovation is only a buzzword if you want it to be. Labeling innovation subtly provides permission to keep ignoring how to do things differently. We need courage to start naming things as we see it (cliques, biases and judgement) and being open and respectful about resetting long and established ways of interacting. It will have bumps along the way...that's the messiness of human engagement, but we guarantee that attention and accountability to the way we engage with each other...definitely will have an impact.

For those of you shaking their heads, next month we'll discuss Kumbaya. Until then, THiNK well.  ${\bf B}\!{\bf L}$ 

Debra Pickfield is the owner of Thinkspot located at 492 Locust Street, Burlington. For more information call 905.639.1314, email debra@thinkspot.ca or visit www.thinkspotburlington.com.



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## **MONTH IN REVIEW**



Check out The Business Link online as we bring you headlines and breaking news stories straight from your community!

#### February 21st, 2012

#### Fluke Growing in New Port Home

Press Release via BusinessLinkHamilton.com

Well-known Hamilton trucking and warehousing company Fluke Transportation Group has expanded into a new home on the city's port lands. A 10-year lease agreement with the Hamilton Port Authority (HPA) for a property at 450 Sherman Avenue North ensures the growing transportation company can continue to prosper in the city where it originated.

#### February 17th, 2012

## Dodge Caravan Kids Cup Family Hockey Day Hits Copps Coliseum

Press Release via BusinessLinkHamilton.com

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) in conjunction with Alliance Hockey will host the Dodge Caravan Kids Cup Family Hockey Day on Monday, February 20th at Copps Coliseum in Hamilton. The day will be packed with hockey and many special events for everyone in the family.

#### February 16th, 2012

## **Burlington Chamber President on Board of Provincial Organization**

Press Release via BusinessLinkHamilton.com

Keith Hoey, the president of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, has been elected to the Board of Directors for the Chamber Executives of Ontario. Chamber Executives of Ontario (CEO) is the professional development association for the senior management and membership development staff of Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade in Ontario.

#### February 8th, 2012

#### Ford Celebrates Valentine's Day by Offering Tips on How To Keep Automotive Affairs Healthy and Strong

Press Release via BusinessLinkHamilton.com

This Valentine's Day, the Ford Motor Company of Canada Limited is reminding Canadians of the importance of showing their vehicle tender love and care to ensure a happy, healthy and long-lasting relationship.

#### February 7th, 2012

## Hamilton Rotary Clubs Honour Local Community Leaders

Press Release via BusinessLinkHamilton.com

Join the Rotary Clubs of Hamilton on Wednesday, February 15, 2012 at 6 pm for an evening of celebration to award the prestigious Paul Harris Awards to the deserving local community leaders Dana Robbins, Julie Brooks, Duane Dahl and Marita Zaffiro at Michelangelo's Banquet Centre, hosted by Connie Smith.

#### February 3rd, 2012

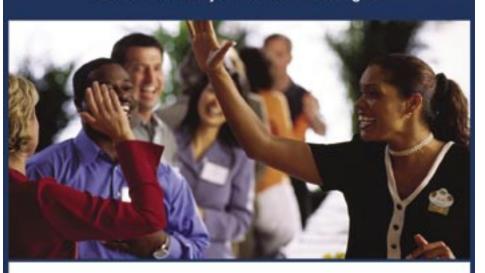
## Growth of Ontario VQA Wine – KPMG Study

Press Release via BusinessLinkHamilton.com

"It is a testament to the quality of grapes grown in Ontario, the competitiveness of our wineries and sales channels such as the LCBO that we continue to successfully grow the VQA market", stated Patrick Gedge, president and CEO of WGAO. "VQA represents an important 25% of Ontario wine sales, along with the 75% of sales generated by International Canadian Blend (ICB) wines."



## Executive Education at the DeGroote School of Business welcomes Disney Institute to Burlington





Are you ready to bring clarity to your business? To begin a new era of focused leadership that will inspire excellence throughout your organization? Then you're ready to D'Think. Bring your business challenges and we will show you a clear, simplified way of looking at the problems and seeing what's probably already right in front of you – easy, effective solutions. With Disney Institute, you can learn to think differently. Are you ready?

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Select and hire right-fit employees
Develop a service philosophy | Retain customers for life
Create a collaborative culture

Executive Education
at the DeGroote School of Business
welcomes Disney Institute to
the Burlington Convention Centre
execed.degroote.mcmaster.ca/disney
April 25, 2012
8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
\$495.00 + HST

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#### Register Today! Space is Limited.

YOU CAN WIN AN UNFORGETTABLE 3.5-DAY DISNEY INSTITUTE PROGRAM AT THE WALT DISNEY WORLD, RESORT IN FLORIDA!

## WOMEN WHO MEAN BUSINESS

On March 8th, International Women's Day was celebrated around the globe—a tradition that represents over ninety years of development and success for women worldwide. Across these pages we showcase local women in our business community with our annual "Women Who Mean Business" feature. These successful women come from many walks of life—whether it's managers, administrators, sales representatives or entrepreneurs. All of them have demonstrated a clear sense of purpose, a desire to be different, and a drive to be the best. This feature is our way of saying "congratulations!" to all the hardworking women that help make the Hamilton-Halton community such a rewarding place to work and live.

#### Carrie Della Luna

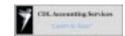
President
CDL Accounting Services



## What internal motivation drives you to succeed?

People I know and admire who, by example, have worked hard and demonstrated leadership, accomplishment and involvement in the community have been my role models. I respect them for their vision and fortitude and continually strive to develop similar traits, and my own goals, through higher education, personal study, training and experience. I believe that if you love what you do, take pride in it and maintain a positive attitude that success will follow. If motivated, we all have the power within ourselves to create and change our lives. I was fortunate to be raised by an exceptional role model and plan to carry it forward.

tel: 289.235.7770 623 South Service Rd., Suite 5, Grimsby carrie@cdl-accounting.com www.cdl-accounting.com



#### Anna Moldavski ca

Tax Manager Wade Group Professional Services



## What internal motivation drives you to succeed?

I believe that doing what you love and being honest to your true self is the key to success.

As the oldest of three children, I took pride in being resourceful at a young age—whether it was about making my own lunches or helping with grocery shopping. The sense of accomplishment made me happy and motivated me to do more.

Years later, as a CA and a tax professional, I still thrive on that sense of accomplishment. I don't have a job. I have a passion for creating meaningful results for people and my work allows me to turn it into reality every day. Helping clients see around the corner, make strategic decisions and grow their businesses gives me so much joy, that work is way more fun than work to me!

tel: 905.333.9888 ext. 153 602-1122 International Blvd., Burlington amoldavski@wadegroup.ca www.wadegroup.ca



#### Heidi Cowie RSW

Therapist | Author | Motivational Speaker Heidi Cowie: Moving You Forward



## What internal motivation drives you to succeed?

As a longtime therapist and motivation speaker, the motivation that drives me to succeed is knowing that I'm making a difference in a person's life. Over my career, I've coached, educated, inspired and counseled literally thousands of people to move from a state of struggle to a state of peace, acceptance and hope. My life and my business are guided by my belief in leading with authenticity, creating relationships that produce positive results, being true to myself and others, and treating every person I meet with integrity and honesty. I love what I create and I create what I love.

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#### **Lesley Matthewson**

Lawyer | Mediator Family Law Solutions



## What advice would you give to other women starting in business?

Lesley Matthewson is the founder of Family Law Solutions, a law and mediation practice limited to negotiation of Family Law disputes. She established Family Law Solutions, located at 911 Golf Links Road in Ancaster, in 2004 after practicing law with a leading Hamilton law firm for 18 years. Lesley helps clients take a constructive, respective and caring approach to separation and divorce. Lesley recommends that new entrepreneurs seek the expertise of other professionals for special needs, like web design, advertising/marketing and financial expertise. These experts help manage the challenges of business start-up and development. Even a professional advisor needs business advice!

tel: 905.648.3616 911 Golf Links Rd., Suite 206, Ancaster Imatthewson@bellnet.ca www.familylawsolutions.net



#### **Jennifer Comeau**

Advertising Account Executive Business Link Media Group



## What advice would you give to other women starting in business?

As a young professional starting out, my advice to anyone would be to persevere and maintain a positive attitude. You can't lose or fail when you put forth an honest attempt. Learn as you go, and refine your skills as you develop them. More importantly, take ownership and always hold yourself accountable for your actions. The secret to my progression is that I consistently write out my goals and stick to them. I also surround myself with like-minded people and drop "Negative Nancies" in my life like anchors. Check up from the neck up and press on because you are fabulous!

tel: 905.646.9366 36 Hiscott St., Suite 200, St. Catharines jenn@businesslinknewspaper.com www.businesslinknewspaper.com



#### Moira Wallace BA MA LLB

Chief Loophole Advisor | Notary Public Wallace Law Professional Corporation



## What internal motivation drives you to succeed?

Be true to and believe in yourself. I started my own law practice with the odds against me: the economy burst in 2009, I was an in-house lawyer with no clients, a newly separated single mom of a three year old child and unsure how I would make ends meet. It was scary. But I was determined to prove to myself, my daughter, my ex and the world, I could be self-sufficient. I discovered the world of entrepreneurship and support systems within it. I developed my own identity and an unconventional way to practice law. I'm good at what I do, I enjoy my work and my clients benefit from my strong will. Looking back, I wouldn't change a thing; except maybe, believed in my capabilities sooner.

tel: 905.575.0732 info@wallacelaw.ca www.wallacelaw.ca

#### wallace law

#### Sandy Alfonsi

Chief Executive Officer Financial Wellness Centre



## What advice would you give to other women starting in business?

It's important to believe in yourself—and don't let anything stand in the way of realizing your dream. There's nothing more gratifying than being able to see your dream become a reality. Having a clear vision in mind will allow you to tailor your life and strive to reach what you're capable of achieving. Build a clear business plan and work it. Most of all—be clear with your mission and make decisions that support your objectives. Focus, persevere and take calculated risks. Don't fear failure. The harder you work, the luckier you'll be in the long run. There's no such thing as chance.

tel: 905.381.9210 236 Pritchard Rd., Hamilton sandy.alfonsi@fwchamilton.ca www.fwchamilton.ca



#### Anne Campagna & Marilyn Gouchie

Co-Owners
Cupcakes of Westdale Village



## What advice would you give to other women starting in business?

If you're passionate about what you're doing in life, you'll always succeed. Don't be afraid to start a second career later in life because you can apply the skills you earned in your first career to jump start your second. You can also use the valuable skills you've gained in life to your best advantage. Just make sure you fully understand your customers' specific needs so you can satisfy people and turn them into repeat customers. Don't be afraid to follow your passion because it can be a very rewarding experience. That old adage is true: "Do what you love and the money will follow."

tel: 905.308.8484 1050 King St., W., Hamilton cupcakes@bellnet.ca www.westdalecupcakes.com



#### **Julie Entwistle**

Occupational Therapist | Owner Entwistle Health Solutions



## What steps do you take to strike a work/life balance?

As a mother of four, small business owner, volunteer, and MBA student, achieving balance can be difficult. However, over time I have learned three key principles that allow me to manage the demands of my life while promoting my health, happiness and success: 1. Exercise. Exercise provides me with the energy and positive attitude I need to maximize every day. 2. Self-discipline. I stick to the schedule I create for myself and avoid wasting time on unproductive things. 3. Organization. Being organized allows me to efficiently find what I need when I need it.

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#### Melissa Heffernan BA

Sales Representative
Sutton Group – Innovative Realty Inc. Brokerage
Independently Owned and Operated



# (O)

## What advice would you give to other women starting in business?

In a word BELIEVE. Always believe in yourself. Surround yourself with positive, accomplished people, who you admire, people who believe in you. A strong support system may consist of your family, friends, colleagues, or your professor, someone who will encourage you, to re-motivate you when your goal seems impossible, what I call a quick "Ego Boost." Don't be intimidated by the project or task at hand, embrace it, learn about it, and always ask questions from those in your industry who have more experience and can give you constructive answers to your questions, based on their experience. Gaining knowledge from others in your industry is an extremely invaluable asset for you and your career. The most important rule for anyone in business is the Golden Rule "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

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# YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Sponsored By Mitchell & Abbott Group Insurance Brokers Limited

### Kimberly Hall

Sales Representative | RE/MAX Garden City Realty Inc., Brokerage Burlington South

#### BY SCOTT LESLIE

The Business Link

#### SL: How did you first get started in the real estate field?

KH: It had always been a passion of mine and interested me throughout university. I decided that if I was still thinking about it two years out of school then I would pursue getting my license and here I am!

SL: What do you feel are some of the benefits that clients can expect from working with a leading real estate firm like RE/MAX? KH: RE/MAX appealed to me in the first place because it's a professional environment and they have years and years of experience. This company in particular spends a lot of time offering specialized training to their agents, and clients really feel the benefit of that. They encourage everyone to continually raise the bar.



KIMBERLY HALL
RE/MAX Garden City Inc.

#### SL: What are some of the real strengths of RE/MAX?

KH: From a buying or selling perspective, RE/MAX has great brand power. The company spends a lot of time and effort on advertising and making sure that consumers are as confident with the brand as its sales associates are. RE/MAX has a great reputation because its sales team strives to be the most educated and experienced. In my first year with the company, I was paired up with a mentor and did additional training while starting out my business. It gave me the tools to confidently move forward on my own, which a lot of other brokerages don't take the time to do.

#### SL: Tell me a little bit about your duties at RE/MAX. What's the average day look like for you?

**KH**: What's great about real estate is every day is different. Most of our mornings start in the office and can go anywhere from open houses and showings to home inspections or offers and negotiations.

### SL: You've recently marked your one-year anniversary of working as a sales representative. What are some of the biggest lessons you've learned since you first started?

KH: There is always a way to fine tune your business. Things are always changing in this industry, and if you approach it with honesty and knowledge, people really take note of that.

#### SL: What do you love most about working in real estate?

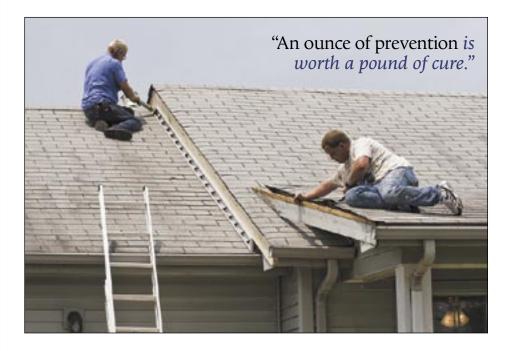
KH: I love that real estate is always a challenge and I constantly get to work with new people doing something that I love. I'm always setting new goals and discovering something different that I love about it! **B**L

 $\textit{Kimberly Hall can be reached at 905.633.4629, kimberly} \\ \texttt{Meremax-gc.com or www.remax-gc.com}.$ 



# PREVENTING WATER DAMAGE

Why take a chance? Learn where your home is most likely to suffer water damage, and what you can do to help prevent it.



#### BY TOM GRAVES C.I.P., C.C.I.B.

amage from water is one of the leading causes of property damage in Canada. Water damage is not entirely avoidable, but by taking preventive measures you can greatly reduce the risk to your home or business.

#### Roof

- Your roof should be in good repair, shingles should lay flat and not curling. Missing shingles should be replaced and holes repaired. Roofs over 20 years old should be inspected by a qualified professional.
- Eaves troughs and downspouts should be cleared of leaves and debris at least once a year.
- Ice Damming may cause water to enter your building by ice building up on your roof. This can be prevented by ensuring that attics and overhangs are adequately insulated and ventilated. If necessary have a qualified professional to clear your roof of ice and snow.

#### **Water Heaters**

- Water heaters as they age develop leaks and may cause major water damage to your property.
- Water heaters over seven years of age should be inspected and flushed annually to see if replacement is necessary.
- Watch for leaks and get repair work done as needed.

#### **Basements and Sewer Backup**

To reduce damage caused by water in your basement there are a number of preventive measures you can take

- Professionally install a sump pump with a battery or generator backup.
- Backwater or check valves can help prevent sewer backup and should be installed by a plumber.
- Keep basement drains free of obstructions.
- Store items away from walls and off the floor. Valuables or irreplaceable sentimental items should not be stored in the basement.
- If you have mature trees in your neighbourhood, make sure the sewer lines are not compromised by tree roots. Regular inspection of the sewer lines in neighbourhoods with older trees is necessary to avoid blockage.

These are only three areas to pay attention to in order to reduce the possibility of water entering your building. I will discuss other areas of consideration to prevent water damage in the future. **B**L

Tom Graves C.I.P., C.C.I.B. is the vice president of operations for The Mitchell & Abbott Group Insurance Brokers Limited. For more information please call 905.385.6383, toll free 1.800.463.5208 or direct at 905.381.4212. Have a question? Email mail@mitchellabbottgrp.com or visit www.mitchellabbott.com for further information. The Mitchell & Abbott Group Insurance Brokers Limited is located at 2000 Garth Street, Suite 101 in Hamilton.

# ARE YOU PROMOTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE?

"Unfortunately, all too often, companies overlook the talent right in front of them, which begs the question: Are you promoting the right people?"

BY MARK WARDELL

hen it comes to recruiting, many of us business owners fall prey to the "grass is always greener" syndrome. We can't help looking over our shoulder at the people working for the competition, wondering are they more competent, more accomplished? However, recruiting from outside your organization is not the most strategic way to build an excellent team. On the contrary, it is the organization that learns how to foster and promote talent from within that ends up with a thriving culture and a more successful business. Unfortunately, all too often, companies overlook the talent right in front of them, which begs the question: Are you promoting the right people? Consider the following:

#### Is your Organizational Chart structured for future growth?

What you need is an Org Chart with foresight. Yes, you need to have the right people in the right positions. Yes, this can be accomplished with proper job descriptions, relationship diagrams, and organizational charts. But you also need a long-term outlook for the future. To ensure your business is properly structured to recognize and promote talent from within, develop an Org Chat that looks well into your future.

#### Promote at the top, hire at the bottom

All companies change and grow. One of the common mistakes I see business owners make is to hire a seasoned C-Level executive for a management position at the top of the organizational chart without first looking inward. In many cases, it is more effective to promote from within and hire at the bottom of your organizational chart to meet the needs of your growing company. Again, the key here is foresight. To capitalize on the talent in your company, you need to plan for your future management needs well in advance.

One of our newer clients recently learned this lesson the hard way. They hired an experienced COO to grow their family business. The problem was, he didn't understand the subtleties of the organization and wasn't able to get the proper buy-in from the staff. They had to let him go after he led their company to its first unprofitable season in over 20 years.

#### Don't fire your best employees

Sounds obvious, doesn't it? Unfortunately, far too often, businesses unknowingly promote their best employees out of a job they excelled at, into a position that isn't as good a fit. Consider this scenario: A business owner rewards her best salesperson by promoting him to Sales Manager. The reality is that while this owner just got herself a new Sales Manager, she also just fired her best salesperson. The skills, qualities and attributes that made the salesperson good at selling, do not necessarily apply to his new role (although in some cases they might). The point here is that it makes more sense to reward great performance while keeping people in positions they excel at.

#### Conduct a skills audit to identify strengths

To help you get a better sense of the skills your people have, I recommend conducting a skills audit. For example, you know that your management team needs to have the necessary skills and strengths to manage their team, utilize the talents and skills of each team member, and inspire people to work together as a cohesive unit to implement your vision. A skills audit will help you identify the individuals with these strengths.

#### Identify and groom the natural leaders

A natural leader is someone who has the social ability, self-confidence and general leadership "je ne sais quoi" to take on responsibilities and inspire others to follow suit. Your job is to provide plenty of opportunities for this kind of top talent to reveal itself within your organization. One way to do this is to foster a culture of teamwork. Allow multi-department teams to work together on tasks, and pay attention. The natural leaders in your organization will take the lead in their team. Their leadership excellence will manifest in their teams' ability to work well together. Once you have identified who these superstars are begin grooming them now by creating meaningful career paths for their future in your company.

Learning how to foster talent and recruit from within your own organization doesn't happen overnight. However, once you begin to nurture this type of culture, you'll find your business becomes not only more successful, but also more attractive to top talent at large. After all, this is the type of organization that people want to be a part of. And when it comes to amazing places to work, well, word travels fast. **PL** 

Mark is president and founder of Wardell Professional Development (www.wardell.biz), an advisory group that helps business owners plan and execute the growth of their companies. The author of seven business books, Mark also writes regularly for several national business publications including Profit Magazine, The Globe and Mail, and CGA Magazine. Email him at mark@wardell.biz.

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## Prepare for the mobile web or you could end up in ruins

Mobile devices are about to dwarf computers and the mobile web will have to take off the training wheels. Is your company ready?



#### BY SCOTT PUTMAN

efore 2007, surfing the web on a mobile phone was a miserable experience. Now, most of us take it for granted and that's

one of the big reasons why sales of smartphones surpassed PCs in 2011. This trend is accelerating so quickly that a lot of companies are going to be in danger of being disrupted if they don't adapt and re-think their customer experience for mobile.

In 2012, worldwide PC sales are projected to reach about 400-million units, while smartphones will exceed 600-million, and tablets will sell about 100-million units. That means that only about 35% of the new devices sold this year that will be connecting to the web will be Windows PCs. That's how much the technology world has been turned on its head in just five years.

These numbers are going to get more dramatic in the years ahead. Already in 2015, PCs are expected to get dwarfed. PC sales are expected to grow to over 500-million, but tablets will triple to about 300-million and smartphones will leap past 1.1-billion.

Despite the fact that this massive change is about to come, the web continues to be computercentric. While many will use computers to design, build, and create content for the internet for years to come, the primary access devices that the majority of users are going use to access the internet will be smartphones and tablets.

While iOS, Android, and Windows Phone devices have web-capabilities almost alongside that of PCs, the mobile web itself is still in relative infancy. In most cases, websites are still badly prepared to handle mobile visitors because of the way the sites use Flash, mouse-over animations, and other Java-

"While many will use computers to design, build, and create content for the internet for years to come, the primary access devices that the majority of users are going to use to access the internet will be smartphones and tablets."

script functionality. Even though many of these sites offer a mobile version, the mobile site usually doesn't include all of the functionality of the full site. That's why user satisfaction with mobile sites is lower than the overall web, and why users have gravitated toward downloading native apps that are optimized for the mobile experience. Since every mobile operating system has a different set of development tools, that means a company has to develop a different app for every platform, and try to keep them all unified and updated. That's both impractical and unsustainable—not to mention the fact that companies now also have to design separate apps for tablets.

In the not too distant future, with the proliferation of mobile devices, the mobile web will simply become the web. That means every company that builds a website will need to rethink site design so that it's always friendly for both a big screen with a mouse and a touch-screen device. But, that's just the first part of the equation. Companies also need to reconsider their entire web experience for mobile, and think about what it could mean for customer service, mobile commerce, global targeting, targeted deals and coupons, and much more.

If you're not thinking about this now and planning for it, you could be putting your business at risk. If your competitors have a better mobile web strategy, it could give them an important edge with customers, especially since users have even less patience for slow site performance and a bad user experience when it comes to mobile. **BL** 

Scott Putman is the president of I/O Vision. For more information please call 905.937.7658, email scott@iovision.ca or visit them at 3-23 Nihan Drive, St. Catharines, ON. www.iovision.ca



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Left: Leslie J. Smith Barrister & Solicitor. Above: Leslie J. Smith enjoys the outdoors and loves to travel. This photo was taken in 2011 when she visited the Australian Zoo.

"For me, it's all about trying to level the playing field and reach a compromise that treats both sides with dignity and respect."

- Leslie J. Smith

## **LESLIE J. SMITH PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION BARRISTER & SOLICITOR**

Oakville Employment Law practitioner helps both employers and employees to negotiate settlements and avoid costly litigation.

BY SCOTT LESLIE

The Business Link

ompassion" isn't a word you would immediately associate with a lawyer—but then, you probably haven't met a lawyer quite like Leslie J. Smith.

As an Employment Law practitioner based in Oakville, Leslie is in the business of providing Employment Law and HR advice to small and medium-sized firms to help prevent potential lawsuits. Having practised law for over two decades now, she prides herself on her ability to sympathize with her clients—particularly when they run into issues with their employees.

Leslie says it's not unusual for small companies to run into HR problems.

"Most small businesses can't afford their own legal or HR departments," she explains. "As a result, they can make mistakes when it comes to hiring and firing and end up getting sued by an employee. Or they might have an employee that's poisoning their work environment and don't know where to turn."

Leslie's law practice provides a full range of Employment Law services including employment contract negotiation, creation of non-competition and non-solicitation covenants, advocacy, severance package review and creation, disability-leave advice, wrongful and constructive dismissal, negotiation, mediation and litigation.

Serving small and medium-sized businesses with less than fifty employees, Leslie works with companies to formulate an employment agreement before they hire a new employee. This allows the company and employee to create a road map for their contractual relationship which should avoid a costly legal dispute when that employment is terminated.

Much of Leslie's work involves helping out a small business when the relationship has broken down between employer and employee.

"Most small businesses don't like confrontation," she explains. "They're often a family-run operation and they want to rehabilitate the person or give them another chance. I encourage them to let an employee go that isn't working out."

According to Leslie, she's a strong believer in the power of negotiation and mediating.

"I'm an experienced mediator so I can tell when someone's lying or when someone's unhappy," she says. "The majority of the cases I deal with are settled without ever going to court which is most often the best solution for small businesses and individuals alike. Some lawyers take the slash and burn approach. I don't. I prefer to de-escalate difficult employment situations, bringing peace and normalcy to the people involved."

Leslie believes it's critical to make sure a departing employee doesn't leave with bad feelings towards your company because a disgruntled staff member has the potential to give a company a bad reputation in the marketplace.

"It's hard enough to attract the best employees so avoiding negative press from a disgruntled one is desirable," she explains. "Most small business owners aren't trained to deal with these kinds of...

Continued on page 16



Leslie J Smith overlooking the Yukon River following a 10-day canoe trip from Minto to Dawson City, Yukon in 2010.

Continued from page 15

...issues so having my experience in their corner can take a big weight off their shoulders."

#### **Working for Employees**

Leslie doesn't work for small businesses exclusively, however. She also represents employees that feel they've been improperly treated or terminated by their employer.

"Employment Law can be fraught with emotion," Leslie explains. "In many cases, a relationship has broken down and now the employee is unable to earn a living, pay their bills or care for their family's needs. It's my job to understand what my clients are going through on a financial and emotional level as well as from the legal perspective."

But she doesn't believe in taking on an employee's case just because a client can afford it.

"Sometimes the odds just aren't in a client's favour," she says, "and it's my job to let them know that."

Leslie makes sure her clients understand all the key legal issues so they can make informed decisions that will affect their employment and career. Many of Leslie's clients want to reach a reasonable settlement and move on with their lives while others may have an axe to grind. In the latter case, Leslie feels it's important to defuse the situation as much as possible.

"My personality informs the way I practise," she says. "I try to help my clients step away from the emotionality of the situation and focus on looking ahead. As I tell my clients, no one can successfully drive a car while only looking in the rear view mirror."

Leslie goes to great lengths to put her clients at ease. She tries to explain legal situations in clear, plain language. Instead of the typical business suit, you'll often find her in more casual business attire.

"I find my clients can relate to me better if I don't try to be too formal or intimidating," she says. "I want to make a visit to the lawyer's office as comforting as possible."





Leslie's reputation as a compassionate but no-nonsense and settlement-oriented lawyer has definitely garnered a lot of attention. In the past decade, she's won or placed in the Oakville Beaver Reader's Choice Awards for Favourite Lawyer / Favourite Law Firm Category seven times.

#### A History of Compassion

Over her three decades in the law field, Leslie has been attracted by the intellectual challenges of her profession. But there's much more to it than that. Her sense of empathy has always been a key motivator in her success.

"I love having the opportunity to help people out at a difficult time in their lives," she says. "For me, it's all about trying to level the playing field and reach a compromise that treats both sides with dignity and respect."

Leslie graduated from the University of Windsor's Faculty of Law in 1985 and was called to the Bar of Ontario in 1988 after a year of articling at an insurance litigation firm in Toronto. Leslie began her law career at a prominent firm in Hamilton and eventually opened her own practice in Oakville in 1996 when she began concentrating on Employment Law.

Leslie is a trained mediator and negotiator, having received certification in Alternative Dispute Resolution in 2008 from the University of Windsor. She has many years of litigation experience and advocacy before the Ontario Courts as well as administrative tribunals such as the Employment Insurance Board and Human Rights Tribunal. She also sat as a Small Claims

Court Deputy Judge for the Central West Region from 2003 to 2009.

Having practised law for so many years, Leslie feels one of the biggest advantages she can offer a client is her experience, wisdom and common sense. She also says it doesn't hurt that she's older than most of her clients.

"I've had a lot of experience on both sides of the table including on the bench," Leslie says. "I know how disgruntled employees think. I know how the courts view these sorts of cases. I can help small businesses create a peaceful and productive environment by managing employee / employer issues more effectively."

Leslie's reputation as a compassionate but nononsense and settlement-oriented lawyer has definitely garnered a lot of attention. In the past decade, she's won or placed in the Oakville Beaver Reader's Choice Awards for Favourite Lawyer / Favourite Law Firm Category seven times.

Leslie is also an active member of her community. She currently sits on the Board of Directors at Support in Motion—a new charitable organization that raises funds for youth and teens with spinal cord injuries. She's a member of the Christian Legal Fellowship, often teaching courses to its members (law students and practitioners)

on topics like Ethics and Civility in the practice of law. Leslie is also a member in good standing of the Law Society of Upper Canada and the Halton County Law Association.

And Leslie's business continues to expand. Although her office is in Oakville, Leslie regularly sees clients from southern Ontario including as far away as Oshawa, Barrie, Kitchener and Niagara Falls.

But despite her growing law practice, Leslie remains committed to serving each individual client to the very best of her ability.

"When I embark on a case, I assure my clients that they'll always have my complete attention," she says. "Together, we'll work to achieve a legal result that will help relieve their anxiety and give them greater peace of mind." **B**L



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## **OBJECTIONS ARE NOT THE ISSUE. YOU ARE.**

"Sales are made emotionally and justified logically."



#### **BY JEFFREY GITOMER**

or some reason, over the past 60 days, the word "objection" has been the prime topic of my email buzz and my customer's requests.

Most objections are either bogus, or they're stalls, or lies, or they carry with them a hidden meaning where the customer is crying out for help, but doesn't really want to state it in those terms.

The biggest and age-old objection is "price." How many times have you heard, "Your price is too high," or "I can get it cheaper someplace else," or (the best one) "Match this price."

When a customer objects for whatever reason, they're actually telling you that they want to buy (they may not want to buy from you, but they want to buy). And if they're going to buy from you, additional answers need to be provided—answers that will provide reassurance, answers that will provide peace of mind, and answers that will allow your prospect to move forward and give you some of their money.

Over the years I've defined objections as barriers, because there is normally something hidden way beneath the surface. And in order for the sale to take place, the barrier must be lowered. Sometimes even eliminated.

I've also defined the biggest objection besides price to be the unspoken risk that the customer perceives, but won't talk about.

Let me give you a couple of examples. When the customer says price is too high, what they're really saying is, "My perceived value in doing business with you is not high enough to meet your price."

Salespeople and sales managers try to address the price issue with a tactic or some kind of sales talk. It doesn't work—not, it never works, but it almost never works. And even if the salesperson is persuasive, and manipulates his or her way to the sale, the buyer will often have remorse and want to cancel the transaction.

HERE'S MY RECOMMENDATION: Rather than trying to give you some slick sales talk, I suggest you re-engage the customer with dialog that uncovers real reasons and eventually gets down to their buying motive. If I uncover the buyer's motive, I will make a sale regardless of price. If I engage the prospective customer in a value-based and value-driven discussion, I might be able to get them to see my perspective.

**CAUTION:** I'm not talking about value-add or added-value. I'm talking about the value that is perceived by the customer in order to move forward—value that will differentiate and set you apart from your competition.

**NOTE WELL:** If the customer perceives no real difference between you and your competition, and no real value between what you offer and what they offer, than the only thing that's left is price. Therefore, when price is an objection, you merely have to look at your ability to differentiate and your ability to create value in the mind of the customer.

But let me return to the central issue. Objections occur in sales presentations. So if you want to eliminate all sales objections, eliminate the sales pitch. Concentrate on gaining and building rapport. Concentrate on meaningful dialog where the customer feels they benefit. Concentrate on preventing common objections that occur by putting them into your conversation. And concentrate on your ability to engage and connect with the customer emotionally.

Sales are made emotionally and justified logically. I've just given you a difficult sales lesson because it flies in the face of everything you've been using for the past decade, maybe more. But I promise you it's the best way of creating relationship—not just gaining an order. Gaining an engaged customer who likes you and respects you, a customer who will likely purchase again (and again).

**HERE'S MY CHALLENGE TO YOU:** Call your top 10 customers and invite them, either individually or as

a group, to a breakfast or a lunch where you talk to them about building relationships. Ask them what they consider important and ask them how much of a role value plays in their decision making versus price. Then ask them why they buy from you. Those 10 customers combined with the strategies that I've given you above will not alleviate all of your objections, but they will alleviate most of them.

Some customers will always just buy lowest price. I recommend you give those customers to your competitor, in order that they may make no profit. **B**L

Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of The Sales Bible,
Customer Satisfaction is Worthless Customer Loyalty
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Red Book of Sales Answers, The Little Black Book
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