

# Small Business Success

October 2014



Community  
Futures Newsask



## Give Your Business a Fall Clean-up

*From time to time we all need to clean out our office and especially the closets in them. I know for a fact that I have files dating back as long as 20-years that I just can't get round to dumping - just in case they might come in handy. I am ashamed to also admit I have a box of floppy disks - now what the heck I am going to put those into? Now there's stuff you don't want to get rid of such as anything the CRA might be interested in looking at should you ever get audited, but even then they don't expect you to back beyond about seven years.*

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## So what can we do to spruce up our business?

**Physical Stuff** - that rickety old filing cabinet that you've been keeping just because you think it's an "antique" (that's a word people use to justify keeping junk). That 7-year old computer on the back shelf you keep thinking you'll use for "parts". The broken down fax machine you say you're going to fix. The textbooks you've kept from University that are now about ten years out of date. Your ultra-slow computer that you keep saying you're going to upgrade when you have time. When you de-clutter your physical space, you will feel better emotionally. You'll be more productive and more motivated.



**People** - are there people in your business (or even in your life generally) that you need to consider letting go? Do you really think that employee is going to improve their performance after the fifteenth warning if he didn't do so after the first fourteen? Does that negative, abusive customer cost you more in demoralizing your staff than he/she is worth? Does that business colleague make you depressed every time you have coffee with him/her because of their constant complaining and negativity? This isn't always easy, but people can clutter your life just like things can, and if there are people that distract you from your

goals, or that you find just drain your energy, it may be worth considering whether you need to let them go as well.

**Systems** - you may not even be aware of them all, but there are systems all over your business. How you process your invoices, how you deal with customer complaints, what process you use to determine which vendors you'll use, how you do your performance evaluations, how you evaluate your sales stats. Every business activity has a system, and sometimes it's useful to evaluate whether those systems are worth keeping. Look at all aspects of your business (and if you have staff, ask those who are using the systems for their input). Are there some systems that could be simplified? Is there software that you could use to combine tasks or speed up processes? Are there tasks that are overlapping between staff members (more than one person doing the same task)? Evaluating your systems can improve your productivity in a huge way, but it is time-consuming. Make sure you are willing to go all the way once you start the process.

De-cluttering itself will make you feel better, make your staff feel better, and will improve productivity. When your systems are more efficient, the people who are working for you are not draining your resources, and your world is more organized, it will show itself in a stronger, healthier business. As you head into fall, think about giving your business a cleanout it almost certainly could benefit from.

## Working From Home and Staying Sane

*If you are running a home-based business, you're probably doing so because to some degree, you enjoy working alone. This can be a blessing since much of what you do is solitary, but also a battle because the isolation can create some bad work habits. Sitting in your home office day after day can be exciting when you first start - after all, you don't have to put up with all the stuff you dealt with at your last job - just you and your computer. But after a while, it can lead to unhealthy habits that erode your productivity. Here are some tips on keeping yourself connected, and active, even if you work from home alone.*

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### **Pay attention to your body.**

It's all too common for a home-based business owner to settle into his or her office chair at 8:00 AM and not move until 3:00 PM because they are engrossed in a project, or have a major deadline coming up, having ignored all the signals their body has been sending them throughout the day. Make sure you take regular breaks (yes, that means get up out of your chair) and move around. Walk up and down the stairs, take a 10-minute walk around the neighborhood, sit on your deck for a few minutes, or just do some stretches in your living room. Moving and getting away from your desk for even a few minutes, several times a day increases your productivity.

### **Feed yourself properly.**

For those of you who can get through a day without even thinking about food, don't sit down before you've had some breakfast, and don't ignore those hunger pangs you feel at lunch. Having high-protein snacks, and a healthy lunch will give you more energy and clarity, and will eliminate that mid-afternoon slump you feel when you haven't eaten since the night before. Your brain needs a balance of carbohydrates and proteins to function well. For those who have the opposite tendency, and working at home brings a constant temptation to nibble your way through the day, allow yourself two coffee breaks and one lunch break during the day and don't eat at any other time.

### **Schedule connection time every day.**

Make sure you spend a portion of each day (even if it's just a half hour) connecting with the outside world (you have to use your voice - e-mail doesn't count!). Make some sales calls, return your messages, call a business associate and chat about how things are going, talk to your suppliers, or phone an old client you haven't talked to in a while. By the end of the day you may be surprised at the sound of your voice, but disciplining yourself to stay connected will keep you from getting too comfortable with being alone.

## Schedule meetings away from your home office.

When you do have to meet with people, try to schedule meetings at their place of business, or at a mutually convenient coffee shop or restaurant. It's good for you to get away from the four walls of your office - a different atmosphere inspires creativity, and a break from the ordinary will make you feel more energized when you return.

## Vary your tasks.

When you have a significant task ahead of you, it's tempting to put your head down and work til it's done, but sometimes, stopping what you're doing and attacking a different task for a little while can actually increase your productivity. Shifting gears with your brain from an intense task to a lighter task can give it a much-needed break and regenerate perspective. Take ten minutes to answer emails, do some filing, sharpen some pencils, organize your bookshelf, and then get back to your task.

## Limit Internet surfing.

It's so easy to do - you go to a web site to research a specific, work-related thing, and before you know it, a half hour has gone by and you're planning next year's vacation! This takes a lot of discipline, but Internet surfing is a huge time waster. Find a way to discipline yourself to only visit sites relevant to the work you are doing. Some people find it useful to keep a log on their desk where they write down each web site they visit. This can be very tedious if you're surfing aimlessly, and becomes a deterrent to pointless Internet wandering.

## Schedule play dates.

When you work for someone else, your personal interaction with others is planned for you. When working at home, you need to make a point of scheduling some play time once in a while, to keep you sane and accountable. Begin working with a coach who can help you get success in areas your struggling with.



Find a buddy, or a group of others who work from home, and start a monthly focus group. It will increase your interaction with others, but will also give you an opportunity to get feedback on difficulties you are facing in your business, perspectives for problem-solving, creative ideas for growth and a sounding board with others who are walking the same path. In the same way, you can assist them in their business growth, and that will make you feel great!

Many people say working from home is the best decision they ever made. If you're still doing it, it probably was for you. Developing a few good habits will go a long way towards making your home office experience a productive one.

## Home Based Business Meets Real Estate Speak

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If you're a home-based business owner, I'd be surprised if to some degree, this hasn't happened to you. You're sitting at your kitchen table in your pajamas, enjoying your second cup of coffee and reading the latest business journal when your company phone rings. You leap from the table and run into your office, pick up the phone, and in your most professional voice answer, "ABC Company, how may I help you?" In a nanosecond, you've been transformed from the guy in his pajamas to a well-respected business owner. This month we thought we'd take a light-hearted look at how things are not always what they seem when you're a home-based business owner. Hopefully you'll have a chuckle as you recognize a few of these home-based "businessisms".

**What they hear:**

*"Could I put you on hold for a minute?"*

**What you mean:**

*"I'm just going to put the telephone receiver beside the radio while I scrounge through this stack of files to find your letter."*

**What they hear:**

*"We're expanding our facilities."*

**What you mean:**

*"I'm cleaning out that closet for extra space."*

**What they hear:**

*"Let me put you through to our accounts receivable department."*

**What you mean:**

*"I'm just going to grab another cup of coffee - I'll be right back."*

**What they hear:**

*"We're experiencing a period of unprecedented growth."*

**What you mean:**

*"My wife is expecting twins."*

**What they hear:**

*"Have you had a look at our current promotion?"*

**What you mean:**

*"I'm make something up if you're interested in buying it."*

**What they hear:**

*"I'm going to have to see how that fits in with our timeline. Can I get back to you?"*

**What you mean:**

*"I'm going to stare at my empty calendar for an hour so you'll think I'm really busy."*

**What they hear:**

*"Of course we can do that for you. We have a team of experts at our disposal."*

**What you mean:**

*"I'm really going to have to scramble to find someone who knows how to do that."*

**What they hear:**

*"I'll need some more information and statistics before I'm ready to proceed."*

**What you mean:**

*"I am behind schedule and need to buy some time."*

**What they hear:**

*"No problem. We can work within that deadline."*

**What you mean:**

*"Great, I guess I'm going to be pulling an all-nighter."*

**What they hear:**

*"Can I just discuss this with my colleague and get back to you?"*

**What you mean:**

*"I'll run it by the cat and see if she purrs."*



So the next time someone asks you about the square footage of your storefront, or how many departments you have, or what your anticipated growth margin is, pour yourself another cup of coffee, smile and realize your success is all in the eyes of the perceiver. And go ahead, say something brilliant. Only you and your coffee mug will know!

## Cartoon

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**"Why get a consultant? I'll dust off this sales plan from 1977 and substitute it for the new one."**

### Challenge 4 Communities 2014

**4 Weeks 4 Challenges 4 Winners 4 Prizes**

Community Futures Newsask is hosting our fifth annual "Challenge 4 Communities"

All community groups (service groups, neighbor groups, youth groups, etc.) are invited to submit community projects that compete for prize money. The public will decide the winners with weekly voting on the internet over a four week format beginning October 31, 2014. Rules and an application form are available on our website at [www.newsaskcfdc.ca](http://www.newsaskcfdc.ca) (click on Challenge 4 Communities)

Get involved with your community today, submit a project, and compete for prize money!

**Challenge 4  
Communities  
2014**



# Embracing Diversity

*We need to shift how we work and do business with each other!*

**Wednesday, October 22, 2014**

**10:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.**

**Tisdale Civic Centre, 901 100<sup>th</sup> Street, Tisdale, SK**

Funded in part by Newsask Community Futures Development Corporation and the Entrepreneurs With Disabilities Program and in partnership with the North East Supported Employment Program, the NE Newcomers Services, Tisdale & District Chamber of Commerce, Nipawin & District Chamber of Commerce, and Melfort Chamber of Commerce will be holding a luncheon with keynote speakers, Cory Johnson and Milton Tootoosis. Cory will also provide a ½ day workshop...*Exploring new possibilities in the workplace and starting your own business...Overcoming obstacles and turning them into possibilities.* Milton will be providing a workshop...*Making the Connection: Treaty and Economic Livelihood Today.*

The luncheon and workshop will be open to employees, entrepreneurs, employers and the general public.

We envision full inclusion in the workplace and diversity in the communities of North East Saskatchewan!

Gain insight into diversifying your workplace, by employing people with disabilities, aboriginal people and newcomers. Become inspired to start your own business!

For Details about the workshops, please contact:  
Newsask Community Futures, (306) 873-4449  
[admin@newsaskcfdc.ca](mailto:admin@newsaskcfdc.ca)

## Guest Speakers:

Milton Tootoosis

Cory Johnson

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10:00 a.m. Making the Connection: Treaty Rights to an Economic Livelihood

12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Keynote Presentation – Cory Johnson and lunch

1:00 to 1:15 p.m. Break

1:15 to 2:30 p.m. Exploring New Possibilities in the Workplace and Starting Your Own Business

2:30 to 2:45 p.m. Break

2:45 to 3:45 p.m. Turning Your Disabilities into Possibilities, Hiring Aboriginal People & Newcomers

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## Lunch Provided

RSVP by October 14, 2014

**Contact:** Newsask Community Futures  
[admin@newsaskcfdc.ca](mailto:admin@newsaskcfdc.ca)

Tel: (306) 873-4449

\$10 per person

If you are on assistance, fees will be waived.

## About The Speakers and Workshop Presenters:

### Cory Johnson



Born with Cerebral Palsy and suffering a stroke at the age of 11 has not deterred Cory Johnson from living life to the fullest. He uses his life experiences, inspiration and education to overcome the barriers that others impose on him.

He encourages his audiences to see new possibilities within themselves and others. With his own perception on life, he'll challenge you to remove some of your barriers.

*Kiwanis Western Canada Governor 2011 – 2012*

*Semi Finalist in Canada's Next Top Comic – 2011*

*Canadian Record Holder in the 100 m and 200m for Para Athletes/National Champion 2012*

*Member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers  
Professional Speaker since 2007*

### Milton Tootosis

Milton has over two decades experience in human resource management and Indigenous policy development at the tribal, provincial and federal levels of government. His professional and personal interests enhance and build communities of collaboration with attention to building positive relationships and advancement. Milton has served on numerous committees with a focused attention to skills development, creating capacity, effective governance and economic independence within Indigenous communities. He is the past Chairperson of the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute Inc., founders of the World Indigenous Business Forum (WIBF).

Milton is from the Poundmaker Cree Nation in Treaty Six Territory. Milton received his undergraduate education from the First Nations University of Canada, has studied public administration and taken numerous professional development courses. He is an accredited Professional Aboriginal Economic Developer by the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers. He is also a student of the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of Arizona.

Milton will share his personal experience as an Indigenous person who is part of the first generation to earn a livelihood off the Indian reserve. No more restrictions due to the 'Pass System' that was a policy of the federal government that impacted and restricted the movement and freedom of his parents, grandparents and great grandparents.

There are challenges that he has overcome that are still common today and proving to be significant barriers for some. He will share the spirit and intent of Treaty No. Six between the First Nations and settlers in 1876. Tootosis will share current business trends, challenges and opportunities associated with the creation of wealth and improving the standard of living for Saskatchewan's First Nations people. There is silent renaissance in the Indigenous community. The potential to realize the vision, the spirit and intent of the Treaty will enlighten you.





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