

Small Business Success

March 2013



Community
Futures Newsask



Video Conference Available at the Newsask Office

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

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

For information or to register, contact us. Email: admin@newsaskcfdc.ca, Phone: 306-873-4449, Toll Free: 1-888-586-9855 or checkout the website at www.newsaskcfdc.ca

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8-Mar	1:00 - 3:00	Building Your Business Proposal	C/MBSC
12-Mar	9:30 - 11:30	Income Tax Basics for Sole Proprietors & Partnerships	Infosource
13-Mar	12:00 - 3:00	Your Business Plan: Getting Started	C/MBSC
14-Mar	1:00 - 2:30	Negotiating Commercial Leases and Renewals for Dummies	Infosource
19-Mar	11:00 - 3:00	Marketing Essentials: Positioning Your Business for Success - 2 Day Power Class	C/MBSC
20-Mar	11:00 - 3:00	Marketing Essentials: Positioning Your Business for Success - 2 Day Power Class	C/MBSC
21-Mar	1:00 - 2:30	Supercharge Your Facebook Marketing	Infosource
26-Mar	9:30 - 12:00	Effective Market Research and Working with International Partners	Infosource
26-Mar	12:00 - 3:00	Your Business Plan - The Home Stretch: Operations & Financial Summary	C/MBSC
28-Mar	1:00 - 3:00	Creating Engaging Online Content	Infosource

News from the General Manager – Judy Childs

The deadline is fast approaching for YBEX, (Youth Business Excellence Awards) submission deadline April 18th. Event takes place May 4, 2013. I would like to provide a little more detail about the process. We appreciate your mentoring and/or encouragement for all submissions to the competition.

YBEX is a business plan and business venture competition for grade 6-12 and youth out of school or attending a university or a technical institute with a permanent address within our region.

We are in our 12th year of hosting this event and the Board feels it is very worthwhile for our region. The categories are as follows:

The Business Plan category is intended for the dreamer... this is for an imaginary business.

The Business Venture category is intended for an existing business – taking the plunge. However the applicant must be actually operating the business. The business does not have to be full time. We understand that hobbies can turn into a successful business and afterschool chores can turn into profit. What does the applicant have a passion for?

Business Venture II ... the seasoned pro. It is intended for past submitters who have expanded, value added, or experienced significant growth by adding more to their business.

We encourage youth to consider entrepreneurship as a career option. For example Leejay Schmidt formerly of Melfort began entering the YBEX competition in grade six and over seven years of submissions, he came in first five of those seven years.

Leejay reveals some of the highlights...cash in your pocket, the food and fun at the event, a chance to win lots of door prizes and a good resume booster. In addition, he received extra credits in his classes, learned money management practices, budgeting and he learned how to research and backup his information. Leejay has completed his second term on the University Senate as a 4th year computer engineering student and he attributes some of the skills that he has gained in YBEX to his ability to participate on the Senate. He also attributed his high marks in classes to his ability to apply what he learned in YBEX in his commerce, design, economics and other classes.

Leejay entered YBEX with an imaginary business called Leejay's DJ's in grade six and in grade seven he actually put his business plan into action. He now has his own online radio station. Please check it out. www.themixrocks.com/player.html. We also received notification that Leejay received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal February 6, 2013 to recognize individuals on their accomplishments.

So what do we want from you? Please encourage students from grades 6-9, grades 10-12 and youth out of school under the age of 30 to submit and participate in this fun competition. It may be a group of students or individually. You can obtain more details on our web-site www.newsaskcfcd.ca.

We will provide presentations and/or workshops or whatever needs you may have in preparing your business plan. All you have to do is call.



“Just Watch Me!” Video Contest

We are honored to announce a winner of the “Just Watch Me” Video contest that involved both Manitoba and Saskatchewan entrants.

The theme for the contest was to help inspire other people with disabilities to consider becoming their own boss and the fact that self-employment can be a great fit for people with disabilities. The contestants created a maximum three minute video and uploaded it to the “Just Watch Me” website between December 3, 2012 and January 25, 2013. The contest was launched on December 3rd in recognition of International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

This year, there were two categories: “start-ups” (in business less than a year) and “seasoned entrepreneurs” (in business more than a year). On February 5, 2013, the judges announced the Top 4 finalists in the “seasoned entrepreneurs” category. Members of the public then had two weeks to vote for their favourite video. The video with the most votes by November 19, 2012 won \$1000 cash. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th place winners receive \$750, \$500 and \$250. All winners will get bragging rights and special prizes from the sponsors.



The contest shared stories of business success from 12 videos submitted and we are excited to announce that Gary Bradley of “Gary’s All Season Maintenance” from the City of Melfort is a winner. Gary made the top four finalists..... He has been in business for over 30 years as an entrepreneur and made the City of Melfort the place to start his business.

Gary received \$250 cash as well as the following:

- From the Business Development Bank of Canada (in Manitoba and/or Saskatchewan) – will provide one hour of consulting and/or mentoring.
- From the Canadian Youth Business Foundation – a gift card from the Source with a \$125 value.
- From Meshy Communications – will provide three hours of social media consultation valued at \$300.

And from the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce - One year free membership.

The Importance of Attitude when Hiring

"It's no secret... in today's demanding marketplace, businesses that focus on providing consistent, quality customer service are the ones that succeed! The level of customer service that an organization is able to deliver is determined by the knowledge, skills and strengths of its employees. Building an effective team starts by focusing on hiring the right employees and fostering a culture of performance. Once the right employees are hired, managers who are able to coach employees for superior performance will see the greatest results."

Published in cooperation with [Blue Beetle Books](#)

So wrote Ginger Brunner, of Dynamic HR Solutions in her popular Encore Workshops training workshop manual. But, the question is how do you make the right hiring decisions?



Many years ago I worked for a company that came up with the phrase "Hire for attitude - train for skill" and that has stuck with me over the years. Think about it, who would you choose between these two applicants for a clerk's position? Applicant A has a wealth of experience in the point of sale system you use and is an expert at the cash register you will be asking her to use, but she lacks personality and seems a little low energy, even a tad unfriendly. On the other hand, applicant B has no idea how to use the cash register in question, and has never seen the P.O.S. system you are using, but is charming, personable, intelligent, and lights up the room. By now you will be saying of course that you would choose applicant B because you can see it is a loaded question. But, think about how many people you come across in retail stores that have a surly attitude, talk to colleagues while you are waiting to be served, and basically treat you as if you are a nuisance rather than as a customer. Well, someone hired them! And, the primary reason is often that the person doing the hiring doesn't want the hassle of spending time and money on training someone, so chooses an applicant who has the required skills, even if they are thoroughly unpleasant. Hiring for attitude, and training a pleasant and willing person to do the job will, in the long run, pay dividends. Of course, if at all possible hire someone who possesses both a positive attitude AND the skills required to do the job, but that is not always possible.



Let's dig a little deeper into the importance of attitude when hiring; after all people attending an interview can put on a falsely positive attitude, or conversely could be very nervous and come across as less than personable when in real life they are a bundle of fun and energy. What are the indicators we should look for during the hiring process?

Cover Letter

A cover letter can tell a lot about a person; take a look at how formal it is, or whether it has spelling mistakes or typo's. Does it look like it came from an online template, or does it have a professional, but personal feel to it?

Resume

Presumably most applicants will have many of the skills and experience you mentioned in your advertisement, so jump down to the end of the resume and check out what the person does in their spare time. What are their hobbies, do they volunteer? I once read a resume that listed in the highlights section that the applicant could juggle penguins - now that spoke of attitude in abundance!

The Interview

Positive people - those with good attitudes, have a ready smile as soon as you meet them. They have a firm handshake, dress well with a little flair and hold eye contact. They really aren't hard to spot. Ask yourself, am I warming to this person? Will my customers and the rest of the team warm to them too?

When answering your questions do they always look on the bright side, or are they a "the glass is half empty" person? Finally, what type of questions are they asking? Are they interesting, creative, positive, forward-thinking, or along the lines of "how many breaks do I get?"

When hiring someone to represent your company, you have to carry out a whole bunch of due diligence, but all of that can be for naught if you hire someone that doesn't fit, or who your customers and the rest of the team don't get on with. Remember, one bad apple can cause a great deal of rot.

Tackling the World of Government Contracts – The Acronyms

Have you ever thought about selling your products and services to government, but don't know where to start? Well, there is a new eBook coming out shortly that will answer all your questions and more. The book is called *Winning Government Business* and will be published in April 2013 by [Blue Beetle Books](#) - here is a short extract which outlines the definition of all those infuriating acronyms governments use for the various types of business opportunities they have.

Published in cooperation with [Blue Beetle Books](#)

The first thing to realize is that there are federal, provincial and municipal contracts and each is different. For example, do not treat writing a proposal in answer to a federal RFP in the same way that you handle one from a provincial government, or municipality. Furthermore, each province's RFPs differ in structure and layout so again treat each on its own merits.

Federal government departments and agencies usually leave purchasing of anything over \$25,000 to [Public Works and Government Services Canada \(PWGSC\)](#). Under that amount they can purchase directly with suppliers. This is important to know when seeking federal government business.

Another agency to check out for business opportunities is [MERX](#) which lists Canadian Public Tenders. This site lists opportunities from all levels of government including school boards, hospitals, municipalities and more. Check out the list of provincial procurement websites at the end of this article.

Okay, back to the acronyms. Although the examples below refer to federal government solicitation, many of the same terms are used by provincial and municipal governments.

(RFP) Request for Proposal

Government uses these for more complex opportunities; or where its decision will be based on more than just price. With this method of solicitation they are looking at the most cost-effective solution, not necessarily the cheapest. RFP's can be very long and complex, and putting a proposal together to answer one can be time-consuming and expensive.

(RFQ) Request for Quotation

The federal government uses this type of solicitation when the opportunity is valued at less than \$25,000 - note, this figure has to include all taxes etc. Basically, the lowest bid wins. On a positive note the required 'proposal' is usually simple and straightforward.

(T-buy) Telephone buy

This is similar to the RFQ, but in this case bids are solicited from one or more selected suppliers either in person, or over the telephone. T-buys are for contracts worth \$25,000 or less and again this has to include all applicable taxes.

(ITT) Invitation to Tender

ITTs are used when the contract is valued at \$25,000 or above, and when there is more than one supplier who could deliver on the contract. The ITT clearly states what is required, so that when tenders are submitted they can be evaluated against the criteria laid out in the provided documents. With ITTs the government intends to accept the lowest-price bid and will not negotiate.

(RFSO) Request for Standing Offer

This is really a pre-qualification; companies agree to provide products and services on an as required basis at set prices and pre-agreed terms and conditions. All criteria are pre-set and used when government departments want to 'call-up' products and services from listed suppliers.

(RFSA) Request for Supply Arrangement

If you are a pre-qualified supplier (against specific requirements) then this is a fast-track way for government departments to process bid solicitations. Formal contracts will still be required for all products and services being supplied. The final type of arrangement is not an acronym, but this list would not be complete without it.

Sole sourcing

As the name implies this is where a supplier has something the government requires that it can't get anywhere else. This saves the government wasting time issuing a RFP, or other form of solicitation, when it knows there will only be one bidder. There are strict rules that govern the issuing of sole source contracts. Prior to issuing a sole source contract government will issue Advance Contract Award Notices (ACANs) which are posted on the MERX site for a little over two-weeks announcing the intention to award a contract. This allows other suppliers to approach government with information supporting the fact they are also capable of delivering on the contract.

YBEX 2013

Youth Business Excellence Awards 2013



Each year for the last twelve years, Community Futures Newsask has been hosting an awards event for our **Business Plan Competition**.

Choose one of the following three categories:

1. Business Plan – Take a business idea and develop a business plan.
2. Business Venture – Report on the operation of your actual business.
3. Business Venture 2 – Significantly expanded or improved business that you previously entered.

12th Annual

In three age divisions as an individual or group:

- Grades 6 to 9
- Grades 10 to 12; or
- Under 30 out of school or attending university or technical institute with permanent address with our region.

Check out our website for the Guidelines, Application, and Awards breakdown, www.newsaskcfdc.ca (Click on YBEX Awards on the left menu.)

We have updated the Guidelines this year and changed the Evaluation Format. Check them out, start planning your business and enter our competition.

Submission Deadline: Thursday April 18, 2013

Awards Event: Saturday May 4, 2013



PO Box 357 909 – 99th Avenue West Tisdale, Saskatchewan S0E 1T0
Phone: 306-873-4449 Fax: 306-873-4645
admin@newsaskcfdc.ca www.newsaskcfdc.ca

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