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The Business Link



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EXPERT ADVICE

Bullivant & Associates Inc.
Health and Safety Experts
A.J. Bullivant and Mardi Bullivant *p7*



HAMILTON/HALTON

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BECOME A LIFE LONG-LEARNER

“When was the last time you read a book on sales? Or customer service? Or positive attitude? Or time management?”

BY CJ CALVERT

As you read this message, I trust and hope for you that you are just as passionate about your New Years Resolutions today as you were a few weeks ago when you wrote them!

Every day, I am hired by corporations to speak before their staff and help motivate, educate and transform them. Everyone in my audience says they want more out of life: more money, more opportunity, and are even willing to work hard to get it. But strangely, it seems that many of the people I meet were relieved to finish school, because they felt they would never have to read another book! They believed that learning stopped when school did...and sadly, their paycheque reflects it.

In fact, I was speaking in front of a sales group last week and asked them to consider: “When was the last time you read a book on sales? Or customer service? Or positive attitude? Or time management?” Unfortunately for them, the question was a bit uncomfortable, because it had been far too long. It’s so easy to find people who want more out of life, and yet it is so hard to find people who are willing to learn; to buy a book on their career, attend a lecture or listen to positive educational CDs while they drive.

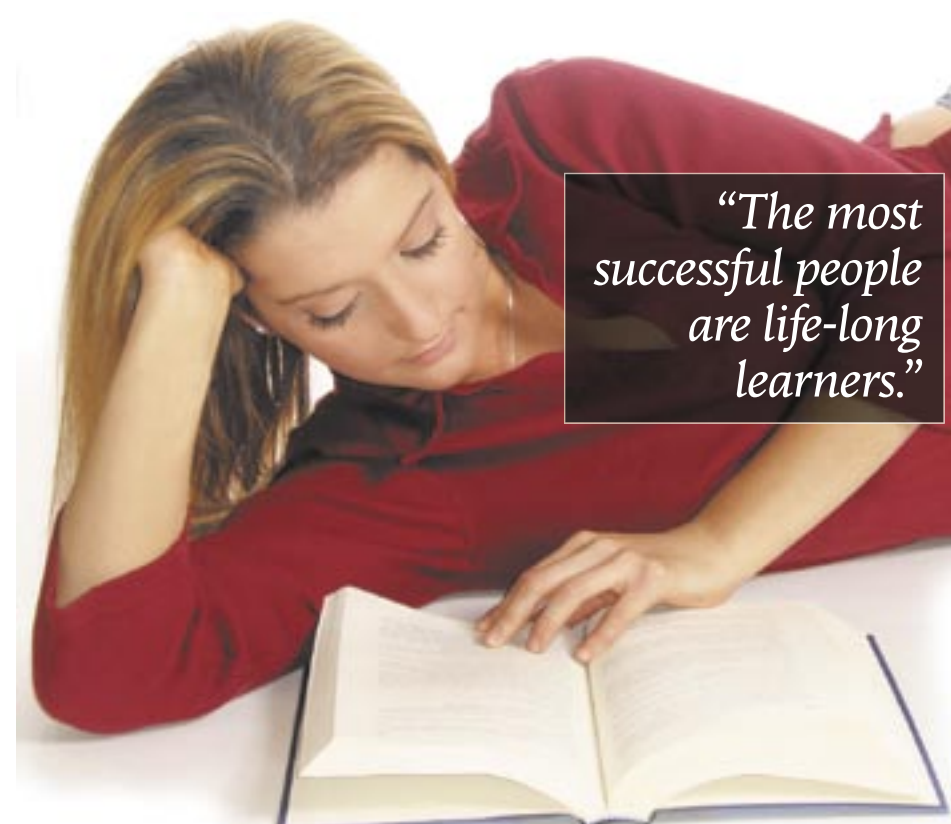
The most successful people are life-long learners. One of my resolutions is to increase my reading. Beginning this year, my goal is to read (and study, and be transformed by) one book per week. (Bear in mind

that I used to read only one business/self-improvement book a month.) At the end of the year, I’ll have read an absorbed 52 business/self-improvement books. In ten years, I’ll have read over 500 books.

I subscribe to a business/motivational book club that delivers a book to my mailbox every month. This month, I was thrilled to receive a copy of “Talent is Overrated,” by Geoff Colvin. I’ve been devouring this book, underlining multiple passages, making notes in the back cover, and quoting it to everyone who will listen. His basic premise is that incredibly successful people do not have God-given talent, are not “lucky,” and weren’t just given a lot of fortuitous breaks. They devoted three hours a day, every day for ten years, to master their craft. Only then did their magical “genius” become apparent.

Mark Twain laments, “It takes twenty years to become an overnight success.” Malcolm Gladwell writes in *Outliers*, “Mastery takes 10,000 hours of practice.” There are no short-cuts to success, and there are really no accidents. Success is there for whomever is willing to pay the price. Whatever your calling, be it a social worker, computer scientist or paramedic, I challenge you to outlearn your competition. And in ten years, with hundreds of books and thousands of hours of learning under your belt, they will call you “lucky.”

CJ Calvert is a motivational speaker, author of “Living an Exceptional Life” and President of CalvertTraining, the motivational arm of Shepell-fgi.



“The most successful people are life-long learners.”

BUSINESS PROFILE

The Graphic Attic

Offering the latest in web, print and online marketing solutions.

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SALES MOVES

Pain-Free Selling!

Pre-existing relationships must be in place to make the sale palatable...

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

One Billion Reasons Why Hamilton Is the Place to Invest

2010 was a record year for the City of Hamilton.

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A BILLION DOLLAR YEAR

One billion thank-yous to Hamilton's business and investment community! You made 2010 a record year in building permit construction value for the City of Hamilton and proved that Hamilton's diversified economy is one of the strongest in Ontario.

Hamilton
Economic Development

investinhamilton.ca

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HOW YOU CAN NOW AVOID BEING "UNPREPARED FOR RETIREMENT"

What would give you the confidence of being fully prepared? What can we do today, that means we can be financially safe forever?



BY BRIAN WEATHERDON MA, CFP, CLU, MDRT

If you quickly google "unprepared for retirement" there are 306,000 entries. Top clicks say Americans are unprepared, people over 45 are unprepared, and baby boomers are unprepared. Do you know if you are unprepared?

Eight hundred times a day, especially this time of year, advertising is scaring people that old-age will bring poverty. But were you wondering... is this actually true?

What would give you the confidence of being fully prepared? What can we do today, that means we can be financially safe forever?

1. First, own a "Certified Life and Financial Plan." This is not just your investment and insurance statements.

Your written plan is a unique, personalized book we offer each client. It pulls together all we have discussed of your goals for life and health, family, money and estate—worries you want to avoid and values you most want to achieve.

You deserve a written plan that fully proves how to prepare and enjoy your future.

2. Second, what are five "post-it" ideas you could put on your mirror today, and raise your income for life?

a) Own Dividends. Over time nothing outgrows dividends. I see many investment accounts with little evidence of dividends. Dividends are a proven way to get income and growth—and pay less tax! Why would you be without them!

b) Hesitate on Bonds. As people come to me I'm finding bonds everywhere. They especially lurk in balanced funds. Bonds lose value as interest rates rise. Bond funds showing high returns may have corporate or foreign risks of which you weren't aware. Bonds today don't equal safety for a long retirement. Only a broader design can protect your income for life.

c) Own Equities. Canadian and emerging markets offer significant growth and dividend opportunities.



The portion in equities depends on your personal profile, fitting your lifestyle needs now and for the future. Amid U.S. and European challenges, there are strong opportunities for income and growth in Canada and other growing economies.

d) Get high-income Guarantees for Life. Is it worth a moment of your time to inquire how people get 5%, 7%, 9% for life? Most of these strategies have a proven history for 100 years! If you think of safety at age 80 or 90, would it be safer to have more income, or less? More is safer! Advisors licensed for investments and insurances can guarantee high income for life! Would this week be a good time to start learning more on this?

e) Learn something new! Learning directly increases your preparedness. So if you can take a quick moment, tell me which of the following catches your eye. (Future articles can show where these ideas fit for you.) Individual Pension Plans (IPP). Retirement Compensation Accounts (RCA). Enhanced Retirement Accounts (ERP). Tax Free Savings Accounts (TFSA). Guaranteed Life Income Plans (GLIP). Charitable Annuities (CA). Life Annuity Ladders (LAL). Rental properties fit easily here too. Pick one—call me about it. Then watch this column for ways we prepare your income for life.

3. ONE MIRACULOUS PORTFOLIO shows the power of simplicity. Despite tech and financial losses since 2000 this portfolio averaged 6.5% annually. It's so simple you could

easily "do this from home." At a major insurer we put 2/3 to a dividend fund, and 1/3 to an income fund. If one had died in a down-market, the capital was guaranteed—probate-free! In up-markets you captured the growth. Result: 6.5% annually. (Ten years to November 2010).

Let's say you own this miracle portfolio. Round it out with term deposits or high growth funds, some rental property, a low-tax life-annuity, and one of the plans outlined in 2.e. By putting it all together in one certified plan we can improve your Wealth Trajectory to age 105.

We can prepare this to any age for you: 95 or even 120! How will it feel when you can open your own certified plan, and talk about the security you now see for your entire future? **BL**.

Brian Weatherdon, MA, CFP, CLU, MDRT.
Sovereign Wealth Management Inc.
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The Graphic Attic team from left to right: Owner & Creative Director Barb Keck; Copywriter & SEO Project Manager Sam Leirsch and Graphic & Web Designer Sarah Vassair.

THE GRAPHIC ATTIC

Burlington graphic design agency offers the latest in web, print and online marketing solutions.

BY SCOTT LESLIE

The Business Link

When you're looking to take your business to new heights, it's a good idea to start with the attic—The Graphic Attic, that is.

The Graphic Attic is a graphic design agency located in downtown Burlington on 1439 Caroline Street. Their expertise can provide a wide variety of creative solutions including logos and brand development, website design, social media, online marketing and search engine optimization. They can even handle more conventional projects like brochures, media kits, newsletters, print ads, trade-show booths and product packaging.

"There's a reason our clients keep coming back," says Owner & Creative Director Barb Keck. "We build solutions that are fully-customized to meet their business needs and help them get real results."

Although The Graphic Attic has a history of success with traditional print and design projects, much of their business in recent years has moved into the realm of website design and online marketing. Last year, they began offering the Smart

family of programs—a series of integrated web solutions designed for small and medium-sized business owners. These programs include lead development tools like Smart Sweepstakes, and search engine optimization tools like Smart SEO and Smart Directories.

According to Barb, their self-managed web programs and templates are a great way for companies

"There's a reason our clients keep coming back... We build solutions that are fully-customized to meet their business needs and help them get real results."

to maximize their online potential in a quick, affordable manner.

"We pride ourselves on our ability to help small business owners grow their business online," she says. "We also offer training seminars and e-handbooks that can help them improve their online marketing tools and convert their leads into sales."

A self-taught designer, Barb launched The Graphic Attic in September, 1989. (The company was named after the attic of Barb's home where

she first operated her design studio.) At the time, Barb had graduated from the fashion program at Sheridan College but she was looking for the opportunity to expand her creative horizons. She began by designing and illustrating her own line of Christmas cards—and local businesses soon took notice of her talents.

"I've always enjoyed promoting people and be-

ing creative," Barb explains. "So developing my own design firm was a natural progression for me."

Over the past two decades, The Graphic Attic team has gone on to design websites and marketing materials for a wide range of companies and organizations in the B2B, insurance, health and wellness, manufacturing, hospitality and non-profit industries.

But their firm has also taken an active role in the local community. For years, The Graphic Attic staff has been involved with the arts scene, donat-

ing their time and resources with organizations like the Rotary Burlington Music Festival and Performing Arts Burlington. Barb is also a member of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce and was recently named "Rotarian of the Year."

The Graphic Attic team is comprised of Barb, her Graphic & Web Designer Sarah Vassair and her Copywriter & SEO Project Manager Sam Leirsch. Barb feels their three personalities and skill sets complement each other perfectly—and that means the best results for their clients.

"We have a great ability to take people's thoughts and turn them into something that really reflects their business," Barb says. "It's like we've just made a new suit for them. They always walk away wanting to show it off." **BL**



For more information call 905.333.5576
or email caroline@graphicattic.ca
www.graphicattic.on.ca

THE INNOVATION GAP™

Inspirational Speaker, Author and Coach, Gerry Visca, recently published his fourth book, *The Innovation Gap®*, which is focused on cultivating creativity in life and business.

BY EVE HOWE

Having inspired over 100,000 people worldwide as one of Canada's top inspirational speakers, Gerry Visca is introducing a new book that promises to ignite creativity into action in people and organizations. After working for 10 years as a Creative Director for Hamilton-based Redchair™ Branding, an international award-winning branding agency, Gerry Visca aligned his actions in 2009 to creatively inspire one million people worldwide. Gerry Visca has made appearances on CBC Fortune Hunters, captured several international design awards and has shared centre stage with world-class speakers John Asaraf and Jack Canfield of the book, *The Secret*.

Judy Marsales, President, Judy Marsales Real-Estate notes: "Gerry was hired to inspire our salespeople at a time when a lot of the media information has dragged them down. Gerry not only inspired them but ignited their mind and their energy to think about the potential that exists within their ability. I was impressed by his practical advice and personal attention to everyone in the room. We thoroughly enjoyed his presentation and look forward to working with him again."

John Bonk, CFL Hall of Famer notes: "As a business owner, I realize the need for evolution and change in the way companies do business in today's competitive landscape. Gerry Visca's principles helped me to plan out solid based ideas on customer needs while finding new and innovative ways to successfully bring new ideas to market. As a former player and winner of a Grey Cup in the Canadian football league, I know the importance of a solid game plan. I wish that I had uncovered this power source called Gerry Visca many years ago."

The Innovation Gap® is Gerry Visca's fourth book in his creative repertoire and features his 10 creative laws to help spark creativity and innovation in people and organizations. Gerry Visca is known to Fortune 500 companies for his ability to inspire audiences and ideas to action.

"My passion and energy for inspiring people is what drives my daily goals. I set out in 2010 to publish this book to help bridge the gap that exists in so many corporations today," notes Gerry Visca.

The Innovation Gap® is written with the intention of helping readers become a master in their field and bridge the innovation gap with creative strategies and elements of differentiation.

In his book, Gerry Visca encourages you to think of creativity in a different way—the key to unlocking one's life purpose and getting innovative within your field.

To think differently, outside and inside the box, to create something new... Gerry Visca's definition of 'getting creative' can be summarized this way: Take Action, Create Opportunities, Stand Out, Become a Master



"In his book, Gerry Visca encourages you to think of creativity in a different way—the key to unlocking one's life purpose and getting innovative within your field."

Presenter, Re-think, Everything, Challenge Convention, Strive to be Magnificent, ZIG when others ZAG.

In his book, *The Innovation Gap®*, Gerry Visca presents his Ten Laws of Creativity™

- Uncover Your Natural Ability
- Condition Your Mind
- Create Your Own Opportunities
- Fixate on the End Result
- Build the Brand Experience
- Generate Momentum
- Collaborate and Attract
- Differentiate
- Communicate like a Champion—Become a Master Presenter
- Live Life with Passion

What is Innovation and how is it defined? It is problem solving through creativity and intuition. The key is to focus on what it is that you want to create and apply these creative laws on a consistent basis. By offering his ten laws of creativity, he helps people to create an innovative culture within themselves and their business which Gerry believes is the gap that needs to be bridged to live a fulfilling life and have a thriving career. Throughout this book, Gerry Visca provides you with examples of how to implement these laws into your life and business. **BL**

For more information please contact Gerry Visca, Redchair™ Branding Inc., 905.528.6032, 416.500.9817 (cell) or email gerry@redchairbranding.com



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Phone System	\$3,700	Included	
Fax Machine	\$200	Included	
Network, Router etc.	\$2,900	Included	
Total Startup Cost	\$27,380	\$695 & up	
Monthly Expenses	Traditional Office	Coffee Office	
	Rent	\$1,200	\$695
Telephone Lines	\$145	Included	
Hi-Speed Internet	\$120	Included	
Repairs, Maintenance	\$101	Included	
Coffee & Beverages	\$75	Included	
Reception	\$1,901	Included	
Total Monthly Expense	\$3,541	\$695	

*based on 1,000 sq.ft.

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SOME SIMPLE FACTS AND SIMPLE SOLUTIONS ABOUT SHOPLIFTERS & SHOPLIFTING

"If you don't have an effective loss prevention plan in action, you may be the store of choice for every shoplifting addict in the area."



BY JON C. ASPLIN

You would think that the rate of shoplifting would have skyrocketed in times of economic downturn such as we have just experienced—however, the level of shoplifting by and large is consistent regardless of the state of the economy.

According to NASP statistics \$13-billion worth of goods are shoplifted in North America each year and one in eleven individuals entering your store will shoplift if given the opportunity.

The vast majority of shoplifters are "non-professionals" who steal, not out of criminal intent, financial need or even greed but as a response to social and personal pressures in their lives. The excitement of "getting away with it" produces a chemical reaction resulting in what they describe as an incredible "rush" or "high" feeling. Many shoplifters will tell you this feeling is their "true reward" rather than the merchandise itself.

Most non-professional shoplifters don't commit other types of crimes. They will never steal an ashtray from your home and will likely return a \$20 bill they see you drop from your pocket. Their criminal activities are restricted to shoplifting. Drug addicts who have become addicted to shoplifting describe shoplifting as equally addictive as drugs. Habitual shoplifters steal on average 1.6 times per week and are caught on average once every 48 times. They are then prosecuted usually 50% of the time. Every year over 10 million shoplifters are arrested in North America. Most shoplifters know which stores have poor security measures in place and fail to prosecute. These are usually the stores they patronize.

If a retailer wants any hope of controlling merchandise shrinkage they must institute a comprehensive loss prevention plan. Some things are simple and inexpressive such as making your staff aware of the need for due diligence to reduce shoplifting or posting a notice at each entrance stating "company policy is to prosecute all shoplifters," and then stick to it. This will possibly deter the beginner or occasional shoplifter but will have little effect on the addict. For these criminals the better security system you have in place, the more you will curtail their activities. They will find easier targets.

A good security camera system will pay for itself in short order but I emphasize "a good camera system." Setting up security systems requires a tremendous amount of experience and knowledge. Many factors must be taken into account—not just where to place cameras but also the type of camera that must be used to obtain the images required. These days the explosion in security camera technology is absolutely staggering and your security advisor must be abreast of all the latest hardware.

For every dollar lost to shrinkage, your store will have to generate up to \$10 dollars in additional sales to compensate for that loss. If you don't have an effective loss prevention plan in action, you may be the store of choice for every shoplifting addict in the area. **BL**

"If a retailer wants any hope of controlling merchandise shrinkage they must institute a *comprehensive loss prevention plan.*"

Jon. C. Asplin is the president of DataCash Technologies Inc. For more information, call 905.869.8820 or visit www.datacash.ca.

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BENEFITS AND RETIREMENT EXPERT



Brian Hansell

QUESTION

Does my group insurance plan have adequate out-of-country coverage?

ANSWER

The Simple Answer is "YES, Likely". Most Group Insurance Programs provide a Good Base level of Out-Of-Country-Coverage.

What You Need to KNOW before you GO:

- It is for EMERGENCY Medical Care ONLY and DOES NOT cover you for 'Elective Medical Care.'

A Pre-Existing Condition?

- If you are being treated or have an unstable condition and require emergency medical attention relating to this condition, you WILL NOT be covered.
- Get Coverage Information in WRITING from the Insurance Company, if in doubt.

Maximums

- Plans have a Maximum. The most common would be a lifetime maximum i.e. \$1,000,000 per Member.

Age Restriction-age 65

- Even though you may be covered for Group Benefits, many plans restrict or eliminate Out-Of-Country Coverage to Members over the age of 65.

Maximum Length of Stay

- Coverage is for only temporary continuous periods of travel.
- Most common would range from 60 to 180 days of continuous travel.

Additional Coverages

Specifically check the terms of your Contract with your Plan Administrator, Employee Handbook and Your Insurance Carrier.

- if you have purchased your trip with your credit card you may have additional coverage.
- If you are a Member of CAA or other Associations you may have additional Out-of-Country Coverage.

Claiming

- OHIP is the first Payer.
- Your Group Insurance Plan will then pay for reasonable and customary emergency medical expenses.
- Frequently travelled locations may co-ordinate payment with OHIP and Your Insurance Companies.
- In some cases you may be expected to make payment at the time of an emergency and then you would be responsible to co-ordinate and seek reimbursement from both OHIP and your Insurance Companies.

Traveller's Checklist

For more detail information please visit www.voyage.gc.ca "Before You Go" Frequently Asked Questions and click on > Health & Well-Being > Travel Insurance. **BL**

tel: 905.643.1017 toll free: 1.800.514.4944

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www.bhhbenefits.com



FAMILY LAW EXPERT



Charanjit K. Gill
B.A., LL.B.

QUESTION

I've been paying child support for a long time, and now my kids are adults. When can I stop paying?

ANSWER

A child's entitlement to support from his parents doesn't automatically end when that child turns eighteen. That entitlement continues as long as the child relies on his parents because of illness, disability, or "other cause."

Courts have ordered parents of mentally challenged or developmentally delayed children to continue paying child support due to their children's disability. Similarly, adult children with psychiatric illnesses, such as severe depression or anxiety disorders or schizoaffective disorder, may be found unable to withdraw from parental control, and still be entitled to child support.

Another common case for continued child support is where a child is attending college or university. Post-secondary education is established as an "other cause" for which an adult child may continue to rely on his parents. Courts often find that children studying full-time at a college, university or other training program will be entitled to support, provided that they have a reasonable and achievable plan. Even though a court will expect the child to contribute to the costs of his education, overall child support is often higher with the addition of tuition and living expenses. This entitlement will sometimes continue past a child's first university degree, provided they are in school and depending on the family's financial circumstances and established expectations, but the entitlement will cease when the court finds that the child should reasonably be able to support himself. **BL**

tel: 905.634.3155

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Burlington, ON

www.jaskotfamilylaw.ca



BRANDING AND MARKETING EXPERT



Jim Albanese

QUESTION

When is my business ready for Branding?

ANSWER

Right Now!

Branding defines your business and attracts the type of customers you need. If you are not branding your business you are fighting an uphill battle. Branding is not only for big businesses. Small business owners unfortunately make the mistake of thinking

that they are not ready for branding. Branding is vital for businesses of all sizes especially small businesses that want to grow.

6 more reasons why you need to start branding your business right now!

- Branding establishes credibility, reason to believe and trust.
- Branding builds value in your business.
- Branding makes your advertising more effective.
- Branding shortens the sales cycle.
- Branding attracts better employees and opportunities.
- Branding builds pride and positive energy for your business.

Special thank you to Ron Patterson who inspired me to address this topic. **BL**

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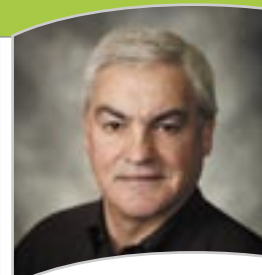
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GOOD SHEPHERD FOOD/CLOTHING/WAREHOUSE EXPERT



Carmen Salciccioli
Director Good Shepherd Centre Warehouse

QUESTION

What is the distinct function(s) of the Good Shepherd Centre's Warehouse?

ANSWER

It is the central receiving point of all donated food, (perishable and non-perishable) small house wares and clothing. From here, items are carefully sorted and organized and categorized for appropriate

redistribution among the other centers within Good Shepherd that exist throughout our city. And ultimately for use by the great many individuals and families that we have the pleasure to serve each and everyday. We have four drivers who pick up the above noted items, as required.

Secondly, it houses the Good Shepherd food bank which last year gave out approximately 1,485 pounds of food—80% of which was donated from individuals and local businesses. People are welcome to come and shop by appointment, and we typically provide a minimum of three days food for each person. Last year we served approximately 3600 men, women and children per month.

Thirdly, our clothing program is also located in the warehouse. Each month approximately 500 individuals and families are able to find adequate clothing at absolutely no cost via our clothing program. In addition, The Good Shepherd Christmas Store /Hamper Program is operated during December from the warehouse. This past December, we issued 3,117 hampers, which represents 6,081 people served by the generosity of our community and we are so very grateful to the thousands of volunteers. **BL**

To find out "How To Give" and for details on our programs and services, contact us today

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Box 1003, 10 Delaware Ave

Hamilton, ON L8N 3R1

www.goodshepherdcentres.ca



PAIN-FREE SELLING. WHAT A FIND! ARE YOU PAIN FREE?



BY JEFFREY GITOMER

My insurance agent came over last week to update my portfolio of policies. I like to make sure I'm more than covered. I consider insurance an asset, not an expense. Peace-of-mind and protection, not a cost.

I also consider insurance among the toughest sales in the world. No one wants it, and many insurance salespeople are somewhere between bad, and pushy. It's hard to get an appointment, and even harder to make a sale once you get there.

HERE'S THE KEY: Pre-existing relationships must be in place to make the sale palatable, nay possible. But that's just the premise for this message.

I asked my agent (who I have been friends with, and loyal to, for 15 years) how he engages a prospective customer. "Well first I try to find their pain," he said with that all-knowing smile. "WHAT!?" I screamed. "When did you learn that? 1972?"

He hemmed and hawed about the sales strategy he was using, but it was obvious he was embarrassed about admitting it.

Why aren't you trying to find positive things instead of negative things? I've been your customer for 15 years and you never found my pain. I never had any pain. I just needed some insurance. I wasn't hurting for insurance. The only pain I had was writing you a check. In fact, that's STILL a pain.

We laughed. But "finding the pain" is not a bit funny in sales. In fact it's somewhere between sad and manipulative. Somewhere between negative and dark. In short, if you want to find pain, become a doctor—people will come to you with pain by the thousands. If you want to make it in sales, there are other things to find.

Pain does NOT drive a sale. If you're in a prospective customer's office or on any sales call here's what to look for and here's what to uncover:

Find the friendly. All things being equal, people want to do business with their friends. No pain there.

Find the common ground. What is there in the rapport building that "clicks." Something that sparks the conversation and takes it deeper. Smiles, things of common interest. Things that build initial comfort—maybe even trust. No pain there.

Find the engagement. How meaningful can you make your questions so that you get to the heart of the prospect's important issues? No pain there.

Find the need. In conversation and two-way dialog precipitated by your questions, uncover the real needs. Find the symptoms and address the needs. Needs are not painful, they're challenges that you can convert to sales. No pain there.

Find the desire. By exposing desire you at once understand (beyond need) how important your product or service is to the prospect. No pain there.

Find the opportunity. Common ground, engagement, need, and desire will expose the one element necessary

for you to make sales: OPPORTUNITY. Your job is to discover how to take advantage of it. No pain there.

Find the difference. The difference between you and your competition that the customer perceives. There may be some pain here—if the prospect thinks the competition is better than you. OUCH!

Find the unknown. Uncover something. Discover an answer that the prospect finds valuable. No pain there.

Find the value. And prove it. Perceived value is the basis for moving forward. No pain there.

Find the trust. Trust is the oil that glides the pen across the contract. No pain there.

Find the improvement or productivity. Everyone wants to improve and become more productive. No pain there.

Find the quality. I want Lexus, not Ford. Pain is selling price. OUCH!

Find the profit. Don't "save me money." Show me how I put money in my pocket. No pain there.

Find the decision maker. AHA! Focus attention on the person who can say YES! Spend time finding him or her. Talking to non-deciders is a pain. OUCH!

Find the elements that will make the sale happen. Uncover past history and buying motives. No pain there.

Find the urgency to buy. Once you find this, your sales cycle will be cut in half, or more. No pain there.

Once you find all these positive elements, you'll find the final prize: the money.

The only pain in sales is self-inflicted. You shoot

yourself in the foot with manipulation, old sales tactics, being too pushy, speaking poorly about the competition, and being unprepared.

Chances are, if you go looking for pain, you'll lose to someone looking for a positive, meaningful, engaging, value-driven relationship. One that not only leads to an order, it leads to a relationship, testimonials, and referrals. Those are pleasures. Find those, and you'll get rid of the pain in your wallet.

If you want a bit more pain, go to www.gitomer.com, register if you're a first-time visitor, and enter the word PAIN in the GitBit box. **BL**

Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of The Little Red Book of Selling and eight other business books on sales, customer loyalty, and personal development. President of Charlotte-based Buy Gitomer, he gives seminars, runs annual sales meetings, and conducts Internet training programs on sales, customer loyalty, and personal development at www.trainone.com. Jeffrey conducts more than 100 personalized, customized seminars and keynotes a year. To find out more, visit www.gitomer.com. Jeffrey can be reached at 704.333.1112 or by e-mail at salesman@gitomer.com. ©2011 All Rights Reserved - Don't even think about reproducing this document without written permission from Jeffrey H. Gitomer and Buy Gitomer, Inc.

EXPERT ADVICE

LICENSED INSURANCE EXPERT



Kyle Melko, RIBO

QUESTION

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 6 tips in order to lower your premium:

1. 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. **BL**

Tel: 905.547.7000 x217

kylem@acumeninsurance.com

883 Upper Wentworth St. Suite 310, Hamilton, ON

www.acumeninsurance.com



HEALTH & SAFETY EXPERTS



A.J. Bullivant
Mardi Bullivant

QUESTION

Can you tell me how costly a WSIB claim can be?

ANSWER

Accidents cost not only the employer through increased insurance rates and loss of productivity but also cost the injured worker who receives only 85% of his/her net pay. Co-workers must either work overtime to make up for the short-fall in hours or endure the training period required to get a new employee or contract worker up to speed.

In the event of an injury, it is not only a legal requirement but also a real advantage for the employer to implement an Early and Safe Return to Work process immediately. It is better for the injured worker as they do not lose wages and continue to feel productive, it is better for the employer as their WSIB rates do not increase and it is better for general morale of the company knowing the employer is looking out for the best interest of all involved.

On another note, this will update you on the general thrust of the Ministry of Labour. All Ontario workers have the right to a healthy and safe work environment. In the past few months inspectors have focused on musculoskeletal disorders. Beginning February, the MOL will be targeting infractions surrounding loading docks. They also stress requirements surrounding fall protection. This can include best practices at loading docks, good general housekeeping as well as ladder safety and working at heights safety issues.

Become proactive. Slips, trips and falls are preventable. Review your policies and procedures. Train your workers to these policies. Ensure your workplace is free of slip, trip and fall hazards. Remember, one accident can cost tens of thousands in WSIB costs. **BL**

tel: 905.664.4943 888.712.7197

info@bullivant.ca

35 King St., E. Stoney Creek, ON

www.bullivant.ca



National Academy opens in Downtown Hamilton

PRESS RELEASE

National Academy has expanded from Mississauga into downtown Hamilton and opened their facility at 31 King Street East on January 31st. National Academy is a private career college that focuses on the general areas of health care, business and law enforcement.

Specifically, the programs offered at the Academy are:

- Personal Support Workers
- Community Services Worker

- Police Foundations
- Early Child Care Assistant
- Payroll & Accounting
- Additional Health Care Components as well as Dental Assisting Levels 1 & 2 will be offered in the near future. The dental clinic is complete and ready to go.

Classes run from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and again from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

The Hamilton facility's square footage is 7,200 square feet and as of early February the Academy already had over 50 students enrolled, one Director, six instructors and four administrative staff.

The important part is that not only are new students and a new educational facility locating downtown, but the leasehold improvements were made with the full support of the Downtown and Community Renewal's

Office Tenancy Assistance Program (OTAP). The Office Tenancy Assistance Program provides low interest loans (1% below Prime) to building owners or tenants to support eligible leasehold improvements to office buildings located in downtown Hamilton. The amount of the loan depends on the square foot area and term of lease or owner-occupied status of the office space, to a maximum of \$450,000 per application. City funds begin to flow upon 50% completion of the work. The maximum loan term is the term of the lease up to five years from the date of the final advance.

As far as we know, no other municipality in this area is offering a program like OTAP and the intention of the program is to entice more office relocations to the downtown from surrounding areas outside our municipal border; OTAP does not apply to existing businesses in Hamilton looking to relocate/expand into downtown Hamilton. **BL**

MAKING SOCIAL MEDIA WORK FOR YOU

"Increasingly, the best way to reach your existing and potential customers is to have a presence online—a website (and Facebook page or YouTube channel) is becoming as important as a storefront."

BY BRETT BELL

With social media garnering so much media attention these days, it is easy to dismiss it as a fad or trend. But before you do, consider these statistics: Canadians now spend more time surfing the web than they do watching TV. In 2009 alone, Canadians ordered over \$15-billion in goods and services online. And according to the latest figures from the social network, more than 15-million Canadians have a Facebook profile.

Increasingly, the best way to reach your existing and potential customers is to have a presence online—a website (and Facebook page or YouTube channel) is becoming as important as a storefront. Today's consumers expect to have access to your

"According to one survey, 60% of small and medium-sized businesses in Canada have said they *won new business through their use of social media.*"

product or service when and where they want: from home, their mobile device or netbook—24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

But the great news is that being active in social media can yield concrete dividends. According to one survey, 60% of small and medium-sized businesses in Canada have said they won new business through their use of social media.

Even better, immediate trends in social media favour local businesses: Google, Facebook and other big names are spending substantial resources to provide consumers with real-time information and opinions about businesses and services in and around their community.

The best news is that most of the common tools used for social media can be exactly measured. You know exactly how many people visited your Facebook page or clicked on your online ad.

Successful businesses use every avenue available to give them a competitive advantage. But to use social media effectively, business owners must approach social media, not as an entertaining hobby, but as a cost-effective and impactful marketing tool. **BL**

Brett Bell is the principal of Grassroots Online, a strategic consultancy specializing in social media. Connect with him through Facebook at www.facebook.com/grassrootsonline and follow him on Twitter at @heybrettbell.

we BUSINESS

CREATING YOUR *Online* BRAND PICNIC *with kitestring creative branding studio*

Session One: Wednesday February 9

Gathering Ingredients: Learn how to build your brand. Featuring *Sweet Success: A Short Story on Baking Brands*
5:00 - 8:00pm

Session Two: Wednesday February 16

In The Kitchen: Define your brand through an online presence. Featuring *Make Lemonade: A Short Story on Social Media*
5:00 - 8:00pm

Session Three: Wednesday February 23

To Market, To Market: Develop ideas for a fully integrated campaign. Work together to create and strategize an online and integrated brand platform.
5:00 - 8:00pm

**Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC),
Hamilton City Hall, 71 Main Street West (1st Floor)**

A light dinner will be provided. Pre-registration is required.

\$35.00 per session **OR** **\$90.00** for all three sessions



Register with the SBEC :
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Learn more about kitestring:
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ONE BILLION REASONS WHY HAMILTON IS THE PLACE TO INVEST

PROVIDED BY HAMILTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2010 was a record year for the City of Hamilton. Not only did the corporation achieve a record in building construction permit values, but that record put the municipality over the \$1 billion mark for the first time in its history (nearly \$1.1 billion for the year).

According to the Director of Economic Development and Real Estate, Neil Everson, this achievement is even more important when taking a closer look at the sectors of the economy where the permits were coming from. "Approximately \$300 million was from the commercial/industrial side," said Everson. "Although residential values comprise just over 50% of the total, which incidentally is one of the lowest percentages in the Hamilton/Halton/Niagara region and the GTA, the true measure of success was in the non-residential jump."

Despite a slow economic recovery from one of the worst recessions since the 1930s, Hamilton continuously outperformed many economies in the area and during the recession and the early recovery consistently had one of the lowest, and many times the lowest, unemployment rates; time and again lower than both the national and provincial averages.

"I attribute that to City Council providing the economic development office more staff and more technological tools to aggressively pursue new investments and just as important work tirelessly to retain/expand those businesses already investing in Hamilton," said Everson.

Among the economic success stories from the past year, four investments in particular stand out for Everson; Canada Bread, Max Aicher, Parrish & Heimbecker and Fortinos. In total, these investments equate to a value of over \$200 million, over 1 million square feet, and approximately 700 jobs.

Canada Bread announced in January 2010 that it was building a \$100 million state-of-the-art, 371,000 square foot fresh bakery facility in the Red Hill Industrial Park on Nebo Road. The new plant with its seven product lines, is expected to bring up to 300 regular full time jobs and 31 seasonal employment opportunities to the area, provide an additional 50,000 square feet for future growth and will be Canada's largest bakery.

Max Aicher Group chose Hamilton as the continuation point for its expansion into North America through the \$100 million purchase of the No. 1 bar mill and the No. 3 bloom and billet mill at US Steel Canada's Burlington Street location. The purchases will add to the capabilities of the company's existing sites in New Jersey and California, and adds up to 300 steel jobs in Hamilton.

Parrish and Heimbecker Limited, involved in the trading and movement of grains as well as milling, poultry, farming and food processing leased over 380,000 square feet of space at Pier 10 at the Hamilton Port. This strategic location will be a multi modal hub for grain and other agricultural products allowing for seamless cargo transfer between marine, rail and truck; supporting Hamilton's multi modal strategy.

Fortinos, long known for its Hamilton roots, moved its head offices to Brampton when it was

acquired by Loblaw's Inc. in 1988. In 2010, Fortinos returned home, moving its head offices back to Hamilton to Nebo Hill Plaza on Rymal Road. Office functions will account for 15,000 square feet of the facility, the commissary another 15,000 and meat processing will take up an additional 10,000. There are 15,000 square feet available for future development. The total cost on completion will be in excess of \$10 million and the space will house 100 full time employees.

With 2010 proving to be an outstanding year for the City of Hamilton, Everson attributes it to teamwork. "I believe that the solid results and performance for Hamilton is the direct result of an effective integrated model for economic development, strong Council and community support of the function, and sticking to the fundamentals of encouraging innovation in companies, working hard to be investment ready, and focusing on business retention & expansion." **BL**

"Among the economic success stories from the past year, four investments in particular stand out for Everson; Canada Bread, Max Aicher, Parrish & Heimbecker and Fortinos. *In total, these investments equate to a value of over \$200 million, over 1 million square feet, and approximately 700 jobs.*"



**More Ribbon.
Less Tape.**

Wouldn't it be nice if governments actually made business growth easier?

It's about relationships; plain and simple. The *Hamilton Calling* program allows you to tell your story, relay your concerns and share your dreams regarding your business with us and together identify the ways we can help you thrive in Hamilton. Imagine, having a contact at City Hall at any time for any issue; with *Hamilton Calling* imagine no longer.

To be part of the *Hamilton Calling* program, call Economic Development at (905) 546-4222, or email us at ecdev@hamilton.ca.

 **Hamilton** investinhamilton.ca

IS YOUR COMPANY USING A 1990's BUSINESS MODEL?

"...CEOs, business owners, executives and senior management teams are actively investigating and pursuing new business models that produce growth results."

BY JASON STANGROOM

Congratulations—you survived the recession! Today, many businesses are making the adjustment from managing recession to managing recovery. As you pick yourself up and dust yourself off, ask yourself this question: "What am I going to do differently this time around?"

To be successful in the new economy, CEOs, business owners, executives and senior management teams are actively investigating and pursuing new business models that produce growth results. I'm not talking about average growth results like those you experienced during the 1990's, but dramatic over-the-top revenue changing results that shift your business paradigm.

Accepting 5%, 10% or even 15% annual growth in today's market space is commendable but when factoring in real inflation, increased labour and G&A costs, you are really just giving up to the status quo and in fact, you are just holding on.

During the 1990's, most firms were successful in spite of their management team's contributions. Their success was the result of a passive "Build it and they will come" inbound marketing strategy. And for over 10 years it worked. But for many successful business owners and executives this passive inbound marketing strategy ended up failing them during the most recent recession. Why? Because their sales, marketing, strategy and finance

operated independently of one another causing a decentralized business model that resulted in revenue leakage. This is similar to a bucket that's filled with hundreds of tiny little holes. No matter how much you try to fill that bucket up with water, the water continues to leak out and you can never fill the bucket to its capacity. And when the flow of water is reduced, the bucket ultimately becomes empty. And like the bucket filled with the holes—most businesses have countless gaps throughout their business departments. And like the water—revenue continues to leak out. When the flow of revenue is reduced—you are out of business! So, to stop the leakage you must first identify and plug the holes. Only then can you fill the bucket to capacity.

Today, many forward-thinking business owners and executive teams are changing their traditional business models to an integrated outbound revenue capture approach where their entire organization is responsible for revenue capture, not just the sales department.

Okay, I know what you are thinking because I hear it all the time. "Our firm is integrated! We have meetings, we strategize, we plan together and we are ISO compliant." Yes, I agree all that is important. However, these are examples of harmonizing your business not integrating it. Just because your team communicates, plans, strategizes, shares and executes ideas together does not mean you have an

integrated business model focused on an outbound revenue capture approach.

Your website is a perfect example of how your firm may be experiencing substantial revenue leakage caused by a decentralized business model. Most firms spend a disproportionate amount of marketing expenditure on search engine optimization, social media integration, brand building, and "getting the message out there." With all the money you are spending on these strategies in an attempt to help grow your company have you ever looked to see if your website is sticky? That's right, I said sticky. Did you know that the number one goal of a website in today's economy is to generate leads for your sales team? There are at least 7 inexpensive methods you can use to trap leads using your website. How many different ways is your website trapping leads; leads that your sales team can immediately follow up on?

How many sales has your firm lost because prospects are sliding off your nice new website and sticking to your competitor's site instead? Seriously, go have a look at your website. Is your website generating leads for your sales team or just good feelings? If the primary function of your website is not to generate leads then your firm is still using a 1990's business model. Think about it. If something as rudimentary as your website is not an integrated part of your firm's revenue capture

strategy, chances are that all your departments are still operating in silos and you are minimizing your firm's growth capability.

Your website is just one very small example of where you might be limiting your growth. Find the gaps so you can stop the leakage. Then integrate your sales, marketing, strategy and financial processes into one outbound revenue capture approach. Do this and you will have a more recession resistant business model that accelerates your top-line revenue.

There is a lot of money out there looking for a home! But your business departments need to go out and get it as an integrated group. **BL**

Jason Stangroom is a Certified Business Success Architect and the president of Revenue First Group Inc., a Burlington-based business consulting firm that focuses on business performance improvement using Value Forward marketing, strategy and sales programs.

Increase your sales, marketing and strategy success in just 15 minutes a week by signing up for our FREE sales marketing & strategy best practices newsletter at www.revenuefirstgroup.com.

For more information contact Jason Stangroom at 289.288.4662 or email info@revenuefirstgroup.com

FREE EXECUTIVE LUNCH & LEARN

HIGH-TECH BUSINESS GROWTH STRATEGIES

Thursday, February 17th, 2011

Wednesday, March 16th, 2011

McMaster University DeGroote School of Business

Some of the topics covered will include,

- How to Evaluate Your Performance
- 5 Business Assets You Must Manage
- Vertical Marketing Benefits
- How to Verticalize Your Company
- Improving Employee Productivity

And much more...

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FLASH FUNCTIONALITY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

“Unless your site is filled with complex animation, video, capturing audio or web games, Flash can inhibit your site from providing your user with timely, accessible information.”

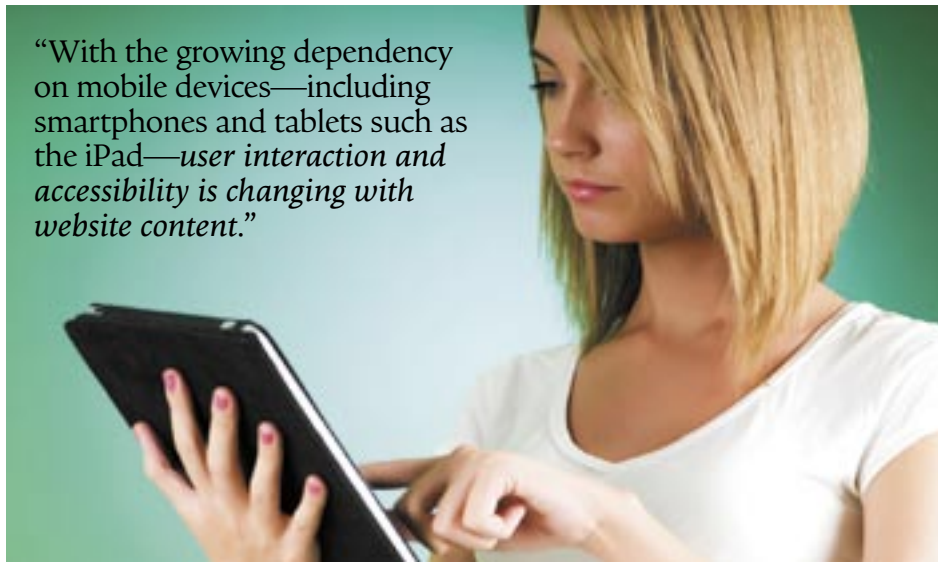
BY RYAN BARICHELLO

Unsure where you stand on the function of Flash within your website? There has been a widespread trend over the last 12 months by many small business sites and web developers away from being Flash dependent. With growing dependency on mobile devices—including smartphones and tablets such as the iPad—user interaction and accessibility is changing with website content. As well, ever-changing web design trends have made it tough and costly for a small business to keep up. However, one growing recommendation by web developers is to remove Flash components from your website.

One reason developers are moving away from Flash is the function of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) within Flash. Search engines “crawl” websites reading HTML code and ranking a site based on relevant information. Flash however, is embedded as an image within HTML and therefore cannot be “crawled” by a search engine making it next to impossible to rank your site. This inevitably gives you a low ranking and decreases your site traffic.

Another focus is on the lack of compatibility Flash offers visitors to your site. Flash requires a plug-in and although many web browsers have this function built-in, a large number of companies do not allow Flash sites to open which severely limits when and where your visitors can interact with your site.

“With the growing dependency on mobile devices—including smartphones and tablets such as the iPad—user interaction and accessibility is changing with website content.”



This brings us to mobile devices. The fact is that most mobile phones do not support Flash and those that do cannot support all components required for seamless, efficient operation. Hence, the importance of your site functioning on a mobile device is glaringly important as nothing is more frustrating for a user than to search a site only to find a page of blank boxes and inaccessible information.

Flash, although a great tool for certain types of websites, is becoming increasingly obsolete. Unless

your site is filled with complex animation, video, capturing audio or web games, Flash can inhibit your site from providing your user with timely, accessible information.

Is your website’s performance being hindered by Flash technology? Find out, linxsmart.com/findout.

For more information contact Ryan Barichello at 905.385.0546 or email ryan.barichello@linxsmart.com



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IT'S TAX TIME AGAIN – WHO'S THE BOSS?

You have the right to receive entitlements and to pay no more and no less than what is required by law.



BY ALAN ROWELL

The statement above is from the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, published by Canada Revenue Agency. Sounds simple enough and even sounds fair. Unfortunately there is a "foot-note" missing from this statement. You also have to ask for it and know what to ask for.

Every year Canadian taxpayers allow Canada Revenue Agency to receive and keep more of your hard earned income than is necessary simply because of a myth.

"It's OK if I make a mistake on my tax return because CRA will fix it for me." WRONG!

Canada operates a "self-assessing" tax system. This means that the individual, you, are responsible for determining how much income tax you owe and sending the money to CRA. Canada Revenue Agency is under no obligation to correct your tax return—only to insure that you have paid at least the minimum amount.

Why?

According to the Privy Council Office in Ottawa, as a government agency, CRA is responsible for:

- interpreting and enforcement of legislation.
- administering the application of the legislation.
- determining the policies and procedures.
- implementing the policies and procedures.
- enforcing the policies and procedures.

The bottom line is that as a Canadian taxpayer you

need to be aware of everything that is available to you, how it ties in with your family and your overall financial plans.

Completing and filing your tax returns is not a simple matter of just filling in the blanks. It requires an expertise and knowledge of all the different areas and the proper application of the legislation.

Income Tax—that annual ritual that tells us that spring is on its way, is once again telling us that it is time to organize your tax records in preparation of filing your income tax returns. This year, instead of just filling out the forms and watching a large portion of your annual income go to the government, let's at least understand why we do this and see if we can minimize the tax bite.

At The Accounting Place this is our expertise. It's what we do, and it's what we do best. This tax season, make the decision to stop paying more in income taxes than absolutely required. You be the BOSS—exercise your right to receive entitlements and to pay no more and no less than what is required by law.

It's tax time again. Who's the boss?

TALK TO US... **BL**

Alan Rowell is the owner of The Accounting Place. If you have questions regarding your income tax return please call 905.664.1010, email info@theaccountingplace.net or visit www.theaccountingplace.net.



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2-558 Upper Gage Ave
Tel: 905-383-5000

2-140 King St E
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EINSTEIN INSPIRES CREATIVE THINKING

"Enjoy the following quotes from Einstein and my thoughts on each."



BY GEORGE TOROK

Would you like to be a creative thinker like Albert Einstein? You might not discover the theory for relativity but you can learn from Einstein's creative thinking techniques and apply them to your creative problem solving challenges.

Albert Einstein has been called the most creative genius of the last century. He started his career as a patent office clerk. That means he spent a lot of time studying other people's ideas and thinking about them. Einstein learned how to analyze creative ideas and examine them in his mind because he didn't have a laboratory to test the ideas.

You might not be an Einstein but you can use his thinking techniques in your creative problem solving. Enjoy the following quotes from Einstein and my thoughts on each.

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler."

Making things simple is true genius. Anyone can complicate things. But it takes patience, probing questions and creative thinking to simplify. Whatever problem you are facing it's probably not as complicated as you think—but we often make it so. If you want to solve more problems, simplify them. The real genius is turning complexity into simplicity.

"The important thing is to not stop questioning."

This is a powerful statement. Creative problem solving is a process of asking advancing questions. Yet too many people stop when they don't hear an answer that they like. Or they stop when they are frustrated. But, the only way to learn is to ask probing questions. You might ask those questions of others or yourself.

The more questions you ask the better you will become at it. Not all questions are good questions and often it is a matter of the right question at the right time. Listen to the answers especially when you don't like them.

"Curiosity has its own reason for existing."

Curious people learn more, discover more and change things. If you want to hire creative people—look for curious people. They ask the questions about things that others ignore. If you want to be more creative—be more curious.

"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity."

This statement could be a book by itself. Einstein was pointing out that real opportunity is the result of great difficulty. The opportunity will require you to wade through the doubts and challenges that dissuade the weaker minds.

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world."

Einstein was not disrespecting knowledge. He was pointing out that knowledge is based on our beliefs from yesterday. The way to move into the unknown is based more on imagination than it is on knowledge. Too often knowledge will tell you that "it can't be done." Only imagination will find and open doors that you had ignored. Just imagine. *Continued at www.businesslinknewspaper.com* **BL**

©George Torok is a Creativity Catalyst. He facilitates Creative Problem Solving workshops and seminars. Find more creative thinking ideas at www.Creative-Problem-Solving.org. Arrange for George to speak to or train your team at www.Torok.com. For media interviews call 905.335.1997

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THE AÇAÍ BERRY: THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPERFOOD

"While the efficacy of some Açaí-based products remains hotly debated among certain groups, there's no ignoring the fact that prominent scientists are praising Açaí, and consumers are voting with their wallets."

BY EVE HOWE

Anyone who has even a passing interest in health and wellness has surely come across the hot new buzz in health sources: the Açaí berry. It's been cited by Dr. Nicholas Perricone on Oprah.com as "The #1 Superfood"; major retailers such as Costco and GNC are proudly displaying Açaí-based products on their shelves; and even a cursory survey of YouTube videos will unearth a volume of prominent news segments, interviews and talk-show hosts looking to jump on the Açaí berry bandwagon. So what's all the excitement about?

In a word: antioxidants. Antioxidants are the body's defense against the damage of free radicals. Free radicals are those atoms that have lost an electron and to correct that condition, rip an electron from a neighboring atom. This causes damage to our cells, impairing our immune system and leading to disease. Fortunately, antioxidants have a spare electron that they give up to the free radical, thereby ceasing its damaging rampage. Because of that, foods that are rich in antioxidants, such as wild blueberries, are quite rightly touted as having health-giving properties.

However, one fruit has been discovered deep

in the Amazon rainforest that boasts antioxidant properties that are higher than anything else yet found on Earth: the Açaí berry. The story of the Açaí berry reaching popular Western society can be traced back to one pivotal scientist, Dr. Alex Schauss, Ph.D. He discovered an indigenous group in the Amazon in 1995 with unusual age-defying health and quickly realized that this was mainly due to large consumptions of a native fruit, the

"With a little research, you may discover that Açaí could become the cornerstone of your future healthy diet."

Açaí berry. After years of study, he released his findings to the world, and the rest is history.

As Dr. Schauss discovered, the Açaí berry is challenging to harvest and process. Once picked, it begins to oxidate immediately, much like cutting an apple causes it to turn brown, and within 24 hours it loses most of its antioxidant potency. This explains why fresh Açaí cannot be found anywhere outside the Amazon, including even the supermarkets of Brazil: it simply cannot survive the several day trip. To combat this, Açaí berries must be freeze-dried in a vacuum the day they are picked to retain their full value. However, freeze-drying anything in mass quantity is

notoriously difficult (and expensive) along the Amazon River.

One company that seems to have figured out the magic formula is a food manufacturer called MonaVie. Touted by Inc. Magazine as the 18th fastest-growing privately-owned company last year in the U.S., MonaVie has developed a manufacturing methodology of using a patented freeze-drying process along with combining Açaí with a blend

of 18 other fruits. Loyal customers clearly appreciate the dedication to quality: in only five years, MonaVie boasted over \$2-billion in retail sales using only word-of-mouth marketing and no formal advertising.

However, for every legitimate Açaí product on the market, you can find a comparable number of duds. With the marketplace reacting so strongly to even the mention of the word Açaí, some companies are taking advantage. For example, two products, a well-known vegetable cocktail drink and a popular children's gelatin snack, both tout new versions that claim to have "Açaí flavour." The obvious giveaway to those

in the know is that Açaí is utterly tasteless; it is neither sweet, bitter, nor salty tasting. Additionally some predatory opportunists have flooded the internet with Açaí pills that claim to have miracle "weight-loss" properties. Açaí is a potent antioxidant, but as of this printing, there is no strong evidence to show it has any affect on weight loss. Always check the science behind whatever product you buy.

While the efficacy of some Açaí-based products remains hotly debated among certain groups, there's no ignoring the fact that prominent scientists are praising Açaí, and consumers are voting with their wallets. The next time you are visiting your local health-food, big-box or grocery store, take note of the number of retailers proudly displaying the word "Açaí" on their product. With a little research, you may discover that Açaí could become the cornerstone of your future healthy diet. **BL**

For more information on the Açaí berry, Dr. Schauss and Monavie, please visit:

www.oprah.com/health/acai-dr-perricones-no-1-superfood,
www.aibmr.com or
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WHY DO YOU NEED A STRATEGIC VISION?

“Successful entrepreneurs already understand the importance of creating a strategic vision, and they prioritize the visioning process—coming back to their vision on a regular basis to see if it’s still something that resonates for their organization.”

BY JULIE MIGNEAULT

Many business owners dive in to a strategic planning process by setting goals for their organization—a great way to measure and plan for your business. But a crucial first step that I see many business owners skipping over is the process of getting clear on their strategic vision.

As author John Naisbitt says, “Strategic planning is worthless—unless there is first a strategic vision.”

Having a strong vision is really the basis for creating what you want. Do you know that place of wanting something so badly that you can see it, feel it and taste it? That’s the place you want to be in your business. What would success feel like for you? What would it look like? Feeling the success before it happens helps you embody what you are creating or building before it happens.

So what are the key components of a strategic vision?

Exciting. Your strategic vision is something that really gets you moving. It motivates you. The thought of having it is exciting and inspires you to bring your gifts to the world.

Sustainable. A strategic vision creates sustainability for yourself and others. The achievement of your vision positively affects your stakeholders, customers, employees, etc. It’s a win-win: it brings good to you and to others.

Unique. Your vision reflects your individual gifts. It is your unique expression of what you offer to your target market. No one else can bring the same offerings to your market that you can. What is your unique vision?

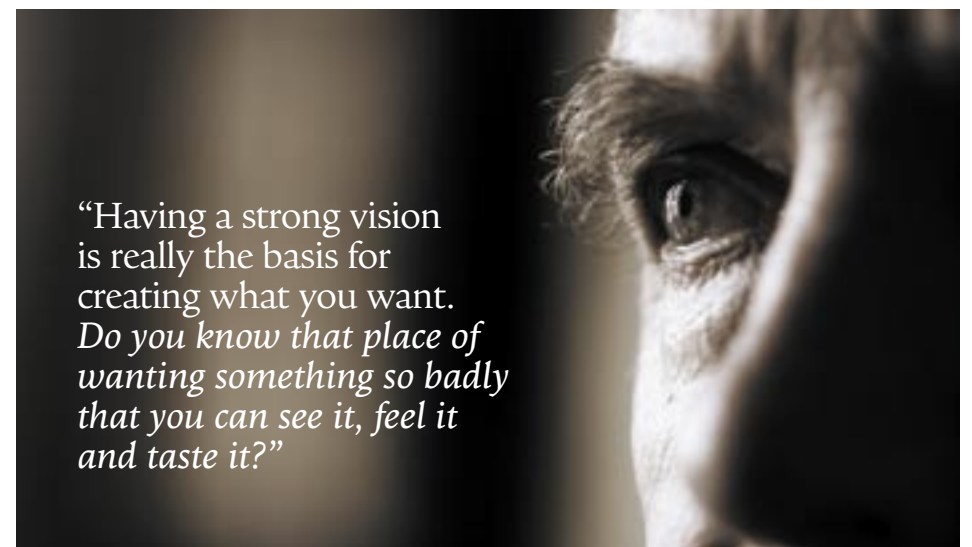
These components bring meaning to your vision—helping to bring it to life and ensure it’s relevant to your organization. Just the process of creating your strategic vision will bring you into much greater alignment with the outcome you desire from your business.

Successful entrepreneurs already understand the importance of creating a strategic vision, and they prioritize the visioning process—coming back to their vision on a regular basis to see if it’s still something that resonates for their organization. If this is an area you have not prioritized in your business, let this article serve as a reminder of the importance of getting in touch with your vision. I find that taking a step back and looking at my purpose for my business always re-inspires me. Let this process be fun and exciting. The results you’ll see are well worth the time you spend getting clear on where you want your business to go and grow. **BL**

Julie Migneault, MBA, is a business coach and consultant devoted to helping organizations create sustainable, successful businesses. She works

with clients who are ready to take their business to the next level through her coaching and consulting. “One of my unique gifts is the ability to see what’s going on in an organization at the root cause and work with my clients to create a very solid strategy to address the issue. I’ve helped CEOs, corporate executives, small to medium-sized business owners, and entrepreneurs in finding sustainable solutions to real problems in their organization.” www.sustainablebusinesssuccess.com

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“Having a strong vision is really the basis for creating what you want. Do you know that place of wanting something so badly that you can see it, feel it and taste it?”



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