

Upcoming Events and Seminars

Please visit nwisbdc.org for updated information about these and other SBDC events and seminars.

• **Launching Your Own Business Workshop**

The workshop is designed to help would-be entrepreneurs determine their preparedness and ability to start a business by examining the opportunities, responsibilities and challenges involved in business ownership.

Tuesday - September 20, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: The Regional Development Company, 1757 Thornapple Circle, Valparaiso, 46385

Tuesday - October 18, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: Purdue University Academic Learning Center, 9900 Connecticut Dr., Crown Point, 46307

Tuesday - November 15, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: Hammond INnovation Center, 5209 Hohman Avenue, Hammond, 46320

Tuesday - December 13, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: The Regional Development Company, 1757 Thornapple Circle, Valparaiso, 46385

Cost per workshop: \$25. Pre-register and pre-pay by calling 219-644-3513 or email northwest@isbdc.org.

Register online: Visit www.nwisbdc.org click Training Events, then Center & search "Northwest ISBDC."

• **Business Plan Writing Workshop—Saturdays: Sept 17, 24 & Oct 1 & 8, from 9 a.m. to noon**

Participants are guided through the process of creating a business plan: an essential tool for entrepreneurs looking to launch a new business or owners who are lacking this component. Each of the four sessions focuses on a different topic that is pertinent to the plan process. The series can be attended as a whole or in individual sessions.

Session 1: Company Description/Market Analysis/Research

Session 2: Competitive Assessment/Sales

Session 3: Operating Plan

Session 4: Finance

Location: PUC Academic Learning Center, 9900 Connecticut Dr., Room 233, Crown Point, 46307

Cost: \$175 for ALL four sessions or \$50 per session. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required.

Register: Visit <http://isbdc.ecenterdirect.com/ConferenceDetail.action?ID=11950> then follow instructions for payment.

• **Accelerating Productivity: For You, Your Staff and Your Company: Thursdays: Oct. 6, 13 and 20, from 8 to 10:30 a.m.**

This workshop series offers an opportunity for participants to utilize self-analysis to better understand their talents, decision-making skills and stress capacity. The workshops can be attended individually or as a whole series, which is recommended. At the end of each workshop, participants will outline a 30-day goal plan to work toward sharpening their leadership skills. *Participants will fill out a 10-15 minute online assessment beforehand.*

Workshop 1: Talent. Talent? Talent!

Workshop 2: Decisions. Decisions? Decisions!

Workshop 3: Stress. Stress? Stress!

Where: Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce, 162 W. Lincolnway, Valparaiso, 46383

Cost: For the first 15 people to sign up, the cost is \$89 when you purchase one workshop, \$159 for two and \$199 for all three. The 16th person and up will be \$115 for one, \$185 for two and \$225 for three. Group discounts are available. Refreshments will be provided.

Registration begins Sept. 1: www.success-trek.com/individual-assessment-workshop

• **QuickBooks Essentials Part II — Fridays: Nov. 4 & 11, from 1 to 4 p.m.**

Take your QuickBooks to the next level with his hands-on workshop. Facilitator Anna Sheets will cover payroll processing, time tracking, managing sales tax, analyzing data and custom reports, inventory, estimates and progress invoicing, customizing QuickBooks and Microsoft integration tools.

Location: PUC Academic Learning Center, 9900 Connecticut Dr., Room 221, Crown Point, 46307

Cost: \$100 for two-part workshop. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required with limited seating of 14 participants.

Register: Visit www.nwisbdc.org click Training Events, then Center & search "Northwest ISBDC."

NWI SBDC Quarterly Newsletter Issue 32 August 2011



9800 Connecticut Drive
Crown Point, IN 46307
ph: 219.644.3513
fax: 219.644.3682
www.nwisbdc.org



Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions, or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.

QUARTERLY
Newsletter

ISSUE

32

August
2011



**NORTHWEST
INDIANA**
Small Business Development Center

9800 Connecticut Drive
Crown Point, IN 46307
ph: 219.644.3513
fax: 219.644.3682
www.nwisbdc.org

in this issue

Sign up
for this newsletter
by sending an email to
northwest@isbdc.org

E-Day marks milestone **P1**

Email, social media etiquette **P2**

Featured business: Innovations in Learning **P3**

Upcoming SBDC Events **P4**

Redbox president to speak at E-Day

Marking 20 years of celebrating the entrepreneurial spirit, this year's E-Day event blends old traditions with new components.

As in years past, the 2011 Entrepreneurial Excellence luncheon will feature a keynote speaker: Redbox president Mitch Lowe.

He has been part of the video and entertainment industry for 30 years and has seen the Redbox network expand from 12 locations in 2003 to more than 27,000 today.

It was while consulting with McDonald's

business development group that he and the company's DVD vending machine team created the Redbox concept.

Lowe also has served as vice president of business development for Netflix and on the board of directors of the Video Software Dealers Association. He was named VSDA chairman in 1996.

He will share his insights as part of the luncheon presentation.

What's new

The Alumni Club debuts this year to recognize E-Day's past winners.

"By bringing together honorees from over the past 20 years, we hope to foster ties and spur dialogue within the region's small business community," said LeAnn McCrum, regional director of the NWI SBDC.

Winners are encouraged to participate in the event and can submit contact information via www.edayleaders.com.

As another platform to mark the milestone, a full day of workshops will be offered in four key areas: leadership, sales and marketing, financial and hiring.

The Leadership Symposium sessions include Leadership Imperative, which will showcase skills for success. The second session is Selling and Refining Your Customer-Focused Value Proposition.

A third session, Evaluating the Financial Health of Your Business, looks at utilizing financial statements for making decisions. The final session, Attracting, Selecting and Retaining Talent, examines how to hire and on-board the right people.

Tickets for the full day are \$140 and for the luncheon, \$40.

Nominations open

The NWI SBDC is now accepting nominations for the following categories through Sept. 7:

- Small Business Person of the Year
- Entrepreneurial Success
- Small Business Advocate
- Small Business Exporter Young Entrepreneur
- Minority or Woman-Owned Business
- Family Owned Business
- Emerging Small Business
- Small Business Journalist

Save the Date

Mark your calendars for Nov. 17. The new Leadership Symposium is from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the luncheon is from 11:30 to 1:15 p.m. at the Star Plaza in Merrillville.

For nomination and sponsorship forms and additional details, visit:

www.edayleaders.com.

Article written by:
Lesly Bailey, Freelance Writer

Etiquette rules for the online world

In the real world, the standards of manners are clear: say "thank you," share, wait your turn, and hold the door or the elevator. These are just some of the rules instilled in us since childhood.

Now, with so many of our interactions in the virtual world, what are some key principles of politeness that entrepreneurs should follow?

Theresa Valade, CEO of Success Trek, which offers services from executive coaching to team development, pinpoints email response time as one area of etiquette.

"Small business owners are insanely busy and pulled in so many different ways. I can completely understand why answering emails falls to the bottom of the list," she said. "But the reality is, in today's world we have to accept that email is as important to many people as a face-to-face conversation would be.

"If someone was in front of you and asked you a question, you'd never wait three days to answer it. Why is it somehow 'okay' to take three days when they ask it over email?"

She emphasizes organization and work flow to stay on top of emails and other day-to-day responsibilities. She suggests starting with goals, then outlining criteria that determines levels of importance and finally, prioritizing and letting the rest go.

"If you don't have an effective organizational system (one that you'll actually use), you'll get overwhelmed by 10 things as easily as 100," she said.

When it comes to email, she recommends "high priority items require a response anywhere from a few minutes to ½ hour. Medium priority can be the 'end of the day' catch-up emails. Low priority can be a day, but I wouldn't recommend going beyond two days – no matter who the email is from. That's just not good etiquette."

On social media channels, Kathy Sipple of My Social Media Coach, reminds

Experts' Top Tips

Social Media Strategies

- Make sure your brand is consistent across all platforms.
- Use a logo that shows well in a square space.
- Upload a professional photo of yourself for your LinkedIn profile.
- Have someone you know review your social media copy and presentation. How well are you giving people contact info? Don't make people work to have to call you. Take the work out.
- Use your email signature and business cards as opportunities to showcase your social media involvement.
- Be responsive. Don't create a profile and only check it once a week or month. People follow you because they want information right now.
- Be transparent. Whether than taking down comments, it's much

better to give candid, truthful answers publicly than it is to delete comments.

- Kathy Sipple of My Social Media Coach

Email Etiquette

- Remember that whatever you email instantly produces a written record.
 - Never, ever send an email when you're angry. If you're not comfortable saying something to someone face-to-face, then don't send it in an email.
 - If you get an email and you're confused as to the sender's tone or response, pick up the phone.
- Have a business account and a personal account and don't mix the two.

- Success Trek CEO Theresa Valade



users to follow a site's rules of engagement.

"Facebook is like a backyard barbecue. You may be able to hand out business cards, but you are there to talk about social stuff," Sipple said. "LinkedIn is the opposite. It is like a 24-hour trade show for a Chamber of Commerce. This is not the audience for family pictures."

She suggests determining a Facebook strategy and sticking with it. If you want to keep it strictly personal and you get a friend request from a professional contact, let them know you would rather connect on LinkedIn.

For Facebook business pages, remember who your audience is and tailor content from there, she said.

"If you are a computer consultant, offer tips on new upgrades or backing up data."

On LinkedIn, Sipple feels the default language when seeking a connection is not the best strategy.

"It's good etiquette to remind a person why you should be friends or connections," she said.

The bad etiquette she sees on social media platforms is when there is no interaction and a business owner is just about promotion.

"Social means social and not your own personal TV station," she said. "Most of us are opening up a two-way communication channel. If you don't see the value, don't do it."

Innovations in Learning targets developmental disabilities

Dr. Bridget Harrison and the Innovations in Learning staff are helping region residents who face developmental disabilities while providing additional mental health services.

The center, located in Merrillville and Hobart, has a program for children with autism and a program for adults with mental disabilities.

Launched in 2005, Dr. Harrison, who is owner and clinical director at Innovations, said she continues to experience growth because the core members of her skilled staff have prompted an increased demand for services. After adding the second location in the spring of 2010, her staff has gone from 20 to over 60 employees and the center services around 360 clients, from age 2 to geriatric age.

She said a challenge Innovations is facing due to growth is making sure to maintain quality. Her core staff had shared responsibilities, but after the expansion, it was necessary to create departments and her staff was spread out. From this sprang organization, communication and system challenges that are being addressed.

"Within all of our changes, we need to make sure that we are providing the best quality services and we are staying true to the principles of behavioral analysis that are part of the reasons we are growing so fast," Dr. Harrison said.

She sees the ISBDC as a partner to help with business basics and principles. She has worked with the NWI Small Business Development Center and Regional Director LeAnn McCrum on strategic planning and identifying weaknesses and strengths

Business spotlight

Dr. Bridget Harrison works with children with autism and adults with mental disabilities at Innovations in Learning.



as the business faces growth and expansion challenges.

"As a clinician I am not a business person so I didn't have those basic business principles and knowledge," Dr. Harrison said. "LeAnn was instrumental in leading us in doing strategic planning and identifying the underlying functions of our company — what we should be focusing on, where our weaknesses are, where we are doing well and where we don't need to spend as much time.

"Every time LeAnn leaves, we feel energized and ready to take the next step, so it's been extremely helpful."

Dr. Harrison looks toward continuing to work with the SBDC in the future.

"Really looking to the future, as to getting stronger as far as organizations, our systems, financials, HR — all those things — with the help of the SBDC moving us that way ... to just be a well-organized functioning business."



Locations: 8901 Randolph St. in Hobart and 8200 Georgia St. in Merrillville

Phone: 219-942-5590 or 219-791-1400

Web: www.innovationsinlearning.net

Dr. Harrison tells her story as part of our video success story series.

Find the Innovations in Learning video along with other region and state businesses at

www.isbdc.org

Click on Our Impact and Success Stories.

Articles written by:
Lesly Bailey, Freelance Writer