

Great Lakes BUSINESS

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November 2009

This newsletter is a joint initiative of Great Lakes Council and Hunter Business Centre

"It's never too late to be who you might have been." --George Elliot

Upcoming Workshops & Events for you and your business

MANAGING YOUR BUSINESS FINANCES WORKSHOP

"An essential workshop for all small business owners wishing to maintain and understand the financial health of their business, using simple but effective financial control techniques, and easy to implement systems and tools that will keep you abreast of your financial condition at all times".

This is a single comprehensive 5 hour workshop with real life examples, exercises and participation, and covering the basic financial statements, as well as Cashflow forecasting, the key Ratios for success, working capital, interest cover, the burn rate, break even analysis and solvency tests.

A must for small business owners.

Date: Tuesday 8th December
Time: 10am to 4pm (with one hour lunch break)
Venue: To be advised

Email Mike Hilsden mike@businesscentre.com.au by COB December 3rd if you would like to find out more and to book your place.

RETAIL WORKSHOPS

Due to problems with grant funding the series of Retail Workshops recently promoted to be held during November and December, will not be happening until early 2010. They will occur along with a series of business development and planning workshops. Keep an eye on this newsletter to find out more and to book your place.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR OH&S OBLIGATIONS ARE?

The recent OH&S Workshops conducted in Gloucester were very informative and well attended. David Sheehan (Workcover Business Advisor) conducted a no nonsense but entertaining presentation designed to create awareness of OH&S obligations and to provide simple and effective options to progress with safety strategies. These workshops are free and include a range of materials to assist you develop safe workplace strategies and programs. If you are interested in accessing these obligation free workshops contact Deb Tuckerman to help arrange a session for early 2010.

Renewable Energy Generation - Opportunities for the Great Lakes Economy

You are invited to attend a Community Forum on renewable energy and the potential benefits for local employment and business growth next Wednesday 25 November.

Special guest, Dr Jim Smitham, Deputy Chief of CSIRO's Division of Energy Technology will address the Forum followed by a question and answer session and general discussion.

The event is an initiative of Great Lakes Council's Economic Development Committee.

Forum will take place at Great Lakes College Tuncurry Senior Campus Lecture Theatre, Block B (off Northern Parkway, Tuncurry) from 6.30pm. For more information, go to www.greatlakesbusiness.com.au or phone Deb Tuckerman on 6591 7390.

Lunch Time Networking Event Successful

26 women joined Council's Economic Development Manager, Deb Tuckerman and Forster Tuncurry Chamber of Commerce President, Joanne Jay for an informal women in business luncheon on 22 October at Box Fish Casual Cuisine, Forster. A wide range of businesses were represented including financial services, real estate, interior design, architecture, retail, training services and earth moving, to name just a few. Several people were new to the area and indicated that the event was just what they were looking for. Based on the positive feedback, it looks like the lunches will be held each month (except over the busy summer months).

The next event will be held:

When: Thursday, 10 December
Time: From 12noon
Where: Box Fish Casual Cuisine - Wharf Street Forster
Cost: Buy your own drinks and lunch.

The events are designed to provide a networking opportunity for all local women in business.

Contact Yvette Ellis on 6591 7303 or email Yvette.ellis@greatlakes.nsw.gov.au no later than Tuesday 8 December 2009. Bookings are essential.

Feedback from the Small Business Diagnostic Program

Over the past six months the Hunter Business Centre has engaged Geoff Marshall to conduct one on one confidential interviews, through the Small Business Diagnostic Program, with small businesses throughout the Great Lakes region. Over 85 individual interviews have been conducted, with the major input being around business planning, recordkeeping and creating innovative marketing opportunities.

We all have different and sometimes set views about how we conduct our businesses and seeking an external independent and confidential view can often open up the mind to new ideas and opportunities. The interviews and advisory service is obligation free and provides an independent analysis of your current position. The project ceases in late December, so if you are interested in an initial interview, or just want to seek a follow up from a previous contact, phone HBC on 6539 3966 or email Geoff geoff@businesscentre.com.au

Through the course of the Program a number of new business relationships have been nurtured encouraging business with similar goals to provide potential links or to seek mutually competitive advantages.

The recent work in relation to the development and launch of the Tuncurry brochure, which included 105 businesses working collaboratively to develop a product to market the

individuality of the Tuncurry Village Centre has also been particularly beneficial. A great result for individual businesses and for the group as a collective, and is an example of what can occur when businesses work in co-operation rather than seeing each other as direct competitors.



Launch of the Tuncurry brochure at the Rockpool

It is always important to review and validate the way you conduct your business - that may mean a fresh approach occasionally, a review of service standards, a design or rearrangement of the layout or just a simple customer reward program.

It was great football coach, Jack Gibson, who once said 'In football, if you are standing still, you're going backwards fast' - there is no doubt that also applies to the small business sector.

NSW Innovation Advisory Service

The **NSW Innovation Advisory Service (IAS)** is a leading provider of innovation services to innovators, inventors, entrepreneurs and small to medium businesses. The IAS works to assist with turning new ideas into viable products, processes or services and new businesses. The IAS assists over 1,200 innovators each year. Ausinvent.com is the online service for the NSW Innovation Advisory Service.

The NSW Government is committed to advancing innovation and facilitating the promotion and adoption of innovation in business and funds the NSW Innovation Advisory Service to provide a range of free professional services for innovators who are ready to take their ideas to the next stage.

The NSW Innovation Advisory Service provides a range of free professional and confidential services to:

- Provide independent, practical advice and assistance;
- Educate and develop innovation skills.
- Fast track viable new ideas.
- Support innovators as they progress through the commercialisation process.
- Link innovators with patent attorneys, designers, prototypers, manufacturers and many other specialists.

To contact the NSW Innovation Advisory Service:

Phone: **1300 411 417**

email info@ausinvent.com.

Web: www.ausinvent.com

Street Address: Level 2, 37 Bligh St, Sydney. NSW, 2001

Mail: GPO Box 4837. Sydney. NSW. 2000

Fax: 02 82573399

The NSW Innovation Advisory Service is delivered by Alchemy Innovation Development Pty Ltd.

'Kickstart' for businesses - Apprenticeships bonus

The Kickstart Bonus is an employer incentive designed to counteract the impact of the global recession on commencements and retention of young people as traditional trade Australian Apprentices.

It will be helpful for any employers deliberating the expense of putting on a young apprentice for the New Year and for employers who employ an Apprentice in a traditional trade who is **aged 19 years and under**.

The Bonus is payable for **new sign ups between 1 December 2009 and 28 February 2010** in qualifications leading to a **traditional trade occupation**.

The new Kickstart Bonus totals **\$3,350** paid in instalments of:

- \$850 at 3 months
- \$2500 at 9 months

This is **in addition to** the usual incentives of: \$1500 Commencement, \$1000 Rural & Regional Skill Shortage and \$2500 Completion - not forgetting that the apprentice will also receive \$3800 in payments during the apprenticeship. For more information click on the link below.

[For further information](#)

New Executive for Chamber

The new executive for 2010 for the Forster Tuncurry Chamber of Commerce, elected at the AGM held on Wednesday the 28th of October, are listed below.

Joanne Jay	President
Peter Rooney	Vice President
Jan Lee	Treasurer
Stan Krzemien	Secretary

with Bob Lee, Dave Dundas, Jim Isackson, Linda Baird, Peter Iverson as Committee members.

If you would like to know more about or become a member of the Forster Tuncurry Chamber of Commerce you can email forsterchamber@gmail.com or go to http://www.ftchamber.com.au/forster/ftchamber.nsf/Great_Lakes_Calendar

10 Top tips towards small business success

1. **Target** - You are not all things to all people. Decide on your niche--narrow your focus and broaden your appeal.

2. **Be Different** - If your competitors are doing it, don't. Stand out from an overcrowded marketplace where so much of the advertising and products look the same.
3. **Build a Team** - Don't hire an employee to fill a position. Employ a person to be part of a team to build your business.
4. **Be Fast** - Time is the most precious commodity. When delivery is expected Friday, show up Thursday afternoon. Return calls and emails now.
5. **Say Thank You** - A lot. Tell your customers and employees how much you appreciate them. Better yet, do it the old fashioned way: take pen to paper and write them a note.
6. **Be Consistent** - Make sure your business has a consistent look and feel. A customer must get the same flavor from everyone within your organization. Always.
7. **Smile** - Throw out the reasons you think people buy from you like price, product quality or your warranty. They buy because they like you.
8. **Fanatical Optimism** - The glass must always be half full. Attitude will always win out in the end and infect all of those around you.
9. **Sell Soft** - Don't ever hard sell. Solve problems. Satisfy wants. Do what is truly best for your customer.
10. **Leave Your Comfort Zone** - Never accept the idea that this is the way you've always done it. Never accept that a new idea or technology could never work for you.

Brian Grinonneau

Useful contacts

Comments and feedback on the Newsletter's content is always appreciated. You might also like to suggest a topic or share some ideas or tips for future editions - good news stories are also welcome - email Sue Druce with anything you think would suit.

For past editions of the newsletter please visit www.greatlakesbusiness.com.au

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