

# Small Business Matters



Cutting the ribbon for the Official Launch of BizPal, a new online business permit and licensing service are: (left to right) Steve Furness, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism, City of Owen Sound, MPP Bill Murdoch, Mayor Ruth Lovell Stanners, MP Larry Miller, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, ServiceOntario, Jane Phillips, Manager The Business Enterprise Centre – Owen Sound and Area. To read more about BizPal, see page 3.

## To Earn More...Learn More...

The difference between a successful business owner and an average one comes down to one essential factor: learning. Be it business programs or self-help books, an effective entrepreneur never stops educating oneself. They know they have to build a broad base of skills and update knowledge in a competitive business world.

It takes courage, enthusiasm, determination, self-control, as well as other personal attributes to be an Olympic gold medal winner or to become a professional athlete. The same holds true for a successful entrepreneur.

Gone are the days of merely putting up with the popular short quote: "business as usual." Changes and new technology are inevitable, and any business owner who wants to succeed needs to keep up with the times, learn how to embrace new tools and processes. A steady flow of innovative ideas, knowledge and resources come with the changing times.

The knowledge-based economy is driving a greater-than-ever demand for skills and higher education levels. The benefits of learning include higher earnings and lower unemployment risks, both of which contribute to individual and family financial security.

To learn anything, there is no better long-term learning tool than actual practical experience. It is also the greatest trial when you are "forced" to learn and practice something for your business that does not come naturally. You can rest assured that you cannot know it all but that

you **do** need to be aware of what your business needs and how to make that happen.

What better time to sign up for local business learning opportunities?

To some extent, tying the subject into things you already know with a view toward a broad understanding of the subject is known as holistic learning -- connecting unfamiliar concepts, ideas and facts to ones you already know or comprehend. It is often said that experience is the best teacher, but why not put learning in place to make sure that the experience is a good one?

I think that this can also be known as "Entrepreneurial Learning."

"Teach me, show me, then let me practice it, by doing it".

So is it bookkeeping, the transition to HST, the world of E-Business, or specific business tools for women? Perhaps you have been established and are looking to plan for succession- where will your business go- how do you exit and what about planning the process?

Take the time to invest with the investment of time to learn. Build a better business and make a better income.

Jane Phillips  
Manager & Business Consultant, The Business Enterprise Centre, Owen Sound & Area

**Business Lives Here**  
Applauding Owen Sound and Area Business Successes

## Tell us Your Story

Why start and run your business in Owen Sound?

Here's what others are saying..

- large regional market
- stable eager workforce
- over 1500 established small businesses
- supportive business community
- infrastructure
- diverse offering of business opportunities
- thriving downtown and shoulder business areas
- exciting, varied lifestyle

Tell us your business story today by emailing [jphillips@owensound.ca](mailto:jphillips@owensound.ca)

We are spreading the news...Owen Sound is the place to start and grow your business.

## Hiring Subsidy

Planning to hire a student this summer? Now is the time to apply for wage subsidies!

The 2010 Ontario Rural Summer Jobs Service is accepting applications from businesses and organizations planning to create summer jobs for rural youth. Employers can receive a hiring incentive of \$2 per hour for up to 16 weeks.

**Deadline for applications is April 16, 2010.** Don't delay, apply today! For more information or to apply go to:

[www.omafra.gov.on.ca](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca)

**Mr. Inkbee – 519.470.4652 – [www.mrinkbee.com](http://www.mrinkbee.com)**

#### **Vital Statistics**

**Owner: Rhonda and John Flanagan**  
**Hometown: Grey Highlands, Ontario and Ireland**  
**Company: Mr. Inkbee**  
**Business Opened: May 2007**  
**Employees: 2 (plus us)**



Rhonda Flanagan is a self-proclaimed Grey County girl. Although she grew up in Grey Highlands, she spent most of her professional career in Niagara. She later spent two years in Ireland with her husband John.

A stroke in 2004 caused Rhonda to re-evaluate her lifestyle and work life.

That combined with an opportunity to move back to Canada led Rhonda home to Grey County. Not wanting to go back to her previous career, Rhonda and John looked for a business they could run together. They wanted to sell a consumable product that would allow them to build on repeat business. Recycling ink and toner cartridges fit the bill and Mr. Inkbee was born.

They chose to open their business in Owen Sound rather than Rhonda's hometown of Grey Highlands because of the size of the city. Owen Sound has a population base that could easily support their business. However, not content to remain within the city boundaries, Rhonda and John built their business by reaching out to the rest of Grey and Bruce counties. Locating drop-off locations at other businesses in surrounding villages have allowed them to become part of the larger community. As Rhonda says, "They see us reaching out to them, rather than them coming to us."

Mr. Inkbee has seen a number of successes in their short time in business. Already they've expanded by moving to a larger storefront in downtown Owen Sound and have added drop-off locations in nine communities. In 2009 they won the Owen Sound Chamber of Commerce Environmental Award. But most importantly, they've built solid relationships with their customers; relationships that have led to solid customer loyalty.

Rhonda feels Owen Sound offers many opportunities for new businesses. There is a solid community in the downtown, with many great businesses that make downtown a vibrant location for businesses and customers alike. Additionally, there is a local population that is ready to work. "There are lot of people who want to work," says Rhonda. "There are lots of people who want to be trained." For someone who wants to start a business and be part of a community, Owen Sound is a great place to be.

**Tom Bovingdon, Infinity Network Solutions – 519.377.2371 – [www.infinityns.ca](http://www.infinityns.ca)**

On the surface IT specialist Tom Bovingdon's measure of success is modest. "As long as everyone is getting paid and everyone is happy," he says. However, when you dig deeper, Bovingdon has lofty dreams for Infinity Network Solutions.

Moving to Owen Sound to be closer to his wife's family, Bovingdon had always known he would start his own business. After getting laid off he noticed no one was serving the IT needs of small businesses in the area. Bovingdon created Infinity Network Solutions to serve this niche.

Infinity Network Solutions sells hardware as a value-added reseller. They provide technical support, consulting, disaster recovery, and install and maintain computer networks. Customers include small businesses, retail stores, government and manufacturing firms.

When it comes to doing business in Owen Sound Bovingdon has discovered the hardest part is also the biggest strength.

"Getting in is tough," he says of the Owen Sound business community. "You definitely need to be friends before you do business."

But taking the time to build those relationships is worth it. According to Bovingdon, 98 percent of their business is word of mouth. "We spend zero dollars on marketing."

How did he do it? By networking and building relationships. But it's more than networking. "You can have the best product in the world," says Bovingdon. "But without great customer service to back it up, you won't keep your customers."

Bovingdon enjoys doing business here. The IT industry is always a high stress field. Often they are working under time constraints, or resolving major problems. But because Owen Sound is more laid-back, the work environment is less stressful than in Toronto.

For people considering starting a new business in Owen Sound, Bovingdon has three pieces of advice.

First, talk to the Business Enterprise Centre. They've been a big part of his success, helping with questions, feedback and support. Second, join a networking group to start building those important business relationships.

And finally love what you do. This is necessary for you to be able to put in the hours needed while still giving great customer service with a smile.

What's next? Bovingdon sees adding more staff to allow him to serve more of Grey and Bruce counties.

"We want to be the premier IT company in the area." Not so modest after all.



#### **Vital Statistics**

**Owner: Tom Bovingdon**  
**Hometown: Woodstock, Ontario**  
**Company: Infinity Network Solutions**  
**Business Opened: August 2006**  
**Full-Time Employees: 3**

# Summer Company 2010 is now OPEN!!

## Summer Company

### BE YOUR OWN BOSS

If you're a student between the ages 15 and 29 years old and are going back to school in the fall- you may be eligible to run your own business throughout the summer and receive up to \$3000 in cash awards!

Contact the Business Enterprise Centre,  
Owen Sound and Area at 519-371-3232 or  
[rford@owensound.ca](mailto:rford@owensound.ca)

For applications and business planning visit;  
[www.ontario.ca/summercompany](http://www.ontario.ca/summercompany)

Summer Company is an Ontario funded program

## BizPaL

Your online source for  
*Business Permits and Licences*

Starting and running a business in the City of Owen Sound just became easier thanks to BizPaL, a new online business permit and licence service that saves time spent on paperwork and helps entrepreneurs start up faster.

BizPaL is an easy to use service that provides entrepreneurs with ready access to information on permits and licences needed to establish and run their businesses. This unique partnership among federal, provincial, and local governments is designed to cut through the paperwork burden and red tape that small business owners encounter. The BizPaL service in Owen Sound was developed by the Business Enterprise Centre of Owen Sound and Area, the City of Owen Sound, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada. Area business owners and entrepreneurs can access the service by visiting [www.owensound.ca/business](http://www.owensound.ca/business) or [www.serviceontario.ca](http://www.serviceontario.ca).

# Upcoming Workshops

## Transition to the HST Workshop

A representative from **Canada Revenue Agency** will be presenting these **FREE** workshops to small and medium sized businesses. Business owners will learn how the harmonization of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) with the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) would be implemented on July 1, 2010.

These workshops are being offered in various locations, for a full listing of dates and locations please go to:  
[www.owensound.ca/business/enterprisecentre/businesssevents.php](http://www.owensound.ca/business/enterprisecentre/businesssevents.php)

Owen Sound Workshops are being held:  
Wednesday March 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm - Thursday March 11<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 am – 10:30 am  
Bayshore Community Centre, Owen Sound

### Get Back to Basics with our Basics of Bookkeeping Workshop

This three part Bookkeeping Workshop will allow you to use the tools and information to understand your financial statements and your own books confidently.

Wednesday March 24<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday March 31<sup>st</sup>  
and Wednesday April 7<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm  
The Business Enterprise Centre Boardroom,  
173 8<sup>th</sup> Street East, Owen Sound

Cost is \$80 per person, includes handouts  
Register early, this workshop is limited to 8 participants

### E-Business Workshops

This series of E-Business Workshops will provide participants with the information and tools necessary to help them get started or be more effective in the world of e-business. The five part workshop series will include the following topics:  
**Intro to E-Business, Getting Started, Marketing Part 1, Marketing Part 2, Building Web Sites that Work.**

Thursday April 29<sup>th</sup>, Thursday May 6<sup>th</sup>, Thursday May 13<sup>th</sup>,  
Thursday May 20<sup>th</sup>, Thursday May 27<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 am – 10:30 am  
Stone Tree Golf & Fitness,  
Hwy 6 & 10, Owen Sound

Cost is \$25 per workshop or all 5 workshops  
for \$100, includes full breakfast and workbooks

### The Best Kept Secrets for Women Entrepreneurs

Guest speaker *Susan Baka, President of Toronto based Bay Communications & Marketing.*  
In this interactive workshop geared to women you'll get:

- Sure-fire advice on how to create a compelling pitch
- Tips for projecting a professional image
- Secrets to powerful networking
- Practical handouts that will help your business grow and succeed

Monday May 31<sup>st</sup>, 11:30 am – 3:00 pm

Stone Tree Golf & Fitness, Hwy 6 & 10, Owen Sound

Cost is \$35 per person, includes full business luncheon and networking

**Pre-registration  
required for all  
workshops and  
seminars.**

#### The Business Enterprise Centre

173 8<sup>th</sup> Street East  
Owen Sound, Ontario  
N4K 1K9  
519.371.3232

*E-Mail:*  
[businesshelp@owensound.ca](mailto:businesshelp@owensound.ca)

*Web Site:*  
[www.owensound.ca/business/enterprisecentre](http://www.owensound.ca/business/enterprisecentre)

### Owen Sound Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting and Dinner

**Guest Speaker: Michael Barrett:  
CEO South West Local Health  
Integration Network**

Thursday March 25<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm  
Best Western Inn on the Bay

Members - \$55.00

Non-Members - \$65.00

[www.oschamber.com](http://www.oschamber.com) to register

**Happy Spring!  
(It's nearly here!)**

**Fact:** Customers are willing to pay up to ten percent more for excellent service.

—Ron Zemke, author of  
*Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service*



"It's one of the advantages of having your own business."

