

The Local Biz Magazine

Summer 2009 **FREE**
Durham Region

IN THIS ISSUE

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Cover Photography: Andrew Reefer

In Picture: A lively shot of the Pool at Parkwood in Oshawa.
Trivia: The pool scene in the movie 'Billy Madison' was shot there

In This Issue

- 5 **Creating Outdoor Spaces** - Todd O'Brien
- 7 **The Language Your Body Speaks** - Renee Munro
- 9 **Toward Healthier Communities** - Ernest A. James
- 10 **Improve Your Health with Thorough Cleaning**
- Deborah Nembhard-Colquhoun
- 11 **Let's Do Lunch** - Susan Scott
- 13 **Hormones And Homonyms** - David Crane
- 14 **Facebook, Mixing Business with Pleasure** - Sue Sutcliffe

Regular feature: "The Coach Corner"

- 15 **Life Coach** - Dennis Brown
- 15 **Business Coach** - Peter Miller

From the Editor

STEP BY STEP



Chances are, you're among the 35 million people who watched that YouTube clip of 47-year-old singer Susan Boyle, who astonished the judges on the "Britain's Got Talent" show back in April with her remarkable performance of "I Dreamed a Dream." Boyle was an instant sensation, except that this unemployed office worker had been singing since she was 12 years old. Her "overnight success" was 35 years in the making!

Now sure, there are business stories of instant successes - like Susan Scott's look at Sue Pitchforth and Debbie Williams's luncheon series in this issue - but even such instant hits require careful planning and ongoing effort to achieve longevity. Otherwise, you get Enron and AIG.

The current recession has everyone nervous but the secret is to think long-term. Sure, no one knows what the next year or two will bring but spending that time learning your field and developing new skills will pay off in the long run.

That's the approach urged by Todd O'Brien and Ernest A. James in this issue, as they challenge our readers to imagine bigger possibilities, whether it's a massive landscaping project or nothing less than transforming Durham's health care system.

It sounds daunting but it's all about moving out of your comfort zone, one step at a time. Sue Sutcliffe explains how Facebook, for instance, can be more than just a messaging tool for teenagers, provided people are willing to learn its uses and experiment.

And the little details count too! Also in this issue, Renee Munro has given us an invaluable lesson on the importance of body language while I love David Drane for his piece on homonyms. I can't bear to see another person confuse 'your' with 'you're' so thanks, David!

All this work, big and small, pays off. Remember: Andrea Bocelli didn't begin singing opera until his thirties. Henry Miller didn't get a novel published until his forties. Julia Child became the world's favourite TV chef in her fifties. Col. Harland Sanders began franchising his fried chicken restaurants in his sixties. Grandma Moses started painting in her seventies.

It's never too late to start, change or revive your dream career. Just sing along with Susan!

Scott Dagostino
Editor-in-Chief



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Creating Outdoor Living Spaces

by Todd O'Brien

As the glorious sunshine and beauty of the summer draws us outside,

many of you might be thinking about how you could improve or create your own outdoor space so you can enjoy this delightful season to the fullest. The latest trend in landscape design is to rethink our backyards in terms of personalized outdoor living spaces, like a living room outside. With so many new and innovative products, the possibilities of creating your own unique space are endless. As with any type of home renovation, costs can escalate quickly. Some good planning and prioritizing in the initial stages can help keep costs under control and also create guidelines for successfully tackling what might seem like an overwhelming project. It is worth doing this preliminary work because there is great value in having your own outdoor sanctuary, a place where you can relax and rejuvenate, and experience the serenity and peacefulness of nature. Or perhaps you want a place to throw big barbeques and parties with your friends and family. Hopefully some of the following considerations will help you decide what your own outdoor space should be like and how you can achieve it.

The first consideration I would suggest is to look at the big picture, that is, your entire property, and how you would like to see it over the long term. Keep in mind the grade of the land and the surrounding land, how it drains water flow, the soil conditions and other features of the land. These features could allow you to do certain things and preclude you from doing others. For instance, poor drainage may require a drainage system; shady areas may require certain plants, or an alternative to grass. Do you require privacy from neighbours? Also note the conditions of your space in relation to nature and the elements. A patio with direct southern exposure will be hot and sunny all day. You might love this, or you might want to consider a shade tree to provide relief. A space with northern wind exposure might benefit from a row of evergreens to break the wind; delicate plants may not do well here.

Once you have an understanding of these limitations/possibilities, ask yourself what you want to do with the space and what sort of features you want. If you intend to move within a few years you might just want a small area to put a barbeque and table and chairs. You might be in a new home and want a nice front entrance and steps right away for instant curb appeal. Or you may want a pool in the backyard with a patio, seat walls,

raised gardens, waterfalls, Jacuzzi, gazebo, built in barbeque, fireplace and the like. As I said, the possibilities are endless. Getting a sense of what you want to use the space for will help you with the design and possible features. You may want a lot of gardens to get your hands dirty, or gardens with very little maintenance. Or maybe the perfect lawn, a pond, lighting, an automatic sprinkler. As you can see, these decisions and considerations are highly personal, and there is no one right answer. Different things will work for different people and different landscapes, but the result of this process can be a space that is uniquely yours, and fits your particular lifestyle.

Once you have an idea of what you want to do with your space, you can prioritize the tasks in order of importance and budget. At this stage if the planning is complicated, you might want to hire a landscape designer or landscape architect to help develop a plan, essentially a scale drawing of your space. Perhaps you can do some of the preparation work yourself, or the planting. Or you might just want to hire somebody to complete the whole thing at once. You may break up the project into phases, to be completed over a number of years.

Whatever you decide, if you hire a contractor/landscaper, I recommend that you hire someone who shares your vision and is passionate about the project, who offers good feedback and various solutions to the project's challenges. Above all, hire someone that you are comfortable working with, and whom you are confident will complete the job properly and with a high level of quality. The installation of landscape stonework should last a very long time, and whoever you choose should stand behind their work by offering at least a two year warranty on the stonework.

As we can see, some preliminary thinking and planning can go a long way to helping you create the outdoor living space that not only fits but enhances your lifestyle. Good luck with your project and enjoy the summer and the beauty of the outdoors.

Todd O'Brien, of O'Brien and Family Landscape Design and Construction has over 15 years experience in the landscape design industry. He is very passionate about helping homeowners achieve the landscaping solutions that fit their lifestyle and budget.



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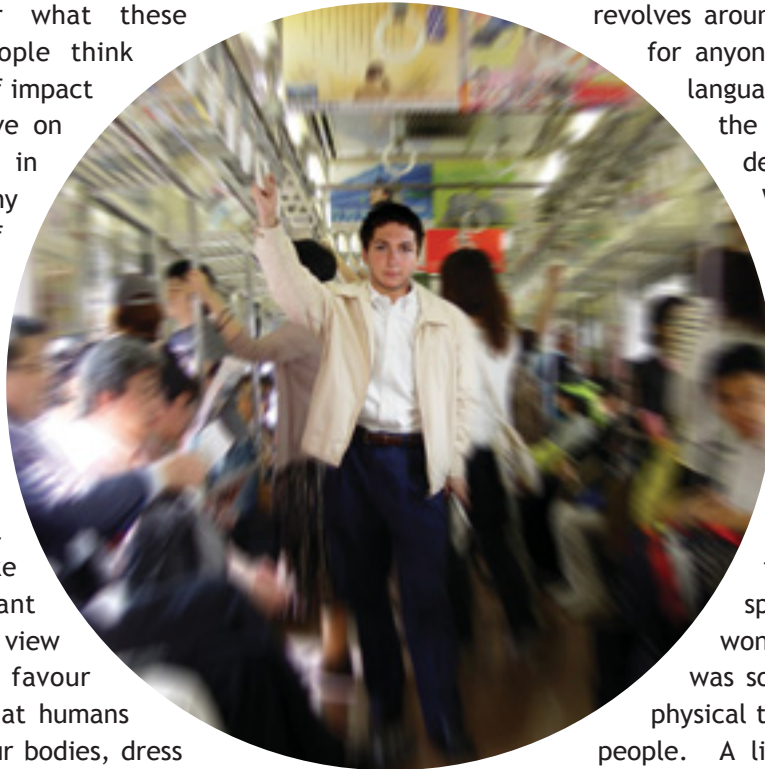
by Renee Munroo

Have you ever thought about the number of people you communicate with every day? During the course of the average twelve to seventeen hour day, you come into the direct eyesight of hundreds of people. You are not aware of most of them because you have no reason to be. It could be a life-changing exercise for you however, to consider what these nameless, faceless people think about you. What kind of impact does your presence have on those who notice you in passing? Do you have any idea of the kind of messages your physical presence might be communicating to them? Our world has become smaller due to technology, but humans have remained a very judgmental species. We make assumptions the instant people come into our view and they return the favour because that is just what humans do. The way we hold our bodies, dress our bodies, and the way we behave all contribute to the non-verbal language that we all speak. Whether we acknowledge that fact or not, it is a fact.

So, how can you be sure that your non-verbal language is speaking positively? The following questions might help:

1. *Has a past encounter made someone seem a little tentative around you now, or does he or she actually seem glad to see you?*
2. *Are you meeting someone for the first time and feeling nervous about making a good impression?*
3. *Are you feeling physically ill at the thought of being called upon to speak publicly?*
4. *Is there someone in your life who is frustrating or maddening and yet you want him or her to feel comfortable coming to you with a problem?*

The emotions you feel in either of these situations will dictate the body language that you speak.



As the boss or as an employee, you want your fellow workers to feel comfortable and valued. You want to be known as a fair and trustworthy person who has the time for others. Can you communicate these feelings without actually speaking the words? Yes you can. Your non-verbal language says it all. When the world revolves around you, there is no room for anyone else. That non-verbal language is also speaking and the people around you can definitely hear it.

When you arrive at an event wearing jeans and everyone else is dressed up, do you ignore the faux pas or give excuses to everyone you meet? When your eyes are drifting all over the room instead of on the face of the person speaking with you, do you wonder why the conversation was so short? Think about the physical things that occur between people. A limp handshake says, "I'd rather not touch you". Cross your arms, lean back in your chair or take a step away from someone and you are telling them that you are not interested in what they have to say. If you keep forgetting the other persons' name during a conversation, it tells them that they are not important to you. Yes, our world is still a physically judgmental one so care and attention must be top of mind. You would be wise to channel your positive thoughts and feelings into your manner and style as well.

Renee has been a resident of the Durham Region for over 20 years. Renee believes that life is cyclical and that what used to be viewed as old-fashioned is slowly making its way back today as new-fashioned. The sense of occasion is becoming important again and along for the ride is the expectation of appropriateness in dress, manners and attitude. She works daily with others to make sure they work and socialize successfully in this new age.



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Towards Healthier Communities

by Ernest A. James

Is it me, or is there a general level of disinterest in our health systems here in the region?

You'd think with all the news of balanced budget pressures on hospitals, commercials depicting nurses disappearing from our communities, overly long wait times in emergency departments, doctor shortages, services being transferred from our local hospitals etc., that our health system would constantly be the water-cooler topic of the day!

On the contrary! In my experience, most people aren't aware of recent technological advances in health care or even the fact that the province no longer centrally administers our health care system.

I think there's a dire need to turn this situation around by injecting a healthy mixture of awareness, interest and action, but before I delve into a discussion, I'd like to describe a few important terms; with a background in Information Technology, I'm only too aware of the ubiquitous disdain for acronyms, so let's get them out of the way quickly.

Firstly, there's E-Health.

There are the two components of e-Health, the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) and the Electronic Health Record (EHR) - we'll use the analogy of the Loblaws grocery chain (many stores with a Head Office that manages them) to aid our understanding.

In the store, there's a computer system that the store manager and his staff use to manage the day-to-day operation - this is analogous to an EMR that a doctor uses to manage patient information in his/her practice.

At the Loblaws Head Office however, staff use their information system to manage the overall chain of stores in terms of produce inventory, human resources, marketing, etc. Although they have access at an individual store level, their primary function is more big picture-oriented in terms of the need to know how well Loblaws as a company is doing at any given time - this is also similar to the EHR that's managed by the province - although they also have access to individual patient records from the various health care providers (hospitals, doctors' offices, walk-in-clinics etc.), they're more concerned with how the system's doing as a whole - especially during the budget process.

Secondly, the Central East Local Health Integration Network (CE LHIN).

The Ontario Government divided the province into 14 administrative areas called LHINs and downloaded the funding and accountability for health care to each of them - our LHIN in the Durham Region is called Central East.

I mentioned the above acronyms to show that:

- technological advances are now available by way of EMR/EHR systems to help manage the ever-increasing costs of health care (for a deeper understanding and ideas as to how you can help, see the website: <http://www.infoway-inforoute.ca/lang-en/>)



- the power is now within our communities to help manage the priorities of how health care funding is allocated; check out the web site: <http://www.centraleastlhin.on.ca/>

One could perhaps argue the point that s/he's fit and healthy and has never been a burden on the health resources of the province, so how/why does/should this concern them?

To help answer this conundrum, I'd like to introduce the "it-could-have-been-me" principle; many people use the latter to:

- show their gratitude for their current well-being
- show their concern for the well-being of their relatives, especially the older ones
- show their humanity for others in the community who may not be as fortunate

An excellent example of this principle in action was the recent community backlash to the decision to transfer mental health services from the Ajax /Pickering hospital to the Centenary Hospital; many of those who rallied against the move simply felt it was in the best interest of the community for the services to remain - to my way of thinking, it was more a humanitarian reaction than anything else; you can read more on this at: <http://www.friendsofaph.com/>.

So, how does one help raise the level of awareness and interest in our health-care system? I'd like to suggest the following non-exclusive list, namely:

- attending the CE LHIN board meetings to get an appreciation for the issues being dealt with - the previously-noted web site has a calendar of events
- watch for health news articles in the media, local or otherwise
- get a basic understanding of and support the various cost-saving initiatives such as EMRs/EHRs
- getting involved in health care-related community organizations such as "The Friends of the Ajax/Pickering Hospital"

Unfortunately, remaining on the sidelines and hoping services will magically become available as required is no longer an option - we need to become actively involved to ensure our precious health care dollars are spent as efficiently as possible.

After all, there's no way you can have vibrant communities without health systems that are functioning at their peak, and for the latter to happen, your awareness, interest and input are vital!

Ernest A. James from Regal Informatics Inc. is a Health Information Technology Consultant living in Whitby, Ontario. He's a passionate believer in the inherent value of healthy communities. In his spare time he can be found watching or playing cricket.

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Improve your health with thorough cleaning!

by Deborah Nembhard-Colquhoun



Dust contains moulds that often grow together with different bacteria. According to the Education Safety Association of Ontario, breathing airborne particles of mould can cause numerous kinds of health problems including nasal, throat, eye and skin irritations, coughing and wheezing. Bacteria are a common thing that help to spread viruses and cause many other health conditions such as: allergies, headaches, fatigue, nausea, depression, skin rashes and sore throats (The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases).

Mold is dangerous; not only may it cause health problems; it is a living organism that will destroy anything it is growing on, including furniture, cupboards, carpets and even walls. If you notice any sign of mould growing in your home, you must remove it immediately with thorough cleaning.

In addition to carrying mould, dust that travels in the air can also carry germs and other harmful bacteria. Studies conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that indoor exposure to harmful air pollutants could be up to one hundred times greater than outdoors. Regular cleaning will help decrease the amount of dust floating in your home.

Being thorough is essential as bacteria are not always visible with the naked eye. Bacteria are everywhere, in the carpet, sofa, walls, door knob, washrooms, and especially in the kitchen. Special attention should be taken on cleaning the kitchen because it is a good breeding place for bacteria.

Help keep you and your family safe and healthy with these simple steps:

- Clean regularly
- Use a good disinfectant cleaner that kills germs
- Don't forget to wipe down handles to cupboards, fridges, and doors
- Get every spot clean underneath furniture in the corners and inside appliances
- Be mindful of cross contamination, especially in the kitchen
- Always ensure your cleaning tools are often disinfected
- Get help if you need it

Deborah Nembhard-Colquhoun is a mother of three in Ajax and owns Divine Touch Cleaning Services providing residential and commercial cleaning.

Let's do lunch!

Where Enterprising Businesspeople Connect!

By Susan Scott

It started during a conversation in the car on the way home to Brooklin.

Sue Pitchforth and Debbie Williams hatched the idea of a luncheon series for businesspeople in Ontario after attending a similar event in Toronto.

"We've both owned businesses for several years but when we went to that lunch, we found it hard to relate to the challenges of a CEO of a large corporation in a room full of a 1000 people," explains Williams. "We wanted to create a friendly, positive group where both corporate and individual businesses would feel comfortable and motivated."

So, on that car ride home, they decided they would launch their own organization in the fabulous Durham Region and encourage people from all over Ontario - no matter what business they were in - to join them for lunch and business. Striving for stress relief, creativity, excitement and a fabulous Friday afternoon, while meeting new people at a business oriented event, they came up with the idea for Let's Do Lunch.

The pair, who have been friends for years, both live in Brooklin, just north of Whitby, organized their first luncheon in October 2004 at the Royal Ashburn Golf Club.

"We thought 'if 70 people join us for this wonderful event, we'll be happy,'" says Pitchforth. To their surprise, 140 people showed up and the two haven't looked back.

Let's Do Lunch differs from other business organizations, in part, because there are four exhilarating events a year, while other groups often have monthly meetings and activities. Each event is totally different from the last, making the events excitedly anticipated by members and those hearing about the event. "Let's Do Lunch does very little advertising, it's grown mainly through word of mouth!" the two gals explain happily.

Today, Let's Do Lunch boasts close to 100 members, although luncheons still routinely bring in almost double that number.

The lunches attract businesspeople throughout Ontario who either currently own their own businesses, are contemplating business ownership, work for a business or large corporation or in the charitable sector.

"We've got women and men in all fields, from small to large businesses," says Pitchforth, who owns her own interior design businesses and serves on Whitby town council. Williams, owns a carwash and convenience store.

Everyone knows about the meetings you go to and hand out your business card counting down cards until you can leave, it's a mechanical thing. We wanted to do something different. We call it connecting. People want to connect with others and this is one way to do it," says Pitchforth. The group's website: www.letsdolunch.info features a list of members, upcoming events, sponsors and archived issues of the organization's newsletter.

Let's Do Lunch helps mentor young women interested in pursuing business careers. To that end, Pitchforth and Williams are very involved with Durham College. They also support a charity at each of their events. "We are both strong believers in giving back to the community," says Williams enthusiastically. "We have been involved with so many wonderful charities. Giving back to the community, through Let's Do Lunch, is motivating in itself." Once you've met these two passionate women you'll understand why Let's Do Lunch is such a success.

Susan Scott, ABC, is owner and operator of Full Circle Communications, a strategic communications and public relations consultancy. She is also editor of the Let's Do Lunch newsletter.

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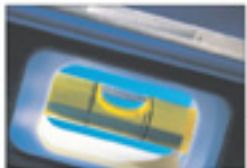
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HORMONES & HOMONYMS BUT NO SECOND CHANCE

by David Drane

Three boys were on their way to grade 8, bragging about their older brothers. Bobby was first as usual.

"My brother goes to the seminary to learn about miracles and things."

Johnny responded. "You mean if I go to the cemetery, I can learn about miracles?"

Billy interjected, "He said "seminary" not "cemetery"."

Johnny looked confused then his eyes brightened with realization, "Cemetery is one of those words that sound the same but mean different things, "hormones.""

They're really called HOMONYMS but they cause as much trouble for business people as hormones do for twelve year old boys.

Some common homonyms are your, you're and yore, there, their and they're and its and it's. When you write the wrong one, they can cause problems.

English also has many words that sound similar like seminary, cemetery, pack, pact, from and form. In a conversation, the differences may go unnoticed but not if they are written.

The situation gets worse. If you use a computer program to check your spelling, it will miss these errors because the word you have used is spelled correctly. But that client you've been trying to land for the last three weeks will spot the mistake as soon as it crosses his desk. Frequently the response will be quick and final. "If he doesn't care enough to make sure that the material he sends me is correct, how will he treat work he does for me?"

Imagine if that mistake had been in your flyer that went to a thousand potential clients.

You could have easily and inexpensively avoided the problem. Here's how.

1. After checking the spelling and grammar, reread what you have written.
2. Then, read it out loud pronouncing every word as it is written.
3. Give it to someone other than a family member to proof read it and read it out loud to you.

Get it right before it goes out.

I hope that your hormones and homonyms stay out of the way and that you never need that client to give you a second chance.

David Drane, a writer for Creative Lifeline is passionate about writing, particularly nostalgia and history. "It's the everyday lives of everyday people that make up real history." His short stories have appeared in a compilation published in 2003 and his non-fiction articles have been published in professional journals and magazines across Canada.

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facebook

Mixing Business with Pleasure

by Sue Sutcliffe

Think Facebook is just the latest computer fad for teens? Think again. Fast, free and friendly, Facebook is revolutionizing the way smart organizations market their products, services and events. In today's marketplace, relationship-building is proving more effective than hard-sell marketing. And relationship-building is the name of the game with Facebook.

This number one Internet hangout was designed to facilitate social networking, but it adapts beautifully to business networking. Facebook's forte - friend-finding - makes it perfect for finding, connecting with, and organizing business prospects. Imagine -- over 175 million active users who can spread your message through their networks of friends.

Facebook's broad e-community invites you to introduce yourself to others and provides intuitive tools that suggest mutual friends and people you'd like to meet. Businesspeople can easily create and sort a virtual rolodex of "faces." In fact, the site's search function will sift through the millions of user profiles to target your preferred mix of age, sex, occupation, and other demographic factors.

It takes only a few minutes of clicking through menus to set up an account and develop a profile that advertises your website, your service or product and your friendly, smiling face. Rather than sharing an individual's preferences, a commercial Facebook profile paints a vivid portrait of an organization's passions, its goals and its character - in essence, a public yet personal face that visitors can explore, and an excellent complement to the firm's formal website.

A well-written profile can stimulate and reinforce brand awareness, solicit feedback, drive website traffic and announce news. The conversations you engage in can build your reputation as an innovator, a leader and an expert resource. Facebook's transparent and viral nature means your message gets read and passed around like the old Clairol commercial: "And they'll tell two friends, and so on, and so on..." Best of all, it's virtually cost-free. At a time when the "R" word prompts worried frowns and fiscal restraint, Facebook is escalating into a promising -- and economical -- business tool to reach a burgeoning client base. So drop by, shake some hands, make some friends. And let's do business.

Public speaker and web-marketing guru Sue Sutcliffe from A WEB THAT WORKS surfs the latest and greatest e-trends and shares them with her audiences and clients.

The COACH Corner

Are we experiencing Challenging Times or Great Times??

So your business has been hit by the impact of the stock market meltdown, major economic downturn in local industries, reduced consumer confidence, H1N1 and a few other seemingly major negative occurrences. Yes, that is the bad news which the media dwells on over and over and over.



Peter Miller

We've also been fortunate to have one of the globe's stronger economies, massive government spending, reduced costs of many input materials, substantial tax incentives, new innovative government grants, upsurges in entrepreneurship, a cascading wealth from the most senior members of society (inheritances) and of course the lowest cost of borrowing funds in memory.

For the vast majority of us the glass is or can be more than half full. But is or could yours be as well? I have seen in many of our businesses become so busy they cannot keep up with the current business volume. I have seen some business do some imaginative things such as;

1. Expand their offerings of low-cost complementary services. Companies who normally provide residential or commercial cleaning have found that by offering to clean windows, exterior entrance ways, organizing minor repairs etc. has added to their business with existing clientele and has also increased their incoming referrals.
2. Some businesses have helped clients afford their business by assisting them to apply for various grants and tax incentives.
3. Successful businesses have kept up their strategic marketing while maintaining a cap on the costs. They have made greater use of their existing contacts, including past clientele, and revisited their advertising material and distribution channels. They have been out and about networking in areas where their potential clientele would be seen.
4. Some businesses have made excellent use of various forms of Social Networking using technology to the maximum.
5. Some businesses have used this opportunity to increase their overall customer service and followed up with their clients ensuring that their clientele are totally satisfied and that any nagging problem is rectified quickly to their clients' total satisfaction.
6. Some businesses have seen this as an opportunity to eliminate some high maintenance clients, clients who take more time than they could ever be billed for and have used that time to obtain more profitable relationships.
7. Some businesses have used testimonials to a greater extent.
8. Some Businesses have formed strategic alliances to team up and deliver a total package or if they are calling on the same clientele profile to promote each others business.
9. Some businesses have used this as an opportunity to review their total cost structure and eliminate nonproductive costs and activities.

However the greatest of them all is number three maintaining your marketing. To not market/advertise in these times is like smiling in the dark, you know you're there and friendly but no one else does.

So if your glass is not or could not be at least half full and you do not see the opportunities find a quiet place with a clean sheet of paper, put on your "thinking cap" and brainstorm everything you could possibly do to capitalize on the current situation. It is frequently even better to do this with a small group of positive thinkers and use their collective wisdom. History has proven itself time and time again, businesses can do very well coming out of an economic downturn.

Here is to half full glasses and great success!! You can be that success, it is just up to you!

Peter Miller of Essential Communications is the program coordinator, facilitator and coach for the OSEB program.

Life inside out

In my coaching practice, the number of clients that have said to me, "Dennis, on the outside my friends, family and business associates all believe I'm so successful, but on the inside I feel like such a failure; if they only knew", is amazing. What is this all about?



Dennis Brown

How do we get our inside to match our outside?

There is a verse in the Bible that states, 'Know the truth and the truth will set you free' (John 8:32). Who are you? Part of our struggles with inner success for a lot people is, they really don't know who they are. We are afraid to be our true selves, we're not sure what that self looks like. Will others like me and accept me?

How can we experience the peace of a transparent, authentic life?

We've spent a great part of our lives being what everyone else wants us to be. From the time we are born, we have our parents, society, teachers and peers molding us into our current personalities. One of the common things I've encountered in my practice is individuals who are still looking for approval and validation from a parent. I see successful men who are still looking for validation from their dads. I see women looking for the same thing except in many cases the validation needed, is not only from dad, but in many cases from mom as well.

We've done great things when we were younger, when we were being our true selves. This was not always recognized or nurtured because in many cases the person whom we were expecting to do the nurturing was operating with their deficiencies. Things like, demonstration of emotion between father and son, was not possible because dad might not have been loved, so how he can give what he doesn't have.

Are we to blame parents for all of our adult problems? Absolutely not. Is there an easy answer for all this? One avenue to consider is our spiritual source. Why are you here on planet earth? Were you created for failure? No. How does God see you or me? When we fully understand how God sees us, we realize we can't fail.

When we start changing our thinking to this new reality, as it states in the Bible: 'No longer conform to the thinking of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, then you will know God's perfect will for your life.' Then finding and living our true purpose becomes our goal. We are then no longer bound by what others think. We can then live out, our inside greatness! This will then match our out side reality. We can now better inspire others, to live out their true self. This will make for a more joyful, better world

Dennis of Dennis Brown & Associates applies his passion in helping others unlock their full potential, enabling them to live the abundant lives they were created to have.



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