

Women's Enterprise Centre assists women entrepreneurs, not just loans clients!

Over the last six issues of this eNewsletter we have profiled a dozen different women entrepreneurs, their businesses and how a loan from Women's Enterprise Centre helped them start, grow and succeed in their business.

This being the last article in the series, we would like to share with you how Women's Enterprise Centre can help you with training and business counselling at any stage of your business, even if you are financing your business through another source.

We know what it's like to start and grow a business; this is why we've developed training that delivers results to the everyday operations of a small business. We provide 'real-world' training and workshops in a number of essential subject areas required to run a strong and successful business.

Deb Leroux, owner of Harris Flowers in Vernon, BC took our workshop, *Focused Marketing: Targeted Effort, Tangible Result's* last May. Before Leroux invested her marketing dollars, she wanted to make sure that she had a clear concept of her target markets and how to reach them most effectively. Here's what she said about the Focused Marketing learning guide and workshop.

'Having the opportunity to attend the 'Focused Marketing Workshop' last November in Penticton has had a profound impact on how I view my customers, my market and my strategy to attract and retain business. Using the tools presented in the forum, it has become a clear destination from wondering about creating success to watching it manifest in the store. Our marketing strategy received its most productive input through the 'Focused Marketing Workshop' and we would encourage all serious business women to attend and actively participate.

Other Women's Enterprise Centre learning guides include Financial Understanding, Financial Management and Strategic Planning. The latest addition is our new learning guide, Creating Your Business, which steers entrepreneurs through the steps of creating a business and developing a business plan. What makes this guide unique is the support our clients receive through business planning coaching sessions. These sessions are held via a tele-conference so that women throughout BC can take part.

Women's Enterprise Centre's knowledgeable and experienced Business Advisors are available to all women entrepreneurs in BC who would like to get a fresh point of view and practical business expertise, at no cost.

Carrie McCarthy & Danielle LaPorte, creator of Style Statement and founders of Carrie & Danielle, Inc. recently took advantage of this service.

"Our experience with WEC was incredibly beneficial to us. Our Business Advisor gave us thoughtful and practical counsel on many elements of our business plan---from cash flow to partnerships, legalities to marketing strategies," says LaPorte. "What's more, she provided what every entrepreneur needs an ample supply of: caring encouragement and belief in our ambitions. When you're growing fast and aiming high, it's a wonderful thing when a seasoned expert is leaning over your shoulder saying, 'You can do it!'"

We can also support you with business plan assessments, market research strategies, cash flow forecasts, and more. Or if you are looking to expand your business, we can help you to prepare, create and manage growth.

Women's Enterprise Centre is also very proud to offer a new three-stage mentoring program open to women in the first two years of business. Through Peer Mentoring, One-to-One Mentoring and Mentor Advisory Forums, women across BC in their first two years of business, have access to the support and knowledge of experienced entrepreneurs.

Skylark Disraeli, owner of One Hill Productions in Kamloops was feeling scattered and overwhelmed by self-employment when she joined a local Peer Mentoring Group last spring.

"The [peer mentoring] program helped me recognize that there are many others struggling with the exact same challenges. It was helpful to know that every entrepreneur, including our facilitator, had had to work through the same issues. That gave me the strength needed to work past them once and for all," says Disraeli. "Four months after completing the program, my bookkeeping is simple, well-managed and always up-to-date; I am able to more quickly cull the effective approaches from the ineffective; I am much more relaxed, happy and optimistic about my self-employment; and I have received my first significant contract in my planned field."

If it's time for you to start, grow, or purchase a business, consider taking advantage of the support that Women's Enterprise Centre offers!

To learn more about the Women's Enterprise Centre's skills development, professional guidance and mentoring, visit womensenterprise.ca

Women's Enterprise Centre serves women across the province from its offices in Kelowna, Vancouver and Victoria. For more information call 1-800-643-7014 or visit online at www.womensenterprise.ca.