

Three success tips for small business owners

(NC) Being an entrepreneur means that you'll often figure things out as you go along, without guidance or an established structure to help you navigate. Though it is one of the most exhilarating aspects of the job, it can also be daunting, especially when you're first starting out. Dan Kelly, CEO of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, offers his top three tips for small business owners.

1. Make mistakes and pivot often. As a small business owner, it's important to constantly assess what works and what doesn't work. On a daily basis, ask yourself: "Did I meet my business goals today?" and identify some key performance indicators. This will allow you to continue doing what works, or troubleshoot problems quickly by pivoting your strategy with minimal

repercussions.

2. Know your customers. It's all about relationships and reputation. Building strong relationships with your customers takes time, but if you treat them right and do what's best for them in the long-term, you'll have a better chance at winning and retaining their business. It's also a good idea to find out where your customers are spending time online or on social media and to communicate with them there.

3. Build a support network. Set yourself up for success by joining a community of other small businesses where you can gain access to invaluable industry resources. CFIB provides specialized business resources and makes sure the voice of independent businesses is heard on government issues that are important to your business.

Three reasons to shop small and local

(NC) Neighbourhood stores and restaurants are at the heart of Canadian communities, providing you with the products and services you need all while keeping things personal, tailored and unique. As a consumer, you can support small businesses in your own community by choosing to shop locally this season. Here are three reasons why:

1. Preserve your community's uniqueness. Independent businesses bring character, originality and offer variety in a society that's becoming increasingly homogenized. That special bookstore you've been going to since you were a kid is irreplaceable. Help preserve the one-of-a-kind gems of your community.

2. Keep the money local. The more we shop at local independent businesses, the more likely it is that money will stay in the community and be used to create jobs. Local business-

es are able to reinvest a significant portion of their revenue back into the local economy, which benefits our families, friends and neighbours.

3. More personalized service. One of the greatest aspects of purchasing from a local shop is that the owner really gets to know you. Small business owners know the products we buy on a regular basis and offer a personal touch as someone who cares more about providing a quality service!

Small Business Saturday

You can visit ShopsSmallBiz.ca to find out more about how the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) and Interac are linking Canadians with local small business on Small Business Saturday and throughout the year. This online directory allows Canadians to find valuable offers from small businesses in their area.

More than a store: The Green Gecko merges lifestyle, eclectic shopping and community

A comfortable mix of international market one-of-a-kind finds and local artisan creations is nestled on the shelves at The Green Gecko.

Situated in an historic house on the main street in Lyndhurst, the Gecko has redefined the bottom floor of the home and embraced a community. Hand-picked, value-priced goods from around the world and down the road accent the eclectic shop.

Among the vibrantly-coloured scarves and clothes, handmade jewellery, funky home decor and eye catching Asian artifacts, there is an element of treasure hunting for customers, which makes each stop at the shop a memorable experience.



Terri Dawson, Owner

The Green Gecko



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Economic Development Officer of the year

TO THE MURAL

KINGSTON - The Ontario East Economic Development Commission has named Ann Weir the BDC Ontario Economic Development Officer of the Year.

Kevin Coleman, of the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), presented the award at the opening ceremonies of the annual Ontario East Municipal Conference (OEMC) at Kingston's Ambassador Hotel Wednesday. Ms. Weir is the Manager of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development Office.

"I'm very honoured to receive this award. It was a complete surprise," Ms. Weir said. "I want to share it with my team, Deanna Clark and Joanne Poll, and with thanks to a supportive Counties Council, our member municipalities and their committees."

The BDC Ontario East Economic Developer of the Year Award is presented annually to an economic developer based in eastern Ontario who has provided exceptional performance in his or her community and contributed to the advancement of the economic development pro-

fession.

"Ann has many achievements in economic development and success in facilitating tourism investment, a strategic priority for Eastern Ontario," said Rita Byvelds, Team Lead with the Ministry of Economic Development & Growth; Research, Innovation and Science. Ms. Byvelds submitted the nomination. She noted Ms. Weir was instrumental in bringing Europe's le Boat to the Rideau Canal and securing a \$16-million investment to the region. Le Boat is Europe's largest operator of self-drive boating vacations.

"Ann believes in collaboration and teamwork and I know she would want to attribute the successes to the leadership of the United Counties, her colleagues, her counterparts and volunteers across the region and Ontario East, and to Noreen Cartwright at the Ministry of Tourism," Ms. Byvelds said.

Among her many achievements, Ms. Weir was involved in securing the 600,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Giant Tiger Distribution Centre in the Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal, which is opening in



Ann Weir is in the centre; (L), Deanna Clark, Economic Development Officer; (R), Joanne Poll, Administrator/ Communications Support. Submitted photo.

2018. She has helped many businesses launch or expand in Leeds Grenville, including King's Lock Craft Distillery, Windmill Brewery, Canadian Rail Equipment Works and Services (CREWS) and Advonex International, which recently held its grand opening in the Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley.

In 2015, Ms. Weir helped launch the 1000 Islands and Rideau Canal Garden Trail, a tourism driver. This year the Garden Trail was selected to be on the esteemed "Canada 150 Garden Experience" list.

Ontario East President Dan Borowec congratu-

lated Ms. Weir for her dedication and successes in economic development both in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and across Eastern Ontario.

About Ontario East and the OEMC:

The Ontario East Economic Development Commission is a regional organization promoting Eastern Ontario as a prime location for investment, representing more than 200 communities and two million residents. Established in 1989, the Ontario East Municipal Conference has developed into the largest annual regional municipal conference east of Toronto.



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