

## Launching Small Business Mentoring in Northwest British Columbia!

The Small Business Mentoring Project is well on its way to a successful launch. While there seems to be no end to the amount of preparation that could be done, everyone in the office is excited to see the project in the practical business world. Similar projects have been very successful in other parts of the world (see "Small Business and Big Success" below) although the influence of local business culture and volunteers will give the program a welcome grassroots feel.

The project extends throughout Northwest British Columbia, including Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Terrace and Smithers. Anyone involved with small business in the region can sign up online and participate in the project at no cost.

The project is funded in part by the Workplace Skills Initiative (WSI), a program by the department of Human Resources and Social Development Canada. WSI helps workplaces become more competitive, productive and skilled. Community Futures 16/37 is also contributing many resources to

the project. Ken Earl, the general manager of 16/37, couldn't imagine a better time for such a program. "We're on the cusp of major economic expansion in our communities, mining, the port development and the modernization of Rio Tinto Alcan. The service industry is going to play a vital role in providing products and services to these major industries. This is an ideal time to match inexperienced entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to grow and prosper in the rapidly changing marketplace."

Dave Pernarowski, the project coordinator, is confident the project will be well received. "The Small *(continued on page 2)*



## Small Business, Big Success

You might be wondering what the hype is about. Why is business mentoring such a hot topic these days? It's also quite possible you've never heard of it before! While there are business mentoring programmes in Canada, it's been mainly in Europe, Australia and New Zealand that business mentoring has become integral to way the businesses operate.

Business Mentors New Zealand started in 1991 and has grown to become a valuable national resource with 26 regional offices. It operates as a charitable trust and as such, all services offered are free. Volun-

teer mentors can attend seminars, and participate in an accreditation programme. According to the Business Mentor New Zealand website, the 2006/07 year saw 3,195 clients receive mentoring assistance. (As a point of reference, New Zealand has a population of 4 million.)

A survey published in the "Daily Telegraph" said that 50% of respondents equated their mentor as being just as vital as their accountant, if not more so. The survival rates of new businesses in New Zealand have been steadily increasing in recent years.

March, 2008

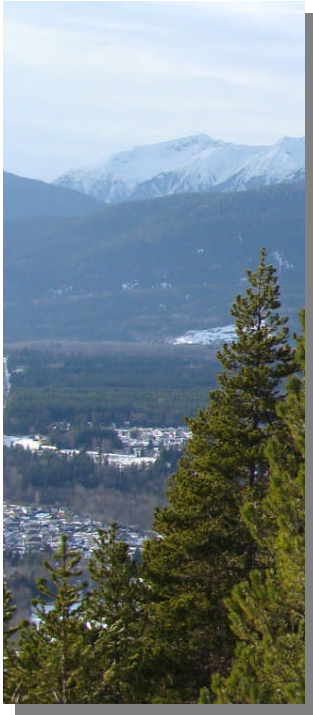
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## SKILLS GAP SURVEY

Many businesses in Canada are facing a skills gap. What's *your* experience? We'd like to know! Would you like to have different methods of training available? Is there an area of expertise that you've always wanted to know more about? Please visit our website at [www.smallbusinessmentor.bc.ca](http://www.smallbusinessmentor.bc.ca) and click on the "Skills Gap Survey" link to make your voice heard.



*“This is about spreading our experiences and knowledge to make a stronger, solid Northwest.”*  
Dave Pernarowski

*(continued from “Launching the Small Business Mentoring Project...”)*

## Sharing experiences to strengthen economy

*(Continued from page 1)*

Business Mentoring Project is geared toward helping small businesses succeed, and therefore revitalizing our communities. But really, all we’re doing is putting people in contact with the resources that are already out there. This is about spreading experiences and knowledge to make a stronger, solid Northwest.”

On a more philosophical perspective, mentorship is a great opportunity to take a step back and reflect on where you have been and how you’ve improved. Taking time to look at the big picture can put life in perspective. Which, in turn, helps to clearly define where you want to go.

The mentor/ protégé pairs will be matched according to complimentary skill sets. Becoming a protégé doesn’t mean a person must be inexperienced in business. Protégés may be very successful in business but perhaps want to know more about a certain subject, or simply want to experiment with something new.

So get involved with the Small Business Mentoring Project for the bottom line, a personal quest for knowledge, or perhaps a second opinion on how some of your fantastic ideas should play out. Or, become a mentor! There’s no better way to give back to the community.

### Register your Small Business with us!

*Get filled in on workshops, seminars and other training in your area.*

Part of our project mandate is to gather a list of ALL the businesses in Northwest BC. We’d like to know how many businesses could potentially benefit in our project (even if you don’t actually have the time to!). If you own a small business that employs around 10 people or less, or just yourself, please register your business with us!

We are also compiling a list of training programs and resources available by internet, videoconferencing as well as other

timely and cost effective ways of training that don’t require large amounts of time for small business owners to be gone from their business. Workshops and seminars may be published in our newsletter in the Upcoming Events section. You can subscribe to our newsletter on our website or pick one up at your local Chamber of Commerce office. If you have a specific topic that you’d like more information about, call us! We will request certain workshops by interest.

### Pictures of Terrace on Display

*by Emily Suderman, Assistant Project Coordinator*

The folks in Northwest BC are surrounded by so much beautiful scenery— it’s amazing! I recently moved to Terrace from the prairies. Don’t believe for a second that the prairies aren’t beautiful, just that it doesn’t stare you down through your kitchen window. Its possible I’m still in the ‘honeymoon’ stage with these big gorgeous mountains, but I realize there are more than just mountains around here to elicit ‘ooh’s and ‘aah’s.

I took a hike up the trail system of Terrace Mountain, snapping pictures every

few feet. The snow was crunchy, and the sunlight shone through the trees—the perfect way to spend the afternoon at work! It is such a blessing to have such a splendid display of nature within walking distance.

Right now on the website we have pictures showcasing views near and around Terrace. Over the course of the project, we hope to change the pictures with the seasons. I look forward to seeing beauty from all over the Northwest region. Spring in Prince Rupert? Summer in Kitimat? Fall in Smithers? I can hardly wait!



A view from Sparks Street and Munthe Avenue, in Terrace

## Mentoring Project Q&A

### What is Business Mentoring?

Business mentoring is a confidential relationship between two people, the mentor and the protégé, designed to help both grow and learn from each other about business. Mentors come to the table with experience, knowledge, and insight. Equally as valuable, protégés come to the table with a fresh perspective, lots of questions and a willingness to learn.

### How does it work?

Mentors and protégés can get together for breakfast or coffee, meeting in the office, a walk in the park, a phone call or any environment that feels comfortable. Learning happens by honest sharing, lots of questions, trial and error, and being respectful of each other's experiences.

### Who can be involved?

Anyone involved in small business! If you have the time, experiences to share or questions to ask, you can register on our website at [www.smallbusinessmentor.bc.ca](http://www.smallbusinessmentor.bc.ca). If you have any questions please feel free to call (250) 635-2311 or email [dave@1637cfdc.bc.ca](mailto:dave@1637cfdc.bc.ca)

### What kind of skills do you need to be a mentor?

There are similarities across business, no matter what industry you're in. There are a wide variety of skills that people would like help with and experience is a

wonderful teacher. Even if you're highly specialized, we might have someone who would like to bounce ideas off you.

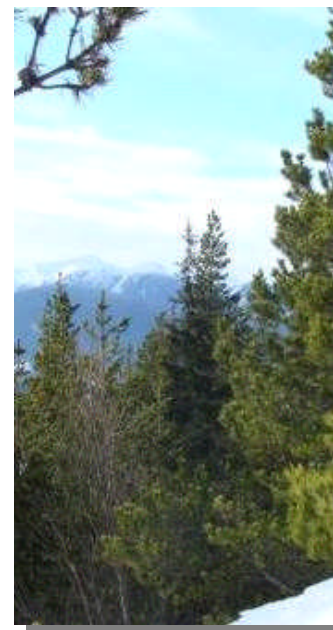
### When is the program taking place? How long will it take?

The program comes to an end in March 2010, and we're hoping to get a pilot group ready to go by the end of summer. If we find pairs that match skills sets of need and expertise, we may connect them earlier. Once you're in a mentoring relationship, it can last as long as seems practical. Many relationships will naturally come to an end as needs shift to a different area. People may have several different mentoring or protégé relationships during the course of the program. You may mentor as many times as you wish, and as it is totally voluntary, if there is a time that is not convenient to you just say no!

### Why should you participate?

Some of the best reasons are: 1. Learn from someone in your community, 2. It's a free resource far more personal than any seminar would be, 3. You can expand your network and meet new people, 4. Learn new ways of doing things, 5. Give back to your community, 6. Feel proud of your community and your contribution, 7. You may find out about things you didn't know you didn't know! 8. There's nothing to lose and tons of benefits.

“I not only use all the brains I have, but all that I can borrow.”  
**Woodrow Wilson**



### Did you know...

- About 36 million years ago there were species of penguin up to 5 feet tall found as far North as Peru!
- Never plant a peach shrub or tree near an almond tree. As the peach belongs to the same family as the almond (Rosaceae) the two sorts are easily crossed. The result is bitter nuts.
- When you're stressed, your brain cells are more likely to develop new patterns!

## Upcoming Events....

### Kitimat

- Chamber of Commerce Dinner Meeting with Paul Henning from Rio Tinto Alcan. March 26th at the Chalet. Cocktails at 6:30 pm.
- AGM and Business Excellence Awards March 29th at the Hirsh Creek Country Club, 6 pm.
- Chamber of Commerce Dinner Meeting with Matthew Burns from BC Ferries. April 30th

### Prince Rupert

- Trade Show May 2-4: sign up online or call the

Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce.

### Terrace

- Trade Show April 25th-27th at the Arena.

### Smithers

- Skeena Wood Residue Workshop, April 11th, 9:30 am-4:30 pm, and April 12th, 9 am-2 pm, at the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre
- Northwest Trade Expo Friday April 11th, 3-9 pm, Saturday April 12th, 10am-8 pm at Smithers Civic Arena.



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SMALL BUSINESS  
MENTORING PROJECT  
ENHANCING WORKPLACE SKILLS

## About Community Futures 16/37:

Community Futures Development Corporation of 16/37 is a locally governed board funded by the federal government. Its role is to help local communities use their resources efficiently and effectively for economic gain as well as make better, healthy communities. That means help create jobs (with services such as Self Employment Benefits), facilitating new business start-ups (with feasibility studies and loans) and other support services for entrepreneurs and small businesses (knowledgeable business analysts and a great library!) Community Futures 16/37 also gets involved with many social and community economic development projects. The Small Business Mentoring Project is just one of the many ways Community Futures provides valuable services to the local population. The office is located above the Service Canada building on the second floor. If you have a business idea, or need help financing a new or expanding business, business counseling is free of charge.

Call Community Futures 16/37 at (250) 635-5449 or Toll Free in BC at 1-800-663-6396, or visit the website: [www.1637cfdc.bc.ca](http://www.1637cfdc.bc.ca).



*"Growing communities  
one idea at a time."*

## Partnerships:



Kitimat  
Chamber of Commerce  
& Visitor Info Centre



Terrace & District  
Chamber Of  
Commerce



Smithers B.C.



Canada

