

Connections

... get plugged in to your network

February 2010

Canadian Chamber of Commerce report on small business use of e-business solutions

Last week The Canadian Chamber of Commerce released a report that identifies the need for the government to do more to help small business adopt information and communications technology (ICT).

Powering Up the Network: A Report on Small Business Use of E-Business Solutions in Canada benchmarks Canada's current progress in ICT and e-commerce adoption among small businesses, and provides concrete recommendations for government and business to work hand-in-hand to get Canada back on top. Over 900 businesses from across Canada responded to the survey that determined how businesses were using the Internet, what business-to-business transactions were taking place, and how small businesses protect their networks. This report builds on the recommendations outlined in a June 2009 Canadian Chamber report entitled: *Mapping the Future of the Digital Economy: Key to Canada's Economic Success*.

The report indicates that while many small businesses are using the Internet and have a Web site, not enough are taking advantage of business-to-business solutions.

One of the key recommendations in the report is for the Canadian government to create a national ICT strategy. Other countries continue to invest and make ICT a priority - it's a fact that investments in ICT can be a significant driver of productivity.

This is an area where local chambers could take a lead role in assisting their local business communities to better educate SMEs about existing available programs and services that could be accelerating ICT adoption and use among businesses.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce encourages you to make this report available to your SME members. The report can be found [here](#).

There's still time to make your members' voices heard...
In December we highlighted that as part of the Canadian

Chamber's policy focus for 2010, a renewed China strategy will be written and also a follow up to 2009's energy report.

As part of the research for these papers, we'd like to get feedback from our chamber members/and their members.

If you are interested in providing feedback there are framing documents available on our Web site which would allow you to formulate your/your members' input.

The consultation papers can be found in the [members' section](#); please feel free to download and make available to your members.

April 26 is World Intellectual Property Day - How will your chamber celebrate?

World IP Day is an annual celebration linking intellectual property and creativity and provides an opportunity to celebrate and promote innovation and economic growth.

In recognition of IP day, the Canadian Chamber, the Canadian Intellectual Property Office, and the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada encourage local chambers and boards of trade to host an event with a *Bank of Speakers* presentation.

What are the benefits of hosting an event with these partners?

- No struggling with content - this is a ready-made event with an intellectual property theme, a complimentary speaker, and useful take-away material for your members.
- You can charge for the event or host as an added benefit for your members - you decide.
- A commitment to providing your members with pertinent and timely intellectual property information.

What are your obligations?

- A meeting space to host the IP presentation.

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- Refreshments – your venue, you determine.
- Come up with a format that works for you - breakfast event; luncheon; lunch and learn; after hours.

What are you waiting for?

All promotional material for attendees will be provided to your chamber at no cost. Request a *Bank of Speakers* presenter in one of these ways:

Online: www.cipo.ic.gc.ca/speakers

Email: BankofSpeakers@ic.gc.ca

Telephone: 1 866-997-1936

Are your members preparing their workforce for the upturn?

Do any of your members:

- Expect skills gaps when the economy picks up?
- Want to increase their employee training to prepare for the upturn?
- Lack knowledge of where to begin?

A “yes” to one or more of these questions could mean they should be thinking now about tools and resources to help kick-start their training efforts. When business picks up, they will want to be ready.

The Centre for Workplace Skills (CWS) may be able to help.

In 2010, CWS is offering a series of workshops across Canada that will:

- Promote the importance of workplace training to prepare for the upturn,
- Share training tools, resources and best practices with companies, especially small and medium-sized firms, that can support their training efforts.

The workshops, which will usually last three hours, will be customized to local needs, and can be combined with other local events to fit best with local schedules. CWS will also share the cost of publicity, and premises rental.

If your chamber or board of trade is interested in holding such a workshop in your community, and would like more information, contact Derwyn Sangster, Business Liaison at the CWS, d.sangster@w1kc-csamt.ca, (613) 241-3222, x4250.

Helping small businesses get an online presence...

Chambers know that TD Merchant Services has a payment processing program in place for Visa, MasterCard and debit; they also have numerous tools on line to assist small business.

We thought it would be interesting, in light of our partnership, and relative to the release of our recent ICT report (*see page 1*) to share information geared to SMEs and building their online business presence.

More Canadians purchased goods and services online last year than ever before, according to Statistics Canada, with total e-commerce sales up 61% from 2005 (from Statistics

Canada 2007 *Internet Use Survey*).

Online Mart a product from TD Merchant Services can help businesses take advantage of this shopping trend.

By adding an e-commerce component to existing web sites, or creating a new online storefront, businesses can reach more customers and expand sales opportunities.

If businesses want to build a new e-commerce storefront from scratch, there is a virtual test site to try out the seven design templates.

To get started businesses should go to www.onlinemart.ca and click on “*Build Your Test Online Storefront/Apply Now*”.

New chamber member

We welcome another new link in the cross-Canada network this month:

Chambre de commerce et d’industrie de Roberval, Érik Simard, info@ccisr.qc.ca.

New chamber managers

Gina Campbell, Administrator, Brighton & District Chamber of Commerce (ON), info@brightonchamber.ca.

Heather Gillett, Manager, Chase & District Chamber of Commerce (BC), admin@chasechamber.com.

Glen Brunt, Manager, Fort St. James Chamber (BC), fsjchamb@fsjames.com.

Susan Holt, Chief Executive Officer, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce (NB), susanh@frederictonchamber.ca.

Sandra Green, Innisfil & District Chamber of Commerce (ON), sandra.green@innisfilchamber.com.

Lisa Kowalchuk, Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce (AB), lisa@medicinehatchchamber.com.

If you are a new manager or have changes that you would like the network to know about - let Stacey Roy know, sroy@chamber.ca.

Looking ahead...

March 22 - Mid-year policy call with The Canadian Chamber of Commerce. This annual teleconference call with chamber members focuses on a couple of key policy areas. *Chambers must RSVP for the call at jhagen@chamber.ca.*

April 26 - World Intellectual Property Day (*see article above regarding how you can host an event at your chamber*)

April 28-29 - The Canadian Chamber of Commerce will host business leaders for the G8/20 Summit in Gatineau, Qc.

September 23-25 - Chamber of Commerce Executives of Canada (CCEC) annual conference in Gatineau. This is a must-attend professional development session for Canadian chamber managers Save the date - it happens just before the CCC AGM which takes place **September 25-27** at the Hilton Lac Leamy. Hope to see you at both!