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VOLUME 16 ISSUE 3 // NIAGARA

MARCH 2018

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# THE BIGGER PICTURE

GERRY VISCA

**I**T'S 3:11AM AND I'VE woken up, yet again, in a cold sweat convinced that I am meant to see the bigger picture that dwells below the surface. As I boil the kettle for my early morning tea, I sit in my studio pondering the words for my next article.

As I look down, visions of my past as a global speaker swirl in my mind delivering content that I believed, at the time, was essential. I see myself on stage giving a talk in Istanbul on the Disruptors of Innovation. The tea swirls and moments later, I'm transported to Quebec where I'm inspiring a global audience on the Power of Creativity. A few more swirls and I'm swept up into the snow-capped peaks of British Columbia delivering one of thousands of talks on building a Brand Experience in order to connect with the hearts of customers.

As I sit in my red chair gazing at the 16 published books resting on the shelf and the unedited manuscript of my latest transformational novel: Why am I here? I ponder a thought:

"Why is the world still so disconnected?"

*Continued on next page »*



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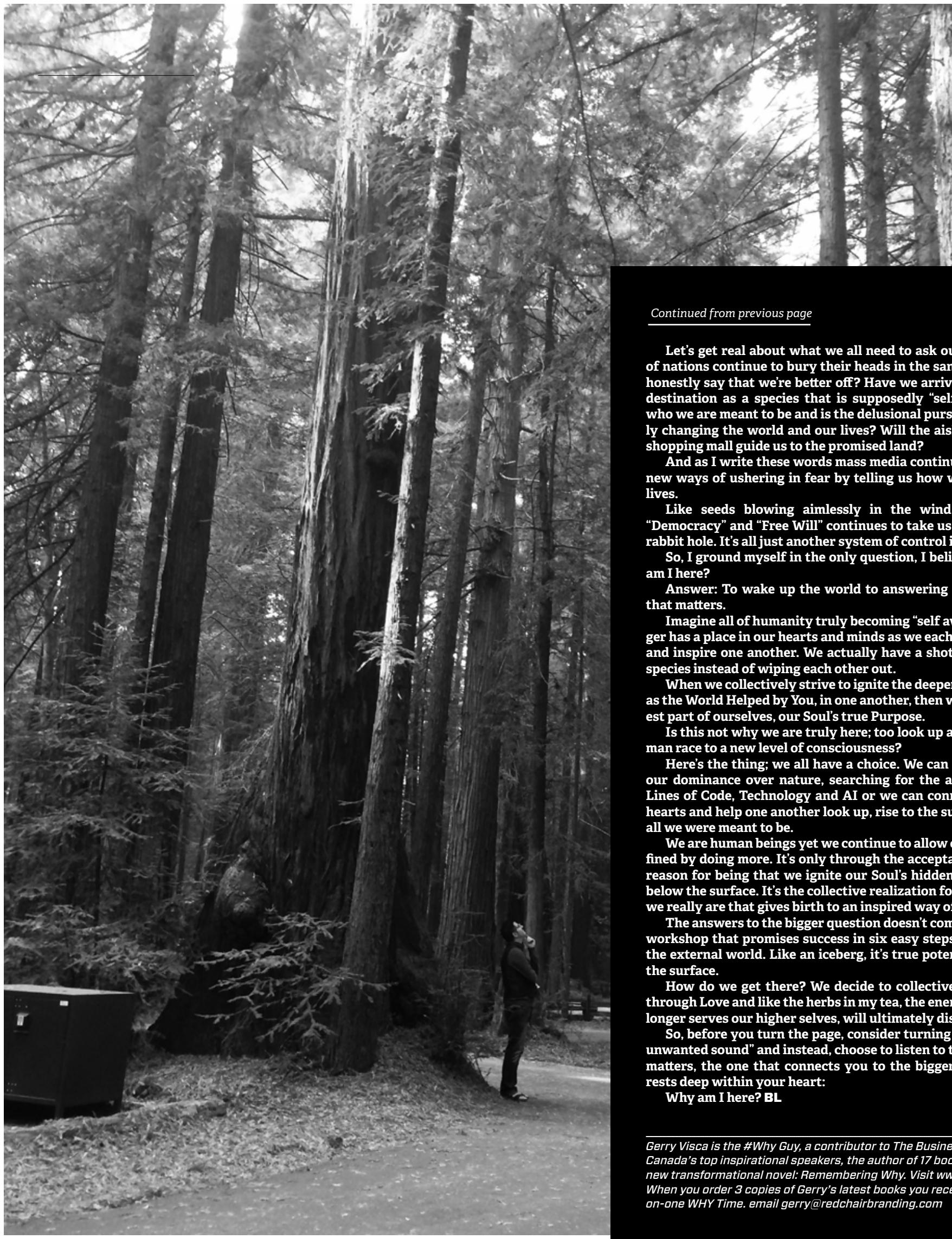
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*Continued from previous page*

Let's get real about what we all need to ask ourselves. As heads of nations continue to bury their heads in the sands of time can we honestly say that we're better off? Have we arrived at the ultimate destination as a species that is supposedly "self aware"? Are we who we are meant to be and is the delusional pursuit for "more" truly changing the world and our lives? Will the aisles of yet another shopping mall guide us to the promised land?

And as I write these words mass media continues to innovate on new ways of ushering in fear by telling us how we should live our lives.

Like seeds blowing aimlessly in the wind, the concept of "Democracy" and "Free Will" continues to take us further down the rabbit hole. It's all just another system of control isn't it?

So, I ground myself in the only question, I believe, matters: Why am I here?

Answer: To wake up the world to answering the only question that matters.

Imagine all of humanity truly becoming "self aware". Fear no longer has a place in our hearts and minds as we each exist to reach out and inspire one another. We actually have a shot at surviving as a species instead of wiping each other out.

When we collectively strive to ignite the deeper why that I define as the World Helped by You, in one another, then we awaken the oldest part of ourselves, our Soul's true Purpose.

Is this not why we are truly here; too look up and elevate the human race to a new level of consciousness?

Here's the thing: we all have a choice. We can continue exerting our dominance over nature, searching for the answer within the Lines of Code, Technology and AI or we can connect with people's hearts and help one another look up, rise to the surface and become all we were meant to be.

We are human beings yet we continue to allow ourselves to be defined by doing more. It's only through the acceptance of our deeper reason for being that we ignite our Soul's hidden Purpose, the one below the surface. It's the collective realization for the truth of who we really are that gives birth to an inspired way of being.

The answers to the bigger question doesn't come from a weekend workshop that promises success in six easy steps. It's not found in the external world. Like an iceberg, its true potential dwells below the surface.

How do we get there? We decide to collectively create a world through Love and like the herbs in my tea, the energy of Fear that no longer serves our higher selves, will ultimately dissolve.

So, before you turn the page, consider turning off the noise, "the unwanted sound" and instead, choose to listen to the only voice that matters, the one that connects you to the bigger picture and that rests deep within your heart:

Why am I here? **BL**

---

Gerry Visca is the #Why Guy, a contributor to *The Business Link*, one of Canada's top inspirational speakers, the author of 17 books, including the new transformational novel: *Remembering Why*. Visit [www.gerryvisca.com](http://www.gerryvisca.com) When you order 3 copies of Gerry's latest books you receive the gift of one-on-one WHY Time. email [gerry@redchairbranding.com](mailto:gerry@redchairbranding.com)



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# COMMERCIAL LEASE RENEWAL DOS & DON'TS FOR TENANTS

JEFF GRANDFIELD AND DALE WILLETON

**A**PPROXIMATELY TWO MILLION COMMERCIAL lease renewal transactions take place every year in North America. Whether a tenant is leasing commercial space in a strip mall, office building or in a stand-alone building for a business, he or she eventually will have to face a lease renewal negotiation with a landlord. Starting with the end goal in mind and planning far enough in advance will make this process much easier.

Most landlords push for a rent increase on a commercial tenant's lease renewal. This is normal and something you should anticipate. Much can transpire in a five or 10-year lease term between when you moved in and when you need to negotiate a lease renewal. Negotiating a lease renewal is not an overnight process. This can take some time and involves a number of steps as found in our book, *Negotiating Commercial Leases & Renewals FOR DUMMIES*, and summarized below:

Create competition for your tenancy. Commercial tenants should negotiate on multiple locations simultaneously – especially with lease renewals, even if they don't want to move. Create options and play one landlord against another. Share with each landlord that you are receiving other proposals. This often creates a bidding war between landlords with you winning in the end!

Start the planning and site selection process well in-advance. For existing businesses and lease renewals, begin 12 to 15 months in advance. This allows for ample time for negotiating, completing paperwork, searching for alternate sites (if necessary) and accounting for Murphy's Law.

Keep success quiet. Landlords often try to raise the rent due to a commercial tenant's success. If doing well in a particular location, a commercial tenant will likely not want to move even if he or she can afford the rental increase. Some agents and landlords may try to take advantage of some commercial tenants knowing how expensive it can be to move and set up a new business.

Talk to other tenants. For lease renewals, talk with other tenants in the building who have recently renewed leases. Ask how these renegotiations went and what the landlord was willing to agree to in terms of rental rates and further tenant incentives.

Negotiate for lease renewal incentives. For some reason, commercial tenants neglect or are simply fearful of negotiating for lease renewal incentives. If a lease is expiring, a commercial tenant should ask him or herself what inducements (e.g. free rent/tenant allowances) the landlord would give to a new tenant just coming into the property.

Think realistically. If a business isn't faring well but the commercial tenant wants to renew his or her lease anyway, this is false optimism. Unless the entrepreneur changes location or something else about the way he or she does business, he or she should not realistically expect the next five years to be better than the first five years. Moving can be difficult, frightening, time-intensive and expensive. However, sometimes, this is absolutely necessary.

Avoid accepting an inappropriate lease length. For new businesses, an initial lease term of five, seven or even 10 years is typical. However, when renewing, a commercial tenant should not automatically sign for that same or similar timeframe without considering his or her own future. A business may be sold and/or an entrepreneur may retire. Don't get locked into a long-term lease renewal unnecessarily.

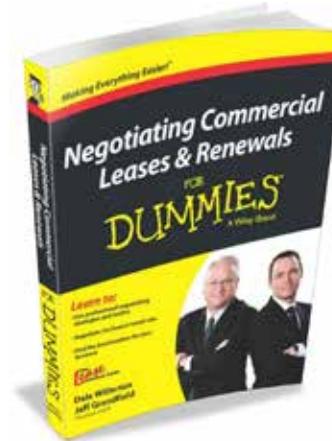
Refuse to settle for the same rental payment. Achieving a rent reduction on a lease renewal is a very real possibility. If the landlord is leasing space to new tenants at less than what the commercial tenant is currently paying, a rent reduction should be achievable. If the tenant's current rental rate is artificially high because of his or her last tenant allowance, a rent reduction on the renewal term could also be in order. Again, commercial tenants should talk with other tenants who have recently renewed or moved in to see how much they are paying.

Insist on having your deposit refunded. If the commercial tenant has paid the landlord a deposit, he or she should ask for this back upon the lease renewal date. Many entrepreneurs can prove themselves as responsible tenants over their initial term. Why should the landlord keep this money?

Remember your operating costs. Having the lease and/or operating costs analyzed are effective ways to keep the landlord and property manager accountable. Frequently, commercial tenants pay inflated Common Area Maintenance (CAM) because of padded or miscalculated operating costs. Often, it can be advan-

tageous for groups of tenants sharing the same property to unify for an operating cost analysis.

Plan to not exercise options. Even though the commercial tenant has a renewal option, he or she may not want to exercise it – especially if the renewal term's rental rate automatically increases or can't decrease. If a tenant is certain that the landlord wants you to stay and market rates (the "going rate" in the neighborhood) have softened, he or she may want to negotiate the renewal from scratch. **BL**



For a copy of our free CD *Leasing Do's & Don'ts for Commercial Tenants*, please email your request to [JeffGrandfield@TheLeaseCoach.com](mailto:JeffGrandfield@TheLeaseCoach.com). Dale Willerton and Jeff Grandfield - The Lease Coach are Commercial Lease Consultants who work exclusively for tenants. Dale and Jeff are professional speakers and co-authors of *Negotiating Commercial Leases & Renewals FOR DUMMIES* (Wiley, 2013). Got a leasing question? Need help with your new lease or renewal? Call 1-800-738-9202, e-mail [DaleWillerton@TheLeaseCoach.com](mailto:DaleWillerton@TheLeaseCoach.com) / [JeffGrandfield@TheLeaseCoach.com](mailto:JeffGrandfield@TheLeaseCoach.com) or visit [www.TheLeaseCoach.com](http://www.TheLeaseCoach.com).

## CANNABIS INDUSTRY PRESENTS OPPORTUNITY FOR NIAGARA

**BLAKE LANDRY**

**I**T'S NO SECRET THAT medicinal cannabis and the legalization of recreational cannabis in July 2018 present a major economic opportunity for Niagara. First, it's important to understand why Niagara stands to benefit. Niagara is an agricultural powerhouse. In 2016, the agricultural sector contributed over \$1.41-billion to regional GDP and supported over 19,900 jobs. In 2016, horticulture, a subset of agriculture, also contributed \$691.7-million towards regional GDP and supported 9,761 jobs. Niagara is home to 14% (22 million square feet) of total Ontario greenhouse space, producing 25% of Ontario's horticultural gross farm receipts. Cannabis is horticulture and Niagara is well-positioned to be a major player in this industry.

Currently, there are four companies in Niagara that hold licenses for medicinal cannabis cultivation including Redecan (Pelham), Tweed Farms (Niagara-on-the-Lake), CannTrust (Pelham), and Up Cannabis (Lincoln). There is currently 1.87 million square feet of licensed cannabis production area in Niagara (8% of total greenhouse area). I suspect we will see many new Health Canada cannabis licensees in the near future, especially with the pending legalization. In 2015, the recreational cannabis market in Canada was estimated to be 697.5 tonnes in volume at a value of \$6.2-billion. Comparatively, Statistics Canada suggests that Canadians spent \$9.2-billion on beer and \$7-billion on wine in 2016. However, Canada imports a lot of beer and wine, while it appears that cannabis and related products will be domestically produced and sold.

The cannabis industry also presents opportunity for processing and manufacturing businesses.

Cannabis can be consumed in various forms including concentrates and edibles (capsules, candy, cookies, topicals, tincture, etc.), so there will be a need for business to make these products to meet market demand. There will also be a need for companies that provide technology and equipment to cannabis cultivators and processors. Currently, Niagara has some innovators in this space such as Hamill Agricultural Processing Solutions (automation), Avid Growing Systems Inc. (turnkey vertical growing systems), and GGS Structures (design and manufacture of greenhouses). I also suspect we will see tourism-oriented opportunities given our position as a global tourism destination including cafes, tours, and other unique entrepreneurial endeavours.

It's an exciting time to witness and participate in the development of this new high-value industry, and we look forward to seeing how businesses and entrepreneurs in Niagara and beyond maximize this new opportunity.

---

*Blake Landry is manager, economic research & analysis with Niagara Region's economic development division. Blake holds a BA in communications from Brock University, a graduate certificate in public administration from Humber College, and a certificate in economic development from the University of Waterloo. You can reach Blake at 905.980.6000 x3796 or email [blake.landry@niagararegion.ca](mailto:blake.landry@niagararegion.ca). Twitter: @blakeleonlandry*





## What The Facebook Algorithm Means For Your Business

WENDY MARSHALL

**F**ACEBOOK ALGORITHM HAS CHANGED! Ever wondered what this means and whether it has any bearing on your business? In simple terms, Facebook means they are making updates they hope will be more beneficial to their audience, and the marketers that affect their own income business.

In the latest update, Mark Zuckerberg announced that Facebook will be changing the way posts appear in your news feed, again. This time he said they will be showing you only the updates from friends and family. They believed that people only want to read stories from those they care about and so comes this filtering of your news feed.

Now, what does this mean for your business? If you are a company that depends heavily on sharing information through your company's Facebook page, this will adversely affect you. This is because the new algorithm favours content shared on groups and personal profile than those shared on pages. So if you are depending on just posting about you on your page alone to get the message across to your customers, chances are you will see a decrease in your reach.

This is where you need to get back to basics on what social media is...social. Tag followers, customers and other businesses to create and keep the conversation going. Move your clients to a group that you need a more direct communication with for when you need to produce that heavy content that relates to them. Or do what Facebook is pushing for – run Facebook ads.

This can be an easy change or a hard hit that will require you to change your approach to Facebook. Ask yourself questions to start on a new social media marketing campaign. Do you have

the manpower required to create a group and run it actively? If you don't then move over to ads. Before you decide to use ads though, you need to be sure you have the budget for it. Can you continuously run ads about your blog posts, new services or products, and new innovations about your enterprise? These are the questions you need to ask yourself and answer adequately before you can embark on your new social marketing campaign. **BL**

Wendy Marshall is the owner of Thumbtack Marketing and is located at 540 Eastchester Avenue East in St. Catharines. For more information, visit [www.thumbtackmarketing.com](http://www.thumbtackmarketing.com) or call 298.434.4874.



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## ADOPT THE MODE OF SHRINKING!

BY DENNIS O'NEIL



**S**HINKING MEANS THE OPPOSITE of hoarding. The need to shrink shows itself most horribly when I lose a document. What havoc wreaks on us when we lose a simple sheet of paper! Particularly a vital one. Sometimes that paper hides for months.

### THE BAD AND THE UGLY

I've had a document go missing and not turn up for 10 years. I have extensive files. When something gets misfiled – wow! My Celtic nature shows the worst of itself in that sort of scenario. Frustration. Bad attitude. Distraction. Anger. Disgust. All the worst of me.

### COULD IT BE THIEVES?

Recently, a friend of mine in the U.K. sold his house of 40 years. He said he had 40 years of junk accumulated. Then in packing he couldn't find a certain valuable item. He imagined the worst...had it been stolen? Should he call the cops? He searched everywhere...10 times. Eventually it turned up. The aggravation cost him a deep emotional abrasion.

During our discussion, I promised myself I wouldn't let that silliness happen to me.

### A SHRINKING CAMPAIGN

I launched a drive to get in the "shrinking mode." I must shrink my stuff. Filing is not my long suit. Not that I'm not good at filing. I am. Reality proves that I prefer to do other things than filing. And my Scottish genes don't ever want to throw anything out.

### THE SHRINKING DRIVE

Toss it. Dump it. Sell it. Gift it. Burn it. Trade it for something smaller. Just get rid of a whole lot of stuff. The plan sounds simple.

### PROGRESS?

For weeks, I have worked to "shrink." Two steps forward, one step back. For all my efforts, I've achieved little progress.

### MORAL OF THE STORY

I need to tune my mind to evaluate stuff differently. For every 10 items, only one rates "save." Six rates "toss" and three that previously might have rated "save," after one week go in the "toss" category. BL

*Dennis O'Neill, The Business Growth Coach is located in Niagara-on-the-Lake. For more information on how to grow your business, please call 905.641.8777, email dennis@dennisonneillcoach.com or visit www.dennisonneillcoach.com.*



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# ACCEPT THE RISK OF CHANGE

TAYLOR HAYWARD

**T**HERE ARE MULTIPLE STUDIES and publications that all indicate the same thing when it comes to all these company's data breaches that have become so common now. A little over 91% of these data breaches are the result of human behaviour. Whether it's by accident or on purpose, it's you and/or your employees that are the cause of these data breaches. This is a pretty formidable number and should be incentive enough to change your behaviours with regards to technology. It should be incentive enough to implement new IT management policies and make it a priority to ensure your staff is trained and aware of the risk they represent.

To give you an idea in 2017, Canada ranked really high in the amount of data breaches and lost revenue. In fact, Canada is in the top five of the most compromised countries in the world. It must be in our trusting nature to click those links that are sent to us!

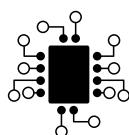
In case you haven't suffered from a data breach, let's try to put this in perspective. It could cost you approximately \$200 to \$255 per lost or stolen record. Even a small business with say 25 customers would feel the pain of a \$5,000 sunk cost. Imagine a much larger company with hundreds of thousands or millions of records being lost or stolen.

For something that is typically very preventable, there are many companies out there that fail to adapt until after they've suffered a breach or attack. Historically, here in Niagara we are slower than others to adapt when it comes to technology. I'd urge you to take a good look at your IT management practices and ask yourself (and perhaps your team) if these processes can be improved upon. The single most cost-effective method of prevention is ensuring that your staff is aware of the risk to your business. And if I failed to motivate you to improve your processes, here are a few (more pricey) options for you:

1. Ensure you have a top-notch spam filter in place.
2. Ensure you have a business grade firewall protecting your network.
3. And most importantly, have a disaster recovery solution in place that has multiple restore points from multiple sites.

*Taylor Hayward is the owner of STS, a technology company dedicated to simplifying IT for small and medium-sized businesses in the Niagara Region. Taylor can be reached at 905.327.6163 or go to simplifiedtech.ca.*

BL



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## COADY'S CORNER

**T**HE ST. CATHARINES CLUB continues to be the Place to Be for professionals in our wonderful region!!!! A big congratulations to Ted Hoxie (Beattie's Basics) for receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award in Business at the State of the City...what a wonderful family owned and operated business here in our city!...A big thank you to our outgoing Board of Directors and now Past-President Dr. Andy Panko for their service on our Board....A big welcome to our New Directors....John Brocato, John Netherway and John Sandham and congratulations to our new Club President Reni de Verteuil and Vice-President Holly Mundula.... It is wonderful to see Rob Hubbert (Hulse and English, Niagara Ice Dogs) back at the club!....Congratulations to Rob Cheevers (Buffalo Canoe Club) for winning the Super Bowl Squares this year....A very Happy Belated 50th Birthday to both Derek Chapman (McMahon Chapman Financial Group) and John Brocato (SPI International Transportation).... Our membership rates have never been better...Call the Club (905-684-1193) for details on our current membership promotion!....Look no further than the St. Catharines Club!! Feel free to post pictures around the club on our facebook page or mention and follow us on twitter @TheStCathClub #theplacetobe

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GASPER PAUL

**F**ORGET TOUGH – TODAY'S competition is fierce! Now, more than ever, your commitment to establishing a true "team" culture is not just important, rather it is a vital component to your company's future success, because when your team is strategically aligned, your organization is positioned with a stronger competitive advantage.

However, it is not easy by any means to establish highly effective and proficient work teams and it is also not easy to get everyone in the organization to work toward common goals. Many companies and organizations that aspire and are committed to reaching such levels, focus, train and coach their people on a continuous basis. In the sports world, this is what is known as training and practicing which ultimately leads teams to championships and dynasties.

However, there are two major challenges when it comes to creating a true team culture. The first is assuming that teamwork is voluntary. One cannot "force" anyone to be a team player. You need to make them "want" to be a team player. The second is that it just doesn't necessarily come naturally. Teamwork requires consistent training. Here's why. Most individuals have been conditioned from childhood to excel as individuals and not as team players. Unless a person has had experience on a sports team under the direction of that rare dynamic coach, he or she does not know how to perform effectively as a member of a team.

In spite of these obstacles, it is absolutely critical to develop teamwork within your organization. Establishing a highly effective and proficient team of professionals who can perform together in an environment of open communication and idea sharing—both internally and externally—is critical. It is the only way to ensure that your company can perform at the highest level of quality service. And it is certainly the only way you can win the competitive battle securing business growth and stability in the long term.

Without teamwork, disharmony, dissension and dysfunction will creep into and sabotage an organization's environment. This is not healthy in today's highly competitive and stressful work climate. Harmony within your team is critical to job satisfaction, customer retention, and business growth.

When your people lack the capacity to understand each other's pressures and the concerns of your customers the following will most likely occur:

- **Barriers can develop among people.**
- **Walls are built and people will work in silos.**
- **Territorialism will manifest within your team.**
- **Quality can be compromised.**
- **Personnel issues and employee disengagement will rise.**
- **People will create separate agendas.**
- **Customers will not receive exceptional service.**
- **Generally, things will deteriorate and be unproductive.**

No business can afford any of these situations. On the other hand, when there is a true team culture, positive outcomes are achievable.

Effective teams develop fragments of ideas and mold them into positive change. Ideas build one on top of another. Individuals, working as a team, take these scattered bits of information and structure a wide variety of options and solutions to the problems an organization continually encounters.

Consequently, teamwork promotes creativity and innovation. Relationships are strengthened—inside and outside your organization. Issues are uncovered, conflict is resolved, and people all pull in the same direction. Individuals are effectively becoming solid team players, and strong leaders emerge.

Sound too idealistic? It's not. All effective, successful organizations operate at this level and there is no reason why yours shouldn't. To begin, follow the steps below to move your company forward to take its place among the best:

**1.** Sit down with your team and describe what you would like to see within your organization. Let them know that you want to involve them in this important team building process and that you will help them get where they need go. People tend to promote what they help to create. Asking for their ideas and input in this initiative is the first step in effective team building. Keep in mind that people tend to promote what they help to create. Employee involvement is critical to the success of your team.

**2.** Work together to establish team competencies specific to each job role.

**3.** Set high standards for performance. Do not settle for mediocre performance.

**4.** Ask for ideas on how you can modify or eliminate any procedure that does not allow for flawless execution.

**5.** Create guiding principles for the way the team will communicate and operate, and how all customers will be treated.

**6.** Set a solid process to realize rigorous but achievable goals.

**7.** Have the courage to remove anyone who might prevent the team from performing at the highest possible level. You can't afford to have a weak player.

Take a good hard look at your team and begin these steps as soon as possible. Just as successful sports team practice to prepare for competition, start teamwork training to help your team become a truly effective entity.

Remember, businesses don't do business, people do. Start building your team today. This will help you create your strongest competitive advantage and if you need help, seek out an experienced and reliable source. You will find that it will be well worth the investment. **BL**

*Gaspar Paul has extensive business, corporate and athletic experience and is available to help you and your organization to reach its goals. To find out more, call 289.501.6426 or go to [www.bridgecoachingandmentoring.com](http://www.bridgecoachingandmentoring.com).*

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- "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66" by Bob Troup

**I**T'S A CATCHY TUNE, isn't it? The song was actually written about Bob Troup's trek across the U.S. from east to west. His dream was to become a songwriter in California. He and his wife packed up the car and off they went. Route 66 passes through eight states and is an iconic trip not to be forgotten for those who have taken the journey.

Do you have a bucket list worthy road trip in your future? I love taking the "road not travelled," must be my Gypsy Soul.

#### HERE ARE MY FAVOURITE TIPS FOR A GREAT ROAD TRIP:

1. Plan your journey! Make sure you've got a basic idea of where you'd like to go and enjoy the interesting stops on the way.
2. Be spontaneous! Some of the best experiences happen because of a wrong turn or spur of the moment decision to follow that road sign to a place forgotten in time.
3. Travel with someone you like! (Sounds crazy, but our "bestie" may not be the best travel partner.)
4. Hydrate and snack. Bring along water and healthy snacks. Getting dehydrated and hungry creates more of a chance for a nasty experience. Alert, focused and happy are the safest choice on the road. **BL**

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# CARING FOR THE LITTLEST OF KIDNEYS

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**M**ARCH IS NATIONAL KIDNEY Month, a time for people across Canada to think about the importance of healthy kidneys to both themselves and their loved ones.

Kidneys play many important roles in the body such as filtering waste products and controlling blood pressure. When kidneys cease to function properly, the health consequences can be severe.

Sometimes the littlest of kidneys require care, as even newborns can suffer from kidney disease. Treating patients from those first moments of life to the teenage years, McMaster Children's Hospital is committed to offering specialized pediatric kidney care for patients throughout the region from Niagara Falls and Guelph to Oakville and Brantford.

"We are the only pediatric nephrology service available in the region," explains Marian Girodat, hemodialysis nurse at McMaster Children's Hospital. "We help patients who have conditions that are beyond what family physicians or community hospitals have the expertise to treat."

Patients who require the care of pediatric nephrology include children and youth with congenital kidney abnormalities, and those with reduced kidney function as a result of other medical conditions such as kidney cancer, diabetes, hypertension, physical trauma and autoimmune disease.

The nephrology specialists at McMaster Children's Hospital offer a complete range of clinical services including hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and pre and post-kidney transplant care.

"You can't live without your kidneys, which is why it's so important to take care of them," says Marian. "Kidney disease is potentially life-threatening and it requires extensive care. Some of our patients visit us three times a week and require dialysis for up to four hours each time. That's one reason we're so grateful for the new, more comfortable hemodialysis space."

After months of extensive renovations, McMaster Children's Hospital celebrated the opening of its Hemodialysis Clinic in July. The redevelopment was made possible by the Caring for Little Kidneys campaign, which was created by Charlotte and Tim Blevins, owners of Reid's Heritage Homes, who were inspired after their daughter received lifesaving care. The \$650,000 donor-fund-

ed campaign enabled the hospital to create a standalone clinic for this unique group of patients.

The clinic now features three customized treatment areas, which can accommodate patients in a hospital bed or wheelchair. Treatment areas are colourful and adorned with a building-block theme, and include age-appropriate toys and electronics to keep patients occupied during prolonged treatment sessions. Comfortable seating is available for parents and other family members so they can accompany children during treatment.

"It is extremely gratifying to help patients in their journey and donors are very important to the work we do," says Marian. "Their support makes it possible for us to have a beautiful clinic like this." **BL**

Please donate to McMaster Children's Hospital Foundation today and make a real difference in the lives of patients at [www.hamiltonhealth.ca/donate](http://www.hamiltonhealth.ca/donate).

Your support helps enable specialized health care for patients in the Niagara region - and beyond.

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## **MOVING INTO THE FUTURE WITH A MINIMUM OF STUMBLING**

**JIM MURRAY**

**A** NYBODY OUT THERE IN a position of business ownership or management understands that the world we are rolling into is not the same as the place we have been, and that the only constant moving forward is change.

And while it is one thing to understand that, it's quite another to get your head around what sort of impact these changes will have on the way your business operates over the next five to 10 years.

The easiest thing in the world to do right now is to pretend that there is still a status quo. And those who do will soon discover that they have fallen and they can't get up.

### **THREE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS ADAPTATION**

**1.** Your Customers. As the world shrinks, customers have more choices and become more demanding in terms of what they are looking for in either a B2B or retail relationship.

**2.** So it is imperative that businesses who want to both attract and retain customers have as much information and insight into who their customers are because customer relations are now very much like personal relationships. Your customers have to love you and you have to love them.

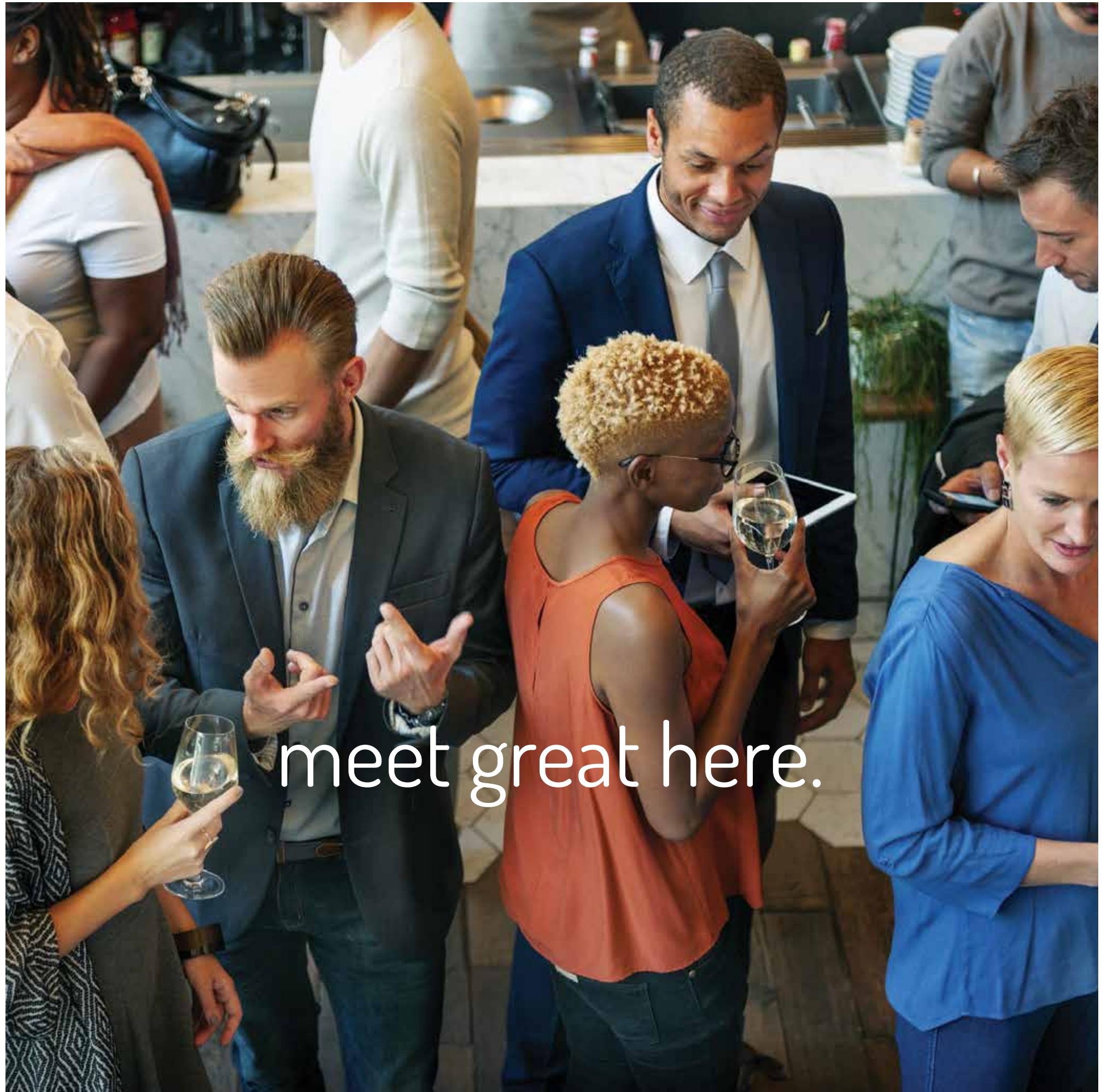
**3.** Your Systems. Despite all the amazing business tools companies have at their disposal these days, adapting to them is a lot of work, and can slow your business to a crawl for quite some time.

The businesses that will survive and thrive in the future are the ones who work with the simplest business systems because simplicity is directly proportional to productivity and profitability.

**3.** Your Brand & Its Character. The businesses that are willing to give back to their employees, to their customers and to their community are the businesses that are going to attract the best people, nurture the best customer relationships and always have a superb public image.

Obviously not every business will be experiencing a lot of stumbling moving forward. But the ones who experience the least will be those who pay attention to the three aforementioned points. **BL**

*Bullet Proof Consulting. Helping Niagara businesses change their thinking for the better. Contact Charlene Norman at 647.991.8743, Jim Murray at 289.687.3475 or email [admin@bulletproofconsulting.ca](mailto:admin@bulletproofconsulting.ca).*



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### BUSINESS PROFILE

Every day, thousands of men and women find themselves struggling to find their way in life and don't know where to turn. Let Fiona McNair be that helping hand. Fiona is the owner and founder of Shifting Gears Life Coaching. Through her life coaching firm, Fiona helps her clients find power and strength in their daily lives so they can develop healthy relationships with their surroundings, their loved ones and themselves.

At Shifting Gears Life Coaching, Fiona offers an intensive eight-week program with convenient one-hour coaching sessions via phone. Dealing with people of all ages, Fiona works closely with each client to build a sense of trust and help ease their burdens – whether they're caring for someone with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or dealing with any other difficult life or relationship issues.

Having worked with children and families for over 13 years in a social work capacity, Fiona prides herself on her sense of empathy and the personal experience she brings to the table.

"In the past two years, I've undergone some major changes in my life," she says, "including having family members diagnosed with PTSD. I know how this can affect your life, and your feelings of security, safety and peace."

Since launching Shifting Gears Life Coaching in the summer of 2017, Fiona has inspired dozens of people to reclaim their lives and reignite their passions. Let her help you find the right path – today. **BL**

To find out more about Shifting Gears Life Coaching, contact Fiona at 905.704.9702 or email [fmcnair91@gmail.com](mailto:fmcnair91@gmail.com). You can also go to [www.shiftinggearslifecoaching.com](http://www.shiftinggearslifecoaching.com) or [www.facebook.com/FionaMcNairLifeCoach](http://www.facebook.com/FionaMcNairLifeCoach).

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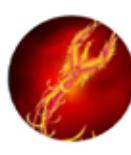
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# EXTRAS! EXTRAS! READ ALL ABOUT THEM!

JOHANNA McNULTY

**A**RE YOU PLANNING TO build or renovate a home? Are you a contractor involved in the building trades? If you are, there is something important that you need to turn your mind to when you contract for the performance of construction work and that is work which falls outside the scope of your contract, called "extra work" or "extras".

In my practice as a construction lawyer with Lancaster Brooks and Welch LLP, a large number of my files involve disputes over extra work between parties to construction contracts.

The purpose of this article is to provide some practical insights from a litigator's perspective on what disputes over extras look like, as well as some practical tips on how to prevent them.

## SILENCE IS DEADLY

In the commercial construction industry, contracts typically contain specific provisions for how extra work is dealt with and disputes more often than not arise when those provisions are not followed.

The purpose of this article is to focus more specifically on the residential construction sector, as I have found that in most of the disputes that I see between parties over extra work in residential construction, the contracts between the parties, if any contracts even exist, infrequently contain provisions about extra work.

Where contracts are silent on the issue of how contractors and owners deal with the performance of work outside of the scope of what was originally contemplated, it is easy for disputes to arise because the parties have no mechanism for neutralizing their often conflicting expectations about how that work should be dealt with.

From an owner's perspective, they will typically have a good relationship with their trades when they are working on site and it may not seem like a big deal to ask their contractor to add an extra twenty pot lights, or to install crown moulding in your kitchen. They often fail to appreciate that such changes can add thousands of dollars in labour and material to the ultimate cost of a project.

The problem usually manifests itself when

homeowners get the final bill and realize that the cost of the project has increased by thousands of dollars beyond what they may have originally agreed to in their contract and ultimately budgeted for. At that point, it is not uncommon for the relationship and communication between homeowners and contractors to break down.

After that final invoice is received and the contractor refuses to reduce its price, that is usually when my office gets the call from an angry homeowner, or from a contractor who now needs to register a construction lien on the owner's property as they have refused to pay not only for extras, but other portions of the contract as well.

## PLAYING THE BLAME GAME

But who is really at fault here?

Is it owners whose pocket books may not be nearly as big as their appetites for making their home look like images from Houzz?

Or is it the contractors who may have failed to do written quotes for extra work and obtain written approval prior to commencing extra work?

The answer, I believe, is that it is a bit of both.

The problem occurs when parties, both owners and contractors, fail to turn their mind to these issues when the dust is flying through the air and the work is getting done.

With so many small and newly formed companies performing renovation work, the unsophisticated nature of both the homeowner and the trades they may hire can also result in poorly drafted contracts and handshake deals which do not contemplate extra work.

When the time comes for money to change hands, however, everyone becomes concerned with their respective rights.

## LOOK FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE TABLE

On the part of homeowners, they may not be aware of the actual cost of construction and therefore fail to appreciate what the cost of additional labour and materials actually is, or the homeowner may not know whether what they received was part of the scope of what they originally contracted for, if there is nothing in writ-

ing for the parties to refer back to.

On the part of contractors, they have invested significant money into the construction of a project; including the purchase of materials and the payment of subtrades and believe that they are entitled to be paid for the work that was done. They simply may not have the time to do the necessary paperwork and obtain the necessary sign offs on additional work when work is being performed and trades are on site.

For some contractors, their lack of organization can come back to haunt them when owners refuse to pay for extra work that was never formally agreed upon and they are left with unpaid trades and suppliers.

The reality that many of the contractors I deal with face when they become embroiled in disputes over extras, is that payment under the contract is often held up as a bargaining chip by owners to negotiate the price of a final invoice down.

These delays in payment can have disastrous consequences for contractors who rely on prompt payment to pay employees, subcontractors and suppliers.

That critical moment, when the refusal of an owner to pay occurs, is usually when lawyers get called to register liens.

## PREVENTION IS THE BEST MEDICINE

After a lien is registered, or lawyers' letters begin flying back and forth over unpaid accounts, disputed items and excess charges, it is too late to consider how the situation could have been avoided.

At that point in time, it comes down to either negotiation between the parties, or to the commencement of a legal action, wherein both sides will be faced with the reality of high legal costs and long drawn out court battles.

The best way to deal with disputes over extra work is to prevent them.

## TOP 5 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PREVENTING DISPUTES REGARDING EXTRAS

There are a few simple strategies that both owners and contractors can employ to try to prevent disputes over extra work from occurring, or

to minimize losses when they do, some of which include the following:

**1.** Ensure that you have a written contract for the performance of any construction work;

**2.** Carefully read the provisions of your contract before you sign it and consider if there are any clauses which deal with extra work, if there are not, ask that one be inserted;

**3.** Make sure that your construction contract lays out the scope of work in a very detailed fashion, so that it is clear what work is included in the contract price;

**4.** If a contractor is asked to perform extra work, they should ask that requests be made in writing, or at minimum, create a formal quote for the work, which must be accepted, in writing before the extra work is begun; and,

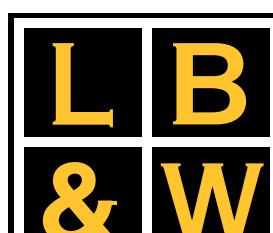
**5.** Contractors should consider ensuring that all payments are at least up to date before providing any extra work.

In addition to the foregoing, for contractors, it is important to document requests, approvals, timesheets and receipts for materials for extra work and to maintain good record keeping throughout the course of a project in the event there is ever a dispute which arises over the work that has been performed extra to a contract.

If you do become involved in a dispute over extras, the process is one in which contractors will be asked to defend their work and cost, and should therefore ensure

The information contained in this article is provided for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal or other professional advice. Readers are advised to seek specific legal advice in relation to any decision or course of action contemplated. **BL**

*The author, Johanna McNulty, is a member of the Construction Law Department at Lancaster Brooks and Welch LLP and her practice focuses on helping contractors, developers and owners navigate the complex world of construction liens, disputes and litigation.*



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**P**ROVIDING EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND non-cash incentives can be a win-win for employers and employees. Employees are often drawn to organizations that offer benefits beyond only a pay cheque. Employers can recruit and retain top candidates based on their benefits packages. But correctly managing and administering these benefits requires more finesse than many employers may consider.

Employers should be aware that there is a difference between taxable benefits, allowances and expense reimbursements, which are often categorized as employee benefits. Each category requires understanding of federal, provincial and territorial legislation and regulations and entails unique administration.

By better understanding the taxability implications of benefits, payroll can make valuable recommendations to employers to help reduce the administrative cost of such benefits. That's important, considering that data from 2015 shows that on average, the annual cost for employers to provide benefits is \$8,330 per full-time employee.

The improper assessment of taxable benefits and allowances are among the Canada Revenue Agency's top audit adjustments. Janet Spence, manager of compliance services at the Canadian Payroll Association (CPA) says, "Non-compliance puts organizations at risk of fines and penalties, and may potentially damage the reputation of the organization." **BL**

Employers and payroll, accounting and HR professionals can benefit from the CPA's wealth of taxable benefits and allowances resources. For more information, visit [www.payroll.ca](http://www.payroll.ca).

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## Taxable Benefits & Allowances: Reduce Costs and Risk of Audits

Marty S., CPM - Member, Ontario Region



One of the most common audit issues is excluding taxable benefits and allowances from employment income. Employers are responsible for: determining whether the benefits they offer are taxable to their employees, adding the value of those benefits to reportable income; and, withholding, remitting and reporting the required statutory deductions to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and Revenu Québec (RQ). The Canadian Payroll Association's *Taxable Benefits & Allowances* seminar offers an in-depth review of applicable legislation and regulations and explains the key concepts used by CRA and RQ to evaluate taxability and assess more than 40 common benefits, including automobile allowances, loan and stock options, gift cards and more.

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Financial incentives to hire individuals who are unemployed and out of full-time school are available to employers to help offset the often significant costs of hiring.

Niagara College also offers a variety of youth-centred hiring incentive programs including Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Connection Summer. The Youth Job Connection program provides a funding incentive to employers that hire youth aged 15 to 29 who have participated in an extensive pre-employment workshop series. The summer program provides funding incentives for students aged 15 to

18 who are returning to school.

The Youth Job Link program can provide financial incentives to either employers or eligible youth participants. It provides job search, job readiness, and job matching assistance to connect youth with employers offering employment opportunities including summer jobs.

Employers wishing to train existing workers or new staff hires can also access the Canada-Ontario Job Grant. This program provides funding to cover at least two-thirds of direct training costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per employee per training. **BL**

For further information about any of these hiring and training incentive programs, please contact 905.641.2252, ext. 4660.

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# TURNOVER. THAT'S A PASTRY, RIGHT?

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# SONAMI PARTNERSHIP BRINGS “INTELLIGENT” BED SHEET CLOSER TO HEALTH CARE MARKET

PROVIDED BY NIAGARA COLLEGE

**I**N THE EMERGING INDUSTRY of fabric sensing technology, one Toronto-based company has invented a revolutionary bed sheet that also functions as a patient health monitor without the use of any wired attachments to the body. And they are praising a unique research collaboration for advancing their smart device to market.

Studio 1 Labs was founded by Edward Shim and Olivia Lin, who met while university students and who shared an interest in health care innovation. They joined forces and invented a wireless fabric-sensing bed sheet that automates routine respiratory monitoring and documentation tasks for health care workers. With advanced data accuracy and analytics, this non-invasive technology can predict the onset of health decline and emergencies like apnea, heart attack and stroke.

To help commercialize the device, the start-up collaborated with Niagara College's Research & Innovation division to create the visually aesthetic user interface for the novel monitoring technology. The College's Digital Media & Web Solutions team developed an intuitive, user interface, which is viewable either by a monitor next to a patient's bed or remotely through a centralized system capable of following multiple patients. The interface programming also incorporates various levels of secure access for doctors, nurses and even family members.

“Collaborating with Niagara College and research student Alex Davis was crucial in bringing us closer towards commercialization,” says Lin, adding that this partnership has allowed Studio 1 to be operationally ready for their first long-term care home trial partner this summer in Vancouver.

This collaboration was possible thanks to support received through the Southern Ontario Network for Advanced Manufacturing Innovation (SONAMI), a Niagara College-led consortium funded by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario). Niagara College last year received a \$7.3-million FedDev grant to create the SONAMI alliance, a single-window approach to supporting manufacturers' research and development needs, encouraging them to adopt and integrate disruptive technologies into their operations.

“One of the great things about Niagara College is their innovative thinking and being able to bring forth other components we hadn't thought about,” says Shim. “It's a perfect example of bringing so many minds together, so many viewpoints.”

As for the need for simplified health care solutions, Shim points to the understaffing at hospitals and at long-term care homes.

“An affordable intelligent bed sheet monitoring and documentation solution will reduce spending by alleviating routine tasks for health care practitioners so that time can be better allocated,” he says.

While wearable fabric sensing technology has already been

gaining ground, Studio 1's device, which is handmade in Canada, is unique in that it is concentrated on the depth of pressure for each sensing point. It can alert staff if a patient is at risk for developing pressure ulcers, if a patient is struggling to get on or off the bed or most importantly, if someone is in respiratory distress.

In the future, and following additional clinical validation, Shim says the market for Studio 1 will extend residentially to include any home bed or crib where a smart-pressure-sensing bed sheet could provide alerts to health emergencies. Newer versions will also include clinical monitoring for heart rate, temperature and sleep stages/cycles.

Niagara College's Research & Innovation division provides real-world solutions for business, key industry sectors and the community through applied research and knowledge transfer activities. The division conducts projects that provide innovative solutions such as producing and testing prototypes, evaluating new technologies and developing new or improved products or processes for small and medium-sized businesses. Students and graduates are hired to work alongside faculty researchers to assist industry partners leap forward in the marketplace. **BL**

For more information about the SONAMI funding, contact Krystyn Keir, SONAMI project manager at [kkeir@niagaracollege.ca](mailto:kkeir@niagaracollege.ca) or visit [ncinnovation.ca](http://ncinnovation.ca).



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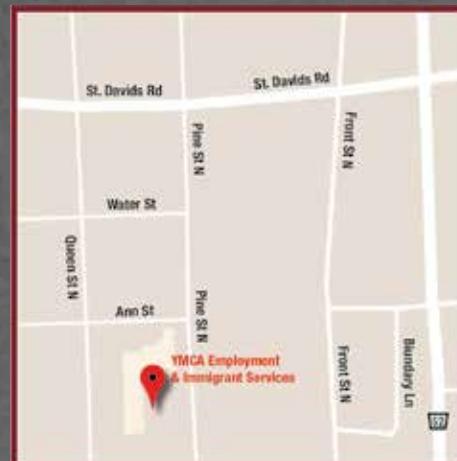
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The education and experience provided at Zavcor Training Academy is the first step to beginning a new career. The next step is joining a company with a supportive training program that will help refine and hone skills. Upon successful completion of the Zavcor Training Academy program, students will have an opportunity for employment at Zavcor Trucking Limited.

For students not interested in working for Zavcor Trucking Limited, Zavcor Training Academy has partnerships with a number of carriers. These preferred carriers visit The Academy regularly to promote working for their company, giving every Zavcor Training Academy graduate preferential treatment.

The Academy became registered as a Private Career College in 2016, under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, to train professional qualified truck drivers. Zavcor Training Academy's course is fully approved by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). Zavcor Training Academy has modeled their program through their business relationship with Kim Richardson Transportation Specialists Inc. (KRTS), an award-winning school with 30 years' experience. Zavcor Training Academy is also an active member of the Truck Training School Association of Ontario (TTSAO), the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA), Private Motor Truck Council of Canada (PMTC), and the Women's Trucking Federation of Canada (WTFC).

The Zavcor Training Academy program provides 200 hours of instruction, exceeding the Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) requirement. The Academy is located on the premises of Zavcor Trucking Limited, giving students the advantage of learning in a professional trucking environment with maintenance and fuelling facilities on site and a seven-acre yard. Zavcor Training Academy's fleet consists of late model automatic and manual transmission tractors.

"We work with every student to ensure the best opportunity for their successful career," explained Sarah Dekker, director of Zavcor Training Academy. "We help every student navigate through funding options, and we make every enrollment efficient and education rewarding."

Zavcor Trucking Limited welcomes all current and prospective students or recent graduates to contact them for information about their mentoring program and how The Academy can help launch a new career.

Zavcor Trucking Limited understands the importance of educating tomorrow's professional drivers. **BL**

*The Zavcor Training Academy would like to extend an invitation to visit the school and meet the team. For more information, call Director Sarah Dekker at 289.321.1063, email [sarahd@zavcor.com](mailto:sarahd@zavcor.com) or go to [www.zavcortrainingacademy.com](http://www.zavcortrainingacademy.com). Full and part-time truck driving instructor positions are also available. Zavcor Trucking Limited is an equal opportunity employer.*

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# Women BUILDING BUSINESS

= SPECIAL FEATURE =

**ON MARCH 8TH, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY** will be celebrated around the globe—a tradition that represents over ninety years of development and success for women worldwide. In this feature, we showcase local women in the business community who have made an impact. These successful women come from many walks of life—and all of them have demonstrated a clear sense of purpose, a desire to be different, and a drive to be the best. This feature is our way of saying “congratulations!” to all the hardworking women that help make the Niagara community such a rewarding place to work and live.



## ALLISON KARES

MOVEMENT UNLIMITED INC.  
CERTIFIED PILATES INSTRUCTOR \ OWNER

**PILATES IS MY PASSION** and I know that movement has healing qualities for everyone. My goal is to continue to work toward making movement accessible to everyone regardless of age or ability so they can have a positive movement experience that helps them to move better and feel better. Movement is so much more than an exercise program. It encompasses the body, mind and spirit of an individual. My aim is to provide an experience that speaks to all of these aspects of each person that I meet.

WHAT IS THE HARDEST THING IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU HAVE HAD TO OVERCOME?

Transitioning from a business partnership to being a sole business owner all while continuing to actively work as a practitioners and meeting the needs of my clients. My clients' health and well being are important to me. Being able to be present and focused on them while still having all the day to day challenges of transitioning a business, moving to a new location and developing new programs was very stressful. With the support of an amazing team of instructors, I was able to continue offering the highest quality programs and keep clients going.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE VISION PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY?

Pilates is my passion and I know that movement has healing qualities for everyone. My goal is to continue to work toward making movement accessible to everyone regardless of age or ability so they can have a positive movement experience that helps them to move better and feel better. Movement is so much more than an exercise program. It encompasses the body, mid and spirit of an individual. My aim is to provide an experience that speaks to all of these aspects of each person that I meet.

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## DR. TAIJA SPENCER-YAP

PROACTIVE CHIROPRACTIC AND TRAINING CENTRE  
CHIROPRACTOR

**DR. TAIJA SPENCER-YAP IS** a chiropractor who was born and raised in St. Catharines. She, along with her partner Dr. Scott Macpherson, opened ProActive Chiropractic & Training Centre in 2009. They grew the practice from one shared room inside a training space to the modern 4,500 square foot facility they have today. Their vision was to offer a "one-stop-shop" for people's health care needs with both treatment and fitness options within the same location. They currently offer chiropractic, physiotherapy, massage, acupuncture, fitness classes and personal training.

"My focus has always been preventative health care and balance," she says, "which includes proper nutrition, exercise and lifestyle management. We're here to help people achieve outstanding results, whether it's in the office, on the field or in their lives."

This year approaches Dr Taia's 10-year mark in practice. She splits her time between treating patients and managing the centre, which currently includes 15 practitioners, trainers and support staff. One of her favourite achievements to date is growing the clinic into a space where others can succeed.

"We are lucky to work with some of the best therapists and practitioners in the region," she says. "Our staff is committed to ongoing learning and innovation that improves the quality of patient care, and we're very proud of that."

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## SABRINA LIMONCELLI

FUSION STUDIO OF PERFORMING ARTS OWNER

WHAT ARE YOUR BUSINESS' THREE BIGGEST WINS RIGHT NOW?

Owning your own business can be very challenging and therefore easy to see where some faults might be therefore spending energy on improving those areas. However another very crucial aspect is seeing the positive and what IS working.

This year in particular, we have a wonderful team of Staff who support, respect and encourage growth within each other, creating a great synergy within the studio.

In the last 2 years we've been honoured to be voted #1 Dance Studio in our city for having a warm, inviting and fun learning environment.

Over the years our students and parents, along with staff, have become a close knit community simulating a family; supportive, nurturing, loyal & loving.

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## BETH KENNEDY

FIND YOUR STYLE WITH BETH  
OWNER

**WHAT IS THE HARDEST THING IN YOUR LIFE YOU'VE HAD TO OVERCOME?**

. As the youngest of five girls, I was able to indulge my passion by playing with the hand-me-downs from my sisters. I learned to break the rules and make my own by mixing bold colours, patterns and textures for maximum effect and comfort. I found accessories were an easy and affordable way to enhance and bolster my own wardrobe. Flash forward - one day recently, I was out for lunch with one of my best friends. We were discussing my current job and my health. I just wasn't happy. She told me it was time to quit my job and finally use my creative side. I knew right then and there I had to follow my heart. Now with my new fashion consulting business - Find Your Style with Beth - I'm able to use my passion and help men and women look and feel the best they can be.

## Feeling Frumpy?

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*Before*

*After*

**...Personal style for your life**



## ROSEANN WATERS

BUSINESS LINK  
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

**ROSEANN HAS ALWAYS BEEN** an independent entrepreneurial spirit. After a successful career in sales and marketing, she recently took a hiatus for her health. Now RoseAnn is back and enjoying the opportunity to work with her clients. A passionate lifelong resident of Niagara, RoseAnn is active in her community. She's also a foodie who enjoys wine and exploring all that Niagara has to offer.

**WHAT IS THE HARDEST THING IN YOUR LIFE YOU'VE HAD TO OVERCOME?**  
**THE HARDEST THING IN MY LIFE** I've ever had to overcome is the abrupt end of my 14-year relationship. Starting over after the age of 50 is challenging. When a long term relationship ends unexpectedly, there are so many loose ends to tie up. At the same time, my business ended and I had to move! Financially, emotionally and mentally, I was starting over. Learning to trust my gut, honour my need to heal, and having the courage to invest the time in getting better was tough. Looking back, I realize now that I'm one of the lucky ones. Not only did I survive - I'm thriving. A new beginning isn't easy but it's worth it. I love my life, my job, my "Business Link" family, and all the people who support me in my success. You only live once. You may as well embrace it and say "yes" to the possibilities!



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## DAWN WARREN

CANADIAN CHAIR MASSAGE TRAINING  
SENIOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR / INSTRUCTOR

**WHAT ARE YOUR THREE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN FULFILLING YOUR ROLE IN BUSINESS?**

**BALANCING BOTH PERSONAL** and a professional life has been one of my biggest challenges. When your office is in your home, and your teaching takes place off-site, it can be an organizational nightmare. Add into that, my partner and I share one vehicle and scheduling becomes a bit of a challenge. We've worked together to create a work/life dynamic that works well for us.

Learning to create curriculum that works for every learning type has been an interesting evolution of how I teach, and how I communicate with others. I'm proud to say that since setting high but achievable goals, my business has grown and I am reaching out further afield to bring chair massage to more practitioners in more locations.

I love the challenges of striving for excellence against my previous bests and the people I work with our so passionate about learning, that it's easy to overlook the challenges and go for the gold.

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# WENDY MARSHALL

THUMTBACK MARKETING  
DIRECTOR

**THUMTBACK MARKETING:** A full-service boutique social media agency focused on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter ads. She also advises social media and digital marketing to other agencies.

Wendy grew her love of marketing when her clients turned to her for advice on how to gain traffic to their newly designed website. Turning to industry leaders for guidance, Wendy turned to Business Trainers Pro and Digital Marketer to gain certifications and experience in Digital Marketing and Social Media Management.

Strengths: Brand Development, Content Creation, Social Media Growth, Search Engine Optimization, Digital Marketing, Ideation, Strategic Planning, Organization, Creative Direction & Aesthetic, Copywriting, Communication, and Brand Voice.

WHAT IS THE HARDEST THING IN YOUR LIFE YOU'VE HAD TO OVERCOME?

Having everything I was working for just taken away overnight. I have rebuilt my business from the ground up on my own and established my business in Niagara on honest and reliable service.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN YOUR ROLE?

Educating people on the role social media and other forms of marketing have within their business. Social Media is not all about the hard sell and pushing products and services it is about the relationship a business has with their community and building trust and educating their following about how the business is going to provide a solution when they are in need of what they are providing.

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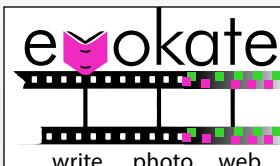
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# 2 MINUTES WITH PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Monthly feature asking local business people some friendly questions.



## NADINE L. TAFT

NL TAFT CONSULTING

- **NICKNAME:** Angel
- **WHERE ARE YOU FROM:** Toronto
- **WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL:** Cambridge, Whitby, Guelph and Kitchener-Waterloo
- **FAVOURITE FOOD:** French food
- **BIGGEST QUIRK:** I do not suffer fools well.
- **3 THINGS THE AVERAGE PERSON DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?** I was into gymnastics as a kid, I went to three high schools in five years, I cannot sing a note.
- **WHAT DO YOU LOVE:** Making a difference
- **WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE:** I believe that doing a random act of kindness every day, makes the world a better place.
- **YOUR DREAM:** To be happy and make those around me happy.
- **YOUR TOP 3 CHARACTERISTICS:** Integrity, sense of humour, kindness.
- **YOUR STRENGTHS:** Great with people, writing, strategizing and implementation.
- **FAVOURITE ACTIVITY:** Developing system to simplify work
- **OTHER INTERESTS:** Reading, dancing, cooking, and live theatre
- **FAVOURITE QUOTE:** "When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down "happy." They said I didn't understand the assignment and I said, "You don't understand life." – John Lennon **BL**



## SHARON BAKER

PRESIDENT | EVOKATE.CA

- **WHERE ARE YOU FROM:** Kitchener and now Hamilton
- **WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL:** I love learning so...University of Western Ontario...Sheridan College...Brock University...lots of courses from different places...I'm constantly learning on my own.
- **FAVOURITE FOOD:** Decadent brownies and ice cream...when it's vegan, it's healthy, right?
- **BIGGEST QUIRK:** I'm not really a fan of boredom, but I did read that it inspires creativity!
- **3 THINGS THE AVERAGE PERSON DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?** I create my own recipes for fun. I have several professional designations and experiences, all of which contribute to my ability to understand my client's needs. I love chocolate, and make my own dairy free and naturally sweetened chocolates.
- **WHAT DO YOU LOVE:** I love being engaged, having my ideas provoked and challenged. We grow as people when we're open to change.
- **WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE:** In being your best self. There is only one you.
- **YOUR DREAM:** To fight "boring" by creating engaging materials for everyone!
- **YOUR TOP 3 CHARACTERISTICS:** Creative, analytical and imaginative
- **YOUR STRENGTHS:** Synthesizing ideas and information from different sources to create something unique
- **FAVOURITE ACTIVITY:** Most definitely, swimming in a lake...or ocean...or any body of water
- **OTHER INTERESTS:** Reading, yoga, travelling, (healthy?!) baking **BL**

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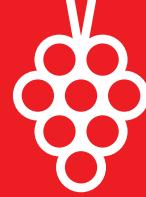
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# Cuvée 2018

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Brock University

A CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE IN  
**ONTARIO WINEMAKING**



**Taste Ontario's best at one of the largest  
celebrations of local food and wine.**

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**FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2018**  
Scotiabank Convention Centre  
Niagara Falls, Ontario

**BROCK ALUMNI PROMO OFFER:  
USE COUPON CODE 3232  
AND RECEIVE \$25 OFF PER TICKET**

All proceeds support student scholarships as well as research benefitting the Ontario grape and wine industry.

**[cuvee.ca](http://cuvee.ca)**

Doug Smith

# CHARITY ROAST

6:00pm on Thursday April 19th, 2018

\$100  
/person

## Includes:

- \$50 tax receipt
- 3 course meal
- 3 bottles of wine per table
- All proceeds to benefit  
Wise Guys Charity Fund

Holiday Inn & Suites, Parkway Conference Centre  
327 Ontario St., St. Catharines



For table sponsorships please contact: Brandon Currie @ [brandon.currie@sunlife.com](mailto:brandon.currie@sunlife.com) / 289.668.6746

For ticket purchases please visit: [www.wiseguyscharity.com](http://www.wiseguyscharity.com) / C.R. Smith Financial, 80 King Street, Suite 502, St. Catharines, ON

# BRAND BLVD

THE LOW DOWN

At Brand Blvd, we take a **proactive** approach at providing **quality** branded merchandise. We are a team of **enthusiastic, professional** individuals who **strive** to **exceed** our clients' expectations in **customer service**. Together, we **create awareness** for your organization and utilize our products to help you **BUILD YOUR BRAND**.

FOUNDED  
**2007**

**AWESOME,  
ALWAYS.**

**100%**  
PRIVATELY OWNED



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES  
WHO HAVE WON  
EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS AWARDS

WE SERVICE OVER **1200** ACTIVE CLIENTS

**WHAT WE DO**  
—  
**BUILD YOUR BRAND**

OUR TOP SELLING CATEGORIES

**LOOKING FOR  
RETAIL BRANDS?**

WE SELL 'EM



ASK US, WE HAVE MORE!

**8B**

LOCATED IN THE  
**HEART OF NIAGARA**  
261 Martindale Rd, Unit 5  
St. Catharines, ON  
L2W 1A1



Our **preferred suppliers** meet all safety standards while being **morally and ethically sound**.



We are part of North America's largest buying group which gives us **\$480 million in purchasing power**.

**WE HAVE  
CLIENTS**

in all of these provinces & territories!



**12 out of 13  
to be exact!**



**2007**



↙ Our people

**2017**



COMBINED,  
OUR BRANDIES  
OWN **13** DOGS

**POPULAR INDUSTRIES  
WE SERVICE:**



**31** AVERAGE AGE  
OF OUR BRAND  
EMPLOYEES



Our stance on  
employee satisfaction:  
**Mandatory**



**OFFICE  
HOURS**

MONDAY - FRIDAY  
8:30AM - 5:00PM



PREMIUM/  
GIFT SUPPLIER  
M-IT READERS CHOICE AWARDS  
2017



DISTRIBUTOR  
ENTREPRENEURS  
OF THE YEAR  
ASI - COUNSELOR  
2017



GOLD DISTRIBUTOR  
OF THE YEAR AWARD  
PPPC  
2012-17



FASTEST GROWING  
DISTRIBUTOR  
COUNSELOR MAGAZINE  
2013



PARTNER OF THE  
YEAR AWARD  
FACILIS GROUP  
2012

**1.844.NEW.SWAG**

# 40

15TH ANNUAL

## UNDER FORTY BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**SAVE THE DATE**  
May 16<sup>TH</sup> 2018

**NOMINATION DEADLINE MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup>**

PRESENTING  
SPONSOR



BayShore Groups

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GOLD  
SPONSOR



COMMUNITY  
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Brock University

BRONZE  
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BEST IN CLASS  
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