

Chutes Coulonge Reaches New Heights Within a year, aerial park wins Quebec tourism award

By: Rosa Lee
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Approximately 10,000 visitors enjoy the beauty and wonder of Chutes Coulonge every year. Thanks to new aerial park, visitors will be able to see the historical region in a whole new way: from above!

Christine Mitchell, Director of Operations for Chutes Coulonge says the park's board of directors decided to pursue other avenues of income for the park three years ago. "We're a non-profit organization," Christine explains. "Costs were going up every year, but our income wasn't."

After reviewing several tourism options, the board decided that an aerial park would give visitors the chance to see the region from a new and exciting vantage point

while maintaining the integrity of the park and trees.

Over the past 10 months, Chutes Coulonge has added zip lines, rock climbing and

are ready for the park's opening on May 1st. However, staff is still training for the Canyon Zip and Via Ferrata cabled rock climb, which are

opportunity," Mitchell explains. "We have all the natural resources to be an eco region, we just need to create the infrastructure and access to do it."

The aerial park helps establish that infrastructure and will benefit local businesses with an increasing influx of tourists, prompting more communication amongst businesses, and increasing development. The aerial park also moves Chute Coulonge into the Eco and Adventure Tourism industry where it has won the annual Les Grands Prix du Tourisme Québécois award for 2009. Chutes Coulonge will proudly move on to the national competition in Quebec City on May 15, 2009.

To learn more about the Chutes Coulonge Aerial Park or to make reservations, visit: www.chutescoulonge.qc.ca

We have a lot of opportunity.

Christine Mitchell, Director of Operations
Chutes Coulonge

even a children's section which was previewed at the park's annual Easter Egg Hunt earlier this month. The park is anticipating an increase of 8,000 visitors this year and upwards of 30,000 visitors by the end of the fifth year.

Mitchell expects to draw attention mostly from Ontario, because almost 55% of the park's visitors come from the Ottawa Valley which does not have an aerial park. Guides for the Zip Line Series and Children's Aerial Challenge

scheduled to open June 1st.

"We're very fortunate that we have the individuals to draw from," Mitchell says. "With so many outdoor adventure businesses in the area and training provided through Algonquin College, we were able to find excellent guides who were already trained and experienced."

The Pontiac region began looking at tourism as viable industry when the forestry crisis started four years ago.

"We have a lot of

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Ottawa Valley Business is a monthly publication covering business news and events throughout Renfrew County and surrounding areas. It is published by Forward Thinking Media Group.

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OVB is delivered monthly via email to more than 2,400 businesses, government and organizations.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE:
To receive OVB by email each month, contact us at: admin@ovbusiness.com. There is no charge to receive the publication.

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News, article suggestions and letters to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. Content will be edited to fit the space available. We welcome press releases and news from our local business community to be published free of charge.

CONTACT US:
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Chamber Publishes Business Book

From Local Entrepreneurs

Reflections from people in business in the area

In 2008, the Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce put together a book entitled "The Spirit of Business," in which entrepreneurs and employees were interviewed for their thoughts on doing business in the Ottawa Valley. The following are some excerpts from that publication. (Copies of the book are available from the Chamber.)

Sandra Blaikie
A Channel (now ATV)

"I get a sense that business is very plugged into the community here. There is a long-standing relationship between business and community involvement."

Angie Giroux-Wren
ACG Professional Photography

"I find that in Renfrew County, everyone is always interlinked. The referrals I receive from other community businesses has really helped my business flourish in a few short years."

Shaun Cotnam
Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.

"The business community is close-knit, and for the most part, incredibly supportive of one another."

Jamie Bramburger
Algonquin College

"What we see that others don't see is the human element

of how we can change someone's life. People come here lost. Some are on social assistance or they're out of a job or they just don't know what to do with their life. We help guide them into a program that fits, and their lives just transform."

Scott, Maureen & Gary
Bank of Montreal

"The financial services industry is extremely competitive. A constant challenge for our business these days is striving to stay one step ahead of the competition."

Chris Hinsperger
Bonnechere Caves

"We all need to step outside some comfort lines at times."

Andreas & Petra Vornweg
Bonnechere Valley Windows

"If people could really see the advantages - and not only for the business owner - the spin-off of spending their money locally. If people could see how it really benefits the entire community, maybe people really would think about spending locally."

Steve Perry
Carefor

"Everything we do, even if it seems insignificant, it makes a difference to people here everyday."

Mayor Ed Jacyno
City of Pembroke

"People who have a positive attitude towards their business are the ones that are succeeding."

Ed Gagnon
CFB Petawawa

"The fact that we are community that cares and helps out in many different ways makes all of us feel good to live in this area."

Michael Tharby
COGECO

"If you want something bad enough, go for it. And be prepared to put in the work and make sacrifices. Nothing comes free ."

Eileen Malette
Custom Draperies

"The more we recognize each others' strengths, the more we can help each other. If we knew all our neighbours a little better, we could re-direct customer locally."

Dave & Elaine Fisher
The Delfi Group

"If we think in terms of what we can do together versus how to take business from someone else, it would be a happier place to be. I see this in business all the time."

See Reflections From Business on Page Three

Progression of Internet Access and Websites

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Internet Access							
Small Business	68%	73%	76%	79%	79%	81%	85%
Medium Business	91%	92%	94%	96%	96%	96%	95%
Large Business	94%	99%	97%	99%	98%	99%	99%
All Firms	71%	76%	78%	82%	82%	83%	87%
Own Website							
Small Business	24%	27%	29%	32%	33%	35%	36%
Medium Business	57%	62%	66%	69%	70%	71%	74%
Large Business	74%	77%	77%	79%	82%	89%	90%
All Firms	29%	32%	34%	37%	38%	40%	41%

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Electronic Commerce and Technology (SECT), 2008.

Reflections from Business

Continued from Page Two

Nick Patel

Econo Lodge Inn & Suites

"Every business has challenges, and it's not enough just to be aware of those challenges, you have to do something about it."

**Agnes Branecka
Edward Jones**

"The business community here is very vibrant. The resources in this community are not inferior to what is available in Ottawa."

**Jennifer Layman
Forward Thinking**

"I think we need to look at all the reasons why something can succeed instead of putting up barriers as to why it cannot succeed. If we do that, inevitably there will be fewer barriers."

Norm Carroll

Frank Carroll Financial

"If you sit down and write out your goals, as long as you believe it, you will achieve it. If you're willing to write it down, you have convinced yourself."

Michael St. Jean

Rotary Club of Pembroke

"Anybody in business should conduct themselves using the four-way test: is it the truth, is it fair to all concerned, will it build good will and better friendships and will it be beneficial to all concerned."

**Sue Campbell
Ottawa Valley**

Waste Recovery Centre

"We're all pretty excited about waste here! It's not just that we're doing the right thing here, but we're helping communities manage waste in a way that is cost-effective."

Ted Barron

**Renfrew County Community
Futures Development Corp.**

"Our slogan is 'Investing in Community' and I think that says it all. You see a result at the end of the day and it's a human result. When you go home at night you can look yourself in the eye and say, 'we helped someone today.'"

Pierre Noel

Pembroke Regional Hospital

"It's important for all of us to come to work and be at our best every day. The work that we do together is so important and impacts on so many people, that we always need to be at our best."

**Shawn Gallant
Gallant Media**

"To me, the spirit of business is being open-minded enough to try the unconventional."

**Jayne Brophy
Pembroke Mall**

"My friends all envy me that I've been able to stay here. Sometimes we just sort of take it for granted."

**Maddie Matheson
Travel Professionals
International**

"Be sure it is something you enjoy doing and don't give up. Make sure you're ready for the amount of work involved. You have to live it."

Jayne DeRoy

Purvis Gallery & Framing

"When you walk in here, it's my job to make our time with you as good as I can. We do our best to offer something to everyone - even if that's just a bit of friendly contact."

Mary Hill

Johnston & Mackie Ltd.

"This is a small town and that's one of the things I love about the place. I like walking down main street and having people know my name, as I know theirs."

Eric McCrae

On-Line Support

"Take good care of your people and they will take care of the business. And, develop your team so that they are self-sufficient and provide them with the opportunity to learn and grow."

**Marie DeNoble Evans
TD Canada Trust**

"Almost everyday, I learn something new about the business, our customers or my staff. We provide service to thousands of customers, and we help people everyday."

**Chris & Louise Hermitte
Speedpro Signs**

"I think that, for a long time, people felt that they had to go out of town to get what they needed, but everything is right here."

**Mayor Bob Sweet
Town of Petawawa**

"I'm proud of the faith these businesses that are here have had, and continue to have, in our community."

**Lorraine Mackenzie
Upper Ottawa Valley
Chamber of Commerce**

"I think my main piece of advice would be, don't isolate yourself. Network and talk to other people who could possibly be mentors to you."

**Lorraine MacDonald
Whitetail Golf Club**

"I think for people getting into business, you have to know how to be organized and you have to know how to hire good and honest employees."

**Gwen Greenstock
Fifth Avenue Collection**

"Good, better best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better, and your better, best."

**Shelley Burchart
Sweet Williams Floral**

"There are a lot of good networking opportunities for people if they look and take advantage of them, and I think that's really important for business."

Is Your Business in the Health Industry?

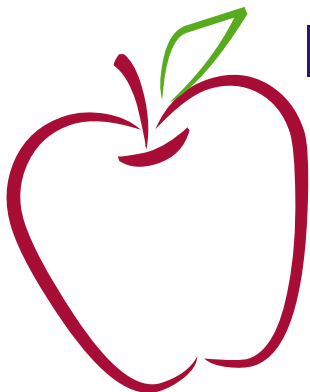
If so, you should be listed at ovhealth.ca!

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How To Make Good Advertising Decisions In Your New Business

By: Jennifer Layman

jenn@fwdthink.net

Knowing how to advertise your business effectively is important to the sustainability of your business. If you don't have customers, you don't have a business, so making the right decisions on advertising and promotion are critical to your success.

What Media Is Best?

Years ago, the only real choices for advertising were newspapers, radio and television. As society changed, so did the way you reach customers, which introduced many more opportunities for promotion of your business. This is not to say that radio, newspapers and television are no longer relevant, in fact, they have also changed, and tend to focus on specific demographics. For traditional and new media, the decision is the same: you need to match the media with the type of person you want to reach.

What To Say

Finding the right media is critically important, after all, you want to be speaking to the people most likely to become your customers. Another critical component is what to say to those people. Now that you have their attention, you don't want to turn them off by saying the wrong thing.

Many new businesses, and some established businesses, tend to cram all the

information they can into the time or space they have purchased. This can be overwhelming to the customer. If the radio announcer talks too fast they can't ingest the information. If the print in the ad is too small or the layout too confusing, they will have a hard time reading it. The solution? Pick one or two key messages and focus on those. Leave the rest to the sales

pitch that happens in the store.

Making good advertising decisions is important to the health of your business as it is responsible for helping you attract customers. Advertising is also something that is always changing, because people are always changing, so keeping current with trends and opportunities makes good business sense.



Events Calendar

May 5, 2009

E-Business Series with Bernard Charlebois. \$15. Purchasing and Selling Online & Online Display Advertising. 6:30pm-9:30pm. Pembroke. Info: 613-432-6848 or ejhughes@countyofrenfrew.on.ca.

May 6, 2009

Tax information forum. Free. Best Western Pembroke Inn & Conference Centre. Pembroke. Visit www.ontario.ca/revenue and click on events for more information.

May 12, 2009

E-Business Series with Bernard Charlebois. \$15. Search Engine Optimization and Internet Auctions/Malls. 6:30pm-9:30pm. Pembroke. Info: 613-432-6848 or ejhughes@countyofrenfrew.on.ca.

May 19, 2009

E-Business Series with Bernard Charlebois. \$15. Social networking pros/cons. 6:30pm-9:30pm. Pembroke. Info: 613-432-6848 or ejhughes@countyofrenfrew.on.ca.

May 28, 2009

Importing/Exporting Goods. Canada Border Services Agency. An intro for small and medium sized businesses that import/export goods occasionally or for the first time. 9:30am-12:30pm. Lanark-North Leeds Enterprise Centre. \$10. Info: 613-283-7002 or cjames@ripnet.com.

June 11, 2009

Joint GST/PST Seminar. Speaker: Canada Revenue Agency/Minister of Revenue. How the tax works, your obligations/entitlements, how to complete your GST return, who has to register, books & records, special situations. 6:00pm-9:00pm. Free. Lanark-North Leeds Enterprise Centre. Info: 613-283-7002 or cjames@ripnet.com.

Financing Used by New and Established SMEs

Types of Financing Instruments	Start Ups	Established
Personal savings of business owners	76.1	54.7
Personal credit cards of business owner	46.9	47.7
Personal lines of credit of business owner	45.6	47.1
Trade credit owing to suppliers	38.1	47.8
Commercial loans: financial institutions	34.8	34.5
Commercial credit cards	34.4	45.6
Lines of credit from financial institutions	33.2	40.9
Leasing	25.3	28.2
Personal loans of business owner(s)	23.7	26.7
Loans from friends/relatives	19.3	24.5
Government lending agencies/grants	14.9	16.2
Loans from those unrelated to owners	11.6	10.6
Micro-credit	11.1	8.7
Other sources of financing	10.5	13.3
Venture capital funds	7.6	8.1
Retained earnings	N/A	50.9
Loans from employees	N/A	15.7
Factoring	N/A	8.7

Based on survey results for 2004, the most recent available. Source: Statistics Canada, Survey on Financing of Small and Medium Enterprises

Tips from High Performance Firms

Presidents and CEOs of Ontario's high performance firms hare what impacts their growth

High Performance Firms (HPFs) are companies that have a global head office in Ontario, employ between 10 and 500 employees and have had sales growth of more than 50 percent in three of the last five years. There are approximately 9,000 high performance firms in Ontario. A selection of these firms ranked the items below as having the highest impact on their recent growth.

Highest Impact on Growth of High Performance Firms

- 70%.....Empowered Employees
- 69%..Product/Service Innovation Strategy
- 68%.....Clear, Communicated Vision
- 67%.....Skilled Employees
- 60%.....Marketing Strategy
- 56%.....Professional Management
- 54%.....Developing Leaders from Within
- 51%.....Custom Core Processes
- 51%.....Skills Development & Training
- 51%.....Market Expansion
- 50%.....Overall Growth Strategy
- 49%.....Financing

HPFs Identified Business Activities That Significantly Affect Their Growth

- 69%..Product/Service Innovation Strategy
- 60%.....Marketing Strategy
- 51%.....Market Expansion
- 50%.....Overall Growth Strategy
- 44%.....Export Strategy
- 40%.....Strategic Partnerships

Key Challenges for the Future Identified by High Performance Firms

- 42%.....HR (Attract/Retail Talent)
- 33%.....Strategies to Support Growth
- 22%.....Competition
- 20%.....Access to Markets
- 9%.....Pricing Pressures/Exchange Rate
- 9%.....Government Policy/Regulation
- 8%.....Availability of Financing
- 8%.....Technology: Changing/Emerging



Small Business Facts & Figures

- 96%**
...of small businesses (1-99 employees) survive for one year.
- 85%**
...of small businesses survive for two years.
- 70%**
...of small businesses survive for five years.
- 47%**
...of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have some degree of female ownership.
- 1 Million**
...the number of small businesses in Canada with employees. This excludes self-employed persons.
- 98%**
...of businesses in Canada have fewer than 100 employees.
- 130,000**
...the average number of new small businesses created in Canada each year from 2002 to 2006.
- 48%**
...of the total labour force in the private sector comes from small businesses.
- 15%**
...the percentage of workers in the 2007 Canadian economy who were self-employed.
- 25%**
...of small businesses operate in Canadian goods-producing industries.
- 75%**
...of small businesses operate in Canadian service industries.

Source: Industry Canada

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Marketing and Your Competition

The importance of building a solid brand



Jennifer Layman
jenn@fwdthink.net

Most people starting a business today have had to prepare a business plan, usually as a requirement for funding or a self-employment support program. Part of the business plan includes a marketing strategy that will help you attract customers. After all, when you're new in business, attracting customers is a pretty big focus. How will people become aware of your business? Why will they choose you over your competition? These are just some of the questions you need to address in building a successful plan.

One area that is often missed in the marketing element of business planning involves dealing with new competitors who come into the marketplace. How can you protect your business when that situation arises?

The decisions you make in your start-up phase have a lot to do with the staving off future competition. The stronger your business appears, the more prepared you will be to address future competition. This can be accomplished in large part with making good marketing decisions in the early stages of your business.

Building Your Image

When you are new in business, your first impressions are very important. Your image is the only thing people have to form an opinion with because they have not yet had an experience with your business. If you want to bring them through the door, you have to look the part.

One of the most important things you can do is to invest in a logo, because it appears on

everything you do with respect to your business promotion: business cards, signage, website, advertising and so on. It is the most recognizable feature of your business. This is not the thing to trust to your friend's nephew who likes to play on the computer. Invest in your image, your brand, and it will strengthen your position in the marketplace.

Get Out There

Make the time to get out in the community and seize opportunities to talk about your business. Join the Chamber of Commerce and attend events. Sit on committees or boards and show up to the meetings. Go to a council meeting or attend a community event. All of these things help create visibility, which also helps to strengthen your position with competitors.

A recent article in Business Week noted that "the more visible you are, the more prospective market entrants will be discouraged from taking you

on. If you remain consistent with your spending, your competitors may view it as essentially a fixed cost of entering the category. They'll either have to keep up with your marketing pace or talk themselves into believing they don't have to. Either way, it strengthens your position."

Be Proactive

Make time to work on your business. If you are pressed for time, find someone who has the time to do that. If you don't work on your business, find new promotional opportunities and continue to be current on the marketplace, someone else will be.

Schedule some time each week to find out information that will grow your business and make appointments with people who can help you. You don't have to know everything about running a business, but you have to know where to find the answers to the things you don't know.

12 Best Practices of HPFs: High Performance Firms

The following Best Practices of High Performance Firms is from the Ontario Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship publication called "Defining Success."

1. Develop and follow an overall growth strategy with clearly articulated objectives and activities.
2. Develop and implement a product or service innovation strategy.
3. Develop and implement a marketing strategy.
4. Pursue a market expansion strategy that takes you to new markets and/or customers.
5. Attract and retain skilled employees or tradespeople.
6. Attract and retain professional management staff.
7. Invest in and develop customized core processes that differentiate you from others in your industry or market.
8. Have access to the right financing at the right time.
9. Communicate a clear vision for your company.
10. Empower employees, allow them to innovate and make decisions.
11. Have a process in place to identify and develop leaders from within the organization.
12. Invest in employee skills development and training programs.

While a shell might protect you if you fall,
you need your wings to really get somewhere.
Break out of your shell.



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