



Celebrating 30 Years of Small Business Success

June 16, 2014

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GrowthWheel

On June 11th and 12th the Illinois SBDC Network, in conjunction with the Illinois Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth Association (IESBGA), held a two day GrowthWheel certification training program at the Illinois State University Alumni Center in Normal. Special thanks to the Illinois SBDC at ISU for coordinating the training program logistics and also deep and sincere gratitude goes out to GrowthWheel Founder David Madie for coming back to Illinois to conduct the intensive two day training session. We are proud to announce that the Illinois SBDC now has 32 more Certified GrowthWheel Business Advisors in our Network.

Congratulations to our latest group of certified business advisors. Please utilize your newly acquired skills and the new tool on a regular basis. We are confident you will find GrowthWheel to be very effective, flexible and extremely valuable for you and your clients. For those of you who participated, please send a reply by e-mail and let us know what you thought about the GrowthWheel training program.

We also strongly encourage you to continually improve your effectiveness by taking advantage of the regular series of GrowthWheel OnTrack Webinars to stay on track and get ideas for how to best use the toolbox with your client companies. The OnTrack webinar series runs on a monthly basis. You can register for any upcoming OnTrack Webinar at <http://www.growthwheel.com/on-track>.



Data Security: 10 Tips for Protecting Your Small Business

By Colton Matheson on businessbee.com, 6/5/14 - Small business owners often don't know where to start when it comes to data security or even have the time to devote to doing it. Although the U.S. government is developing stricter penalties for cyber-attacks, an ounce of prevention is always worth the time. Here are 10 tips to help protect your data.

- 1. Identify Sensitive Data** - Every company has sensitive data, including financial records, employee personal information, or consumer credit card details. Make sure you know where this information is stored, whether on computers, laptops, or servers, and that adequate protection exists at each level.
- 2. Control Access** - Never give anyone, even an IT administrator, blanket access to all data with no oversight. Keep records about who uses data as well as how and when they use it, so a trail exists if files go missing or are compromised.
- 3. Don't Ignore Mobile** - The rising bring-your-own-device (BYOD) trend means more mobile devices than ever in the workplace. As a result, many employees keep both work and personal data on phones and tablets, but they often don't have sufficient security measures in place to prevent an attack or a loss. Owners can't stop mobile use, but they can create solid at-work use policies.
- 4. Consider the Cloud** - Despite some of the negative security press surrounding the cloud, public options are often a viable way for small businesses to secure their data. By storing information offsite and under a robust cloud provider agreement, companies not only limit the chance of an attack, but they have access to data backup in the event of a disaster.
- 5. Encrypt What You Have** - If you do choose to keep data onsite, encrypt it. Many databases, applications, and security suites offer data encryption services. Use a secure encryption technique so that even if information is stolen, it can't be easily compromised.
- 6. Hire the Right Help** - For many small business owners, hiring a dedicated IT pro makes sense to manage compliance and security issues. Before bringing on any new talent, however, make sure to do your homework. Conduct background checks and check references. In-house data theft remains a huge problem for businesses.
- 7. Control Downloads** - Just as too-broad access can expose your data, so can downloading data that contains spyware. Imposing strict download controls is one way to sidestep this problem.
- 8. Think About Paper** - In a digital world, many small business owners forget the power of paper. Shred all sensitive documents once you transfer them to a digital format, and employ a secure shredding company to dispose of the remains.
- 9. Secure Your Network** - One of the easiest ways to do business in a small office is by using a wireless network. If left unsecured, however, these networks are also easy to attack. Make sure your wireless network has a password, and use WPA2 encryption rather than WEP.
- 10. Update Passwords** - According to Trustwave, "Password1" remains popular because it meets most automated security system requirements. Small business owners should periodically review all passwords being used in their system and change those that aren't secure. Change passwords once every few months, especially if your employees leave the company or use third-party providers for IT functions.

Check it out the latest "Why Illinois for Tech" video: <http://www.youtube.com/user/IllinoisDCEO>

Program Success of the Week –The Music Connection

Kaleidoscope Strings and Piano was founded in 2004 by Janet Kuester, a professional violinist, pianist, and private music instructor for 30 years. The school opened with 60 students. In March 2007, Kaleidoscope Strings and Piano became The Music Connection to better reflect the mission and scope of Ms. Kuester's dream which was "to provide students of all ages with the skills they need to enjoy music for a lifetime and to develop the musical ability of each student by providing quality music education through private and group instrument instruction."

Ms. Kuester has been a client at the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Governor's State University (GSU) since 2009. The advisors at GSU continue to help her

refine business operations, plan for expansion, explore traditional and alternative financing for growth opportunities and plan the next steps for the Music Connection. She is now in the process of a further expansion at the Orland Park studio. She once shared this invaluable advice; "Completing my business plan was invaluable in assessing the business now and for future growth. I know where I am and where I want to go. I thank the SBDC at GSU for their help."

In April, 2014 The Music Connection is serving more than 500 students through its Orland Park and Frankfort studios. Ms. Kuester is also a tireless volunteer at the Suburban Youth Symphony Orchestra which is composed of about seventy talented young musicians from Chicago's south and southwest suburbs.

Learn more at: <http://www.theconnection2music.com/> or call 708-364-7590.

Resource of the Week – BusinessUSA Rural Exporting Portal

NEW RURAL EXPORTING WEB PORTAL: The [BusinessUSA Rural Exporting Portal](#) has now launched! Part of the [Made in Rural America Export and Investment Initiative](#), this web portal provides a gateway to government services, counseling, and financing opportunities available to help rural U.S. businesses, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers begin or expand exporting. The [Rural Exporting](#) portal includes:

Upcoming rural export events near you

Latest news highlighting export opportunities

Coming Soon! A new online quick-search tool that will provide rural businesses and entrepreneurs a customized list of relevant government resources

Neoserra/WebCATS Update

Each Neoserra/WebCATS user needs to have their own log on and password. If you have users that sign in under another's name please contact Tom Becker to assign them their own log in information. Contact Tom Becker at 217/558-6303 or tom.becker@illinois.gov

Moves and News

CONTEST DEADLINES - Elevator Pitch and Business Plan – Chicago City Treasurers Office

\$30,000 Business Plan Competition - BIGGEST PRIZES EVER OFFERED

4 Page Business Plan Template to [Enter](#)

\$15,000 in prizes for Tech Business Plan

\$15,000 in prizes for non- technology. [Sign up today.](#)

DEADLINE IS JUNE 23rd

\$8,500 Elevator Pitch

"Get to the top with perfect pitch." :30-:60 video ([Enter](#)) Only 2 weeks left to Enter.

Win \$\$, get expert feedback. Videos are judged on PITCH not production. [Learn More](#)

DEADLINE 6/30

SSTI Launches 2014 Conference at 1871

Regional Prosperity Through Innovation

3SSTI Annual Conference Opening Reception Sunday, September 14, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM [Regi](#)
1871 is Chicago's Entrepreneurial Hub for Digital Startups. SSTI conference attendees will re
new technologies. Launched in partnership with the state of Illinois, 1871 is a 50,000-square
the people at 1871 share ideas, make mistakes, work hard, build their business and, with a l

SSTI is totally geeked to be spending the evening at 1871. We know you are too. [Register Today!](#) **The Early Registration deadline ends June 16.** [Take a virtual Tour of 1871...](#)

America's SBDC Network Connect

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to see the June 12, 2014 edition of [America's SBDC Network Connect newsletter](#).

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to Tom.Becker@illinois.gov. Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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