



*Providing Professional Guidance for Business Growth*

**October 19, 2015**

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### **Illinois SBDC Accreditation Week**

This week the Accreditation Team from the America's SBDC Network will be traveling throughout the state, visiting many of our Illinois SBDCs, talking with the leadership at the Illinois Department of Commerce and the SBA Illinois District office and meeting with Network members from all of our Illinois SBDCs. The Illinois SBDC Network enthusiastically welcomes Accreditation Team Leader, Mike Myhre, State Director from the Florida SBDC and each of the members of the Accreditation team to Illinois. Other members of the Accreditation Team include, Diane Howerton, Regional Director of the SBDC at UC Merced in California, Mark Langford, Regional Director from the North Texas SBDC and Janice Washington, State Director of the Arizona SBDC. The Accreditation Team also includes two observers from a couple of our neighboring states, Keith Brophy, State Director of the Michigan SBDC and Greg Tucker, Associate State Director from the Missouri SBTDC. Please join us in welcoming the Accreditation Team and showing them our tremendous Illinois hospitality. Everyone, have a Fantastic Week !!!

### **Spotlight on Success – Sweat It Off Fitness**

Dee Caswell can attest to the fitness effectiveness of "spinning." She lost 135 pounds spinning on a stationary bike to better health 20 years ago. This experience led to Ms. Caswell becoming a spinning instructor and working at several area fitness centers where she developed a devoted following.

After developing her personal brand, Ms. Caswell decided to open Sweat It Off Fitness in January, 2015. She chose her location carefully, opening her facility at a busy corner in Chicago that sees 36,000 cars a day pass. Sweat It Off also uses traditional marketing tools such as flyers, discount incentives and reaching out to other local businesses and residents within a two mile radius of her location. The target client is working females between the ages of 25-60 that make \$35,000/year or more. Within that target

are also individuals that may have a weight or medical condition that can greatly benefit from the impact that spinning offers.

Ms. Caswell's success has been a collaborative effort. She works with several advisors at the **Illinois Small Business Development Center at Bethel New Life**, earned a \$10,000 loan from The Private Bank and received significant assistance from The Law Project and staff attorneys from Kirkland and Ellis in setting up the legal structure. In September, Ms. Caswell told her story on the Steve Harvey Show and was awarded a new truck and mentoring session with Marcus Lemonis, host of *The Profit*, a show on CNBC about small businesses.

She expressed her gratitude to the **Illinois SBDC at Bethel**, "I wasn't sure what the proper steps were to open my own business, so **Bethel's** instructors were like angels to me. They took their time and helped me research and understand so many things about business that I never thought I could comprehend, like managing my finances or taking care of legal matters. They also introduced me to people and partners that were very helpful to me. Working with the **SBDC** has made me a smarter business owner and I would not have gotten off the ground without them."

Several of Ms. Caswell's clients testify to her excellent training in this YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpufvwu3EwE>

Learn more about Sweat It Off at <https://www.facebook.com/SweatItOff/info?tab=overview>

### **Veteran's Bootcamp**

The Illinois SBDC at Governor's State University will be hosting their annual Veteran's Entrepreneurial Boot Camp on Thursday, November 12, 2015 from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. The SBDC Veteran's Entrepreneurial Boot Camp is perfect for veterans and non-veterans who are interested in knowing more about how veterans can take advantage of being a veteran in business, the path to success through the guidance of veteran business owners as well as many other aspects to being a veteran and starting a business.

For more information contact the Illinois SBDC at GSU at 708/534-4929 or register at [www.govst.edu/sbdc-bootcamp](http://www.govst.edu/sbdc-bootcamp). Space is limited so register early. The bootcamp is free to veterans, \$50 for non-veterans.

### **Small Business Vouchers Pilot**

DOE's [Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#) (EERE) is putting the world-class resources of the national labs at your fingertips, with the Small Business Vouchers Pilot (SBV). Through 2016, EERE is providing up to \$20 million in vouchers so that small businesses can request technical assistance from national labs to help bring the next generation of clean technologies to market.

#### **Expertise for Clean Tech Businesses**

Eligible small businesses can request vouchers up to \$300,000 in [up to three rounds of requests](#). Selected businesses are matched with handpicked experts at the national labs, who use this funding to help businesses create and commercialize new and improved products and processes.

Examples of assistance SBV can provide small businesses include:

- Addressing technical problems
- Testing and validating technologies

- Developing and testing unique materials
- Conducting modeling and analyses
- Providing advanced technology for hardware and software applications
- Prototyping
- Improving production and manufacturing processes
- Scaling up technologies and processes
- Developing engineering designs
- Field-testing
- Conducting technoeconomic analyses to understand market value

### How can SBV help me?

Assistance from labs will vary depending on lab capabilities and the small business needs related to specific products and services, but could include examples similar to those that follow.

### Maximizing Neoserra – Activity Summary



The Activity Summary on the right side of the client detail page shows client milestones and advising time. This is a quick way to check that your milestones are counting correctly as well as showing a snapshot of your work with the client.

### Valued Resources – Small Business Hiring Guide

Monster.com offers a Small Business Hiring Guide that covers recruiting, interviewing and candidate evaluation. Learn more at: <http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/strategic-workforce-planning/small-business-hiring-guide.aspx>

### Network News and Moves

The Global Small Business Forum will held in Chicago at the historic Navy Pier on Friday, October 23rd (all day event): <http://www.globalsmallbusinessforum.com> — where you will hear from individuals on a whole new way of doing business with the world.

Here's a snapchat of who plans to participate as moderators, panelists and speakers

(<http://globalsmallbusinessforum.com/speakers/>):

- Richard Paulin, Executive Director, International Trade Association of Greater Chicago; Chairman, IL District Export Council
- Kevin Drost, Director of International Strategy, [Reverb.com](http://Reverb.com)
- Bo Steiner, District Director, U.S. Small Business Administration, Illinois District
- Rajiv Khatau, Founder and Managing Director, LODAAT LLC
- Kati Suominen, Founder and CEO, Nextrade Group, LLC

- Marc Schulman, President, Eli's Cheesecake Company
- Lisa Bitsky, President, Automated Design Crop.
- **Zach Person, Program Manager, Illinois SBDC International Trade Center for Entrepreneurship, College of DuPage**
- Sophia Leaguedi, President, Ameroc Export Inc.
- Jim Snediker, Co-Founder and CEO, Stock Manufacturing Co.
- Roy Donoso, President, Sumac
- Timo Lukkarinen, CEO, Horizon Educational
- Sergei Kozyrenko, Co-Founding CTO, Parknav
- Rob Wray, CEO, mp3Car
- Morgan Coghill, International Sales Manager, Simmons Knife and Saw
- Doris Nagel, President, Blue Sky Consulting Services

You won't want to miss this! To learn more and to register, visit:

<http://globalsmallbusinessforum.com/tickets/>

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

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Bruce Rauner, Governor

