

Access Saskatchewan

Marketing a Lemon

There's No Sourpuss on These Young Entrepreneurs

By Kelly Brownlee

Trying to interest high school students in the adult business world is no small feat. The trick is to get them interested in something that they know. And what young person doesn't know about Lemonade stands!

The idea came to **Meridian Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)** manager Vickie Newmeyer on her way to work one day. "I knew we had to develop a teaching tool high school students would find entertaining and challenging," she said. "It had to be innovative. That's when I thought to myself, 'Lemonade! That's it!'"

After countless hours of brainstorming, Newmeyer and her co-workers used the notion of a child's first entrepreneurial venture, a lemonade stand, and developed it into the **Lemonade Game**.

The game is for high school students and is designed to be interactive and promote youth entrepreneurship by focusing on the fundamentals of marketing. Students work in groups of four or five to develop a business idea on how to sell lemonade and promote their product. Students are encouraged to use the five P's of marketing: product, price, promotion, place, and people.

After developing and marketing their business they are given \$100 play money to purchase property (lemonade stands) and supplies. The stands are then rated by a group of judges on the quality of their products, prices, appearance and additional products and services provided.

How they decide to use the five P's often proves to be quite entertaining. Students in the past have paid radio announcers to advertise their stands and have given out free kisses with the purchase of a glass of lemonade.

The underlying purpose of the lemonade game is to encourage youth to become entrepreneurs by showing them they can

successfully market a business. "Kids need to know that they have the skill set to start their own business and successfully market a product," explains Newmeyer. "We want them to consider entrepreneurship as a career path but if all they learn is how to market themselves, then we've won too."

The game was tested on high school students at Meridian's 3rd Annual Youth Conference. The feedback was encouraging.

"One of the greatest comments we have received is from kids who had played the game last year but missed it this year. We know they have enjoyed themselves when they tell us they're disappointed not to play it again," Newmeyer said. "They are having a good time and learning about marketing."



The Honourable Ron J. Duhamel presents Vickie Newmeyer, Meridian CFDC manager, with a Youth Initiative Award at the Pan Canadian CFDC Conference in Quebec.

The game has been so successful that Meridian CFDC received a youth initiative award, at the Pan Canadian CFDC convention in Quebec, for their innovative approach to tackling this challenge. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) sponsored the convention.

Meridian CFDC works with towns in west central Saskatchewan and east central Alberta and struggles with the effects of out-migration. "The number of youth leaving rural Saskatchewan and Alberta is a problem and we knew something had to be done. We want to say to kids 'go out, have fun and get your education. When you're ready, come back to your community and contribute to the rural economy,'" Newmeyer said. "We need to give them an invitation to come back and we believe entrepreneurship is an effective tool to achieve this."

Meridian CFDC is one of 13 Community Futures Development Corporations in Saskatchewan funded by Western Economic Diversification providing business development counseling, business planning, information resources and access to capital in rural areas of the province.

Spa's special treatment means business growth

Employees at Jane's Skin Care and Day Spa treat themselves to a variety of services offered at the spa.

Jane Fletcher, a graduate nurse started **Jane's Skin Care & Day Spa** in Regina as a self-financed home-based business 20 years ago. She has made escaping the hustle and bustle of every day life a little easier.

When she began her business in 1980, Fletcher was a home-based one-woman show offering a variety of services including facials, manicures and waxing. To accommodate the demand for her services she moved to her present location and in 1995 built a 500-square-foot expansion to introduce the day spa.

A one-hour session at the urban day spa can transform the most frazzled individual into a relaxed shadow of his or her previous self and more Canadians than ever are taking advantage of this luxury. So much so that, the spa has recently formed a partnership with the **Hotel Saskatchewan Radisson Plaza** offering customers a "spa getaway" which includes a half-day at the spa, accommodation and limousine transportation.

The business has grown immensely and increased the number of out-of-town clients. The spa was recognized by FLARE magazine as 1999's most popular day spa in Saskatchewan. Fletcher is enthusiastic about the numbers her spa is drawing, but is adamant about focusing on urban clientele. "I want the spa to operate at full capacity without compromising service to regular customers," she said.

Commemorating the second growth spurt for her business, Fletcher recently opened a 2,000-square-foot expansion that doubled the size of the original space. "It shows there is a demand," she



explains. "In the last four years, that we've been promoting it, the day spa industry has grown."

"Before each phase of expansion, I needed to be confident that the business could sustain itself when extra financing was necessary. I'm also very frugal, constantly evaluating operational costs."

As Laura Small, Executive Director of Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (W.E.), indicated, "Jane is one example of why women entrepreneurs are successful. They are risk takers, but it's a calculated risk."

Fletcher is part of a cell group through W.E and has recommended it to women starting businesses. "I feel it's an extremely active, energetic organization that can help people at any point in their business cycle." Recently W.E. honoured Fletcher by naming her Member of the Year in the Existing Business category.

W.E. is part of the Women's Enterprise Initiative which was created and funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada to promote the concept of entrepreneurship as a career option to women, as well as identify and fill service and financing gaps that women entrepreneurs often face.

Recognizing and adapting to market trends is also crucial to increased productivity, says Fletcher. She has found that clients, especially those of the "boomer" generation, prefer services that address specific problems or needs. Her clients are also more educated about personal care and more concerned about health and wellness.

Fletcher enjoys providing access to the same services that women can find in major North American cities. At her business, 19 full and

Laura Small, of Women Entrepreneurs (WE), presents Jane's Skin Care and Day Spa owner Jane Fletcher, with the WE Member of the Year –Existing Business Award.

part time staff members provide aromatherapy, reflexology, spa salt glows and algae body wraps which have been added to the more traditional services that include therapeutic massage, facials, manicures, pedicures, waxing and electrolysis.

Her number one business belief is that you must be passionate about the product or service you're providing to your client and believe that it has a benefit for others. Once you have that passion you must remain focused through management plans. Fletcher has also been cautious about financing her business growth.

She encourages other start-up entrepreneurs to embrace superior customer service. "It's often as simple as saying to oneself, 'How would the client like to be treated in this situation?'" explains Fletcher. Valuing employees, empowering them through education, complimenting and thanking them are all part of creating a productive business environment, she adds.



Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Get Tailored Business Advise

It is no secret that the number of Aboriginal businesses in the Saskatchewan economy is growing. But what is less well known to many of these Aboriginal entrepreneurs is the wealth of information available at the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC) in Saskatoon.

The **Aboriginal Business Service Network (ABSN)** is part of a Government of Canada Aboriginal Business Development Initiative that was designed in 1999 to improve business development opportunities for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Along with the ABSN, the initiative also calls for the enhanced delivery of existing business support programs to Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

In reaching out to Aboriginal clients, the CSBSC is making a thorough review of what it has to offer Aboriginal clients and how best these clients can access its services. Saskatchewan ABSN Coordinator, Ken Evett, is consulting with Aboriginal clients throughout Saskatchewan to determine their needs. This includes existing and potential clients of the CSBSC in Saskatoon, as well as clients at any one of its 16 regional access points throughout Saskatchewan.

Ken's task is to determine how CSBSC products, services and delivery style can be tailored to maximize their effectiveness in the aboriginal business community. For example he'll investigate how Aboriginal clients in remote northern communities or examine how those involved in the forestry industry can benefit from the services offered by the CSBSC.

The CSBSC already provides information on government programs and services, provides referrals for more in-depth assistance and maintains an extensive collection of information for business clients. The services are available by phone, fax, the CSBSC web site or in person at the CSBSC hub in Saskatoon or at regional access points throughout the province.

For more information about the Aboriginal Business Service Network please contact the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre at 1-800-667-4374 or www.cbbsc.org/sask

The Mobile 'Paws' That Refreshes

By Kelly Brownlee

To say that Lorrie Fraser has come a long way in the last 10 years would be an understatement. She was a single mother of three, who returned to school to gain a diploma and then a science degree in veterinary medicine from the University of Alberta. She remarried and believed things were finally on track.

Traveling around west central Saskatchewan tending to large and small animals, Fraser realized her practice needed somewhere to call home. Running the business from her residence proved to be hectic and intrusive.

"I was losing business and my customers needed a recognizable base," said Fraser. So, in 1999 she decided to move her business, **Hiway 7 Mobile Vet** to a storefront location in Delisle near Saskatoon.

Like many entrepreneurs, Fraser struggled financially for a while. "I had to be creative if I wanted to get my business off the ground. I designed the office layout and gyp rocked a dividing wall myself. I couldn't afford the conventional examining tables so I had to use my imagination. I ended up getting used tables from a hospital and modifying them to serve my needs," she said.

After being turned down numerous times for conventional funding, Fraser turned to Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) for help. She worked exclusively with WD's client service officers to write a business plan and pursue financing.



"I'm not a business planner and I found it tough writing a plan to be considered for bank financing," said Fraser. "Through Western Diversification's help I was granted a secure operating line of credit." The credit line was made available through **Mid-Sask CFDC** in Outlook.

Veterinarian Lorrie Fraser examines one of her smaller patients at Hiway 7 Mobile Vet.

Veterinarian Lorrie Fraser gives "Flash" a manicure at Hiway 7 Mobile Vet.



It is one of 13 Community Futures Development Corporations in Saskatchewan providing business development counseling and access to capital in rural areas of the province.

Joan Corneil from Mid Sask CFDC attributes Lorrie's success to her, determination and belief in her own capabilities. "She's realistic about targets, market capabilities and the goals she sets for herself," added Corneil.

Fraser went to the Mid Sask CFDC for help twice. On her first visit she was a typical client who didn't have the time or energy to draw up the paperwork necessary to start a business. A year later she returned for help.

"The second time she understood that she had to set goals and do a long term plan," said Corneil. "If she keeps with her business projections she will have a positive cash flow."

Hiway 7 Mobile Vet is open six days a week and Fraser has ensured emergencies remain her top priority. "I still make house and farm calls for large and small animals and emergencies. Emergencies take precedence over everything," said Fraser. Both her receptionist and her veterinary technician volunteered until she could afford to pay them.

Future projections include expanding and updating her veterinary equipment, purchasing a building as she now rents, and expanding her diagnostic practice.

Fraser attributes the success of her veterinary practice to a strong faith, hard work, the support of family and friends and innovative thinking. "It's taken a long time to achieve what I have but it's been worth the wait," said Fraser. "When you really pour your heart and soul into something you make it work."