

Celebrating Our Crystal Anniversary



151ST GRADUATING CLASS Back row: Michael Oakley, Home James Services for Seniors; Aldo Pecile, Custom Guitar Lessons; Trevor Beeby, Echo Management Inc; Jesse Sidhu, Event Checkin.ca; David Hunt, Coin Mart; Sandra Farrell, Sandy's Dog Training; Heather Currie, Bisou Bites Cafe; Joe Zhou, SoftWeb Project Consulting; Scott McAlpine, President of Douglas College; Paul Sim, Sun Bright Solar Inc. Second row: Catherine Skelly, Hycroft Hearing Centre Inc; Elizabeth Thompson, Evergreen Art Studios; Vanessa Ng, Ning Photography; Mallory McKeever, Art Lease BC; Sandi Gowda, Sandra Dee Garden Escapes; Tony Frei, New Millennium Marketing Solutions. Front row: Aruna Sidhpura, SHAKTI Catering, Jessica Scott, Jessica Scott Consulting; Vipin Sidhpura, RCR Construction.

Last May, the Douglas College Self Employment Program celebrated its 15th year of business, helping other people start theirs. A celebration was held for the nineteen graduates of the one hundred and fifty-first (151st) graduating class. College president, Scott McAlpine, gave the graduation speech, emphasizing the impact that small business has on the economy both locally and globally.

Over the past fifteen years the program has assisted many individuals transition from employment to self employment, launched over 3,000 businesses, witnessed many long-term dreams come true, and reveled in the stories of graduates' successes:

A surgeon who sewed people for a living becomes a costume designer who sews clothes.
A structural engineer who was laid off bought that same company a year later and operates it to this day.

The newly immigrated mother of four who started a family business importing marble and fabric.
The environmental engineer who opened a toy store in New Westminster.

The convenience store executive who started a "wildly" successful pet sitting company.
The teacher and young mother who wanted to work from home that began an online tutoring business that now hires over 500 teachers for home tutoring.

The stories are endless and so is the success...



15
Years & 3,000
businesses
launched!

Crystal Anniversary and 2010 Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

On Oct. 20, 2010, during small business week, we celebrated our Crystal Anniversary and the 14th annual Entrepreneur of the Year Awards.

Read more about the EYA Awards night in the special pull-out section.



Fifteen Years and Still Going Strong

Considering one-half of all new Canadian businesses fail prior to their third year and only 20% survive a decade, graduates of the Douglas College Self Employment Program have beaten the odds. Along with hard work and perseverance, much of the success in the program lies in the one-on-one guidance imparted by the Business Advisors and the group support provided by those you go through the program with. Anyone can read books on how to launch a small business or use a template to write a business plan, but success often lies in the second opinion of experts and peers – specific to your own business and personality.

The proof of this success is demonstrated in the fact that ninety-five percent of those who complete the Douglas College Self Employment program are still in business one year later. After four years, seventy-two percent are still in business. The provincial average is 77% the first year and only 41% after four years.



Coquitlam campus Self Employment Program Staff, from left to right.
Back row: Alex Sim, Ray Peterson, Diane Thompson, Wayne Indseth, Chris Ricard.
Front row: Mari-Lou Shoulak, Laura Aveledo, Tannya Cranna, Shirley Shannon.
Inset: Graham Hill and Rita Sieber, both with the SEP for 15 years.

	Douglas College Self Employment Survival Rates*	BC Business Survival Rates**	Hazard Rates***
After one year	95%	77%	23%
After two years	86%	60%	22%
After three years	75%	49%	18%
After four years	72%	41%	16%
After five years	65%	35%	14%

Survival rates give the probability that a new firm will live beyond a certain age. A new BC firm has a 77% likelihood of surviving beyond its first year, a 35% probability of surviving past its fifth year, and a 20% likelihood of completing its first decade. By comparison, each of the hazard rates represents the likelihood of failure at a particular age – conditional upon the risk of failure still existing. Accordingly, a new Canadian firm that is still in business just prior to its second year has a 22% likelihood of failing during its second year. An entrant that remains in business prior to its fifth year has only a 14% chance of failing during this year.

You Are Not Alone. You Live in the Best Province to be Self Employed.

In British Columbia, one out of every 10 people are self-employed. As of 2009, there were 443,800 self employed workers. In fact, BC ranks second in Canada for small businesses per capita, and self employment accounts for 19.7% of total employment in the province, making BC the province with the highest proportion of self-employed workers.

On average, self-employed people tend to be older, are more often men and are more likely to work longer hours than paid employees. Approximately 35% of the self-employed in British Columbia are women, which is slightly below the national average.

Want to know more about small business in BC? Excerpts are from the BC Ministry's Small Business Profile 2010 – to get the complete document, go to:
www.resourcecentre.gov.bc.ca/pdf/SmallBusProfileEngWeb.pdf

*Douglas College Self Employment Business Survival Rates based on the number of businesses that have completed the North Fraser Based Self Employment Program.

**Source: Failure Rates for New Canadian Firms: New Perspectives on Entry and Exit www.statcan.gc.ca – Catalogue no. 61-526-XIE, page 25

***Source: Failure Rates for New Canadian Firms: New Perspectives on Entry and Exit www.statcan.gc.ca – Catalogue no. 61-526-XIE, page 23

Resources to Help You Grow as an Entrepreneur



Stay on the Leading Edge

If you want to keep up to date on everything there is to know about sales and marketing, business innovation and technology, and management and leadership, subscribe to receive their **free weekly Brainstorm e-zine**.

Go to www.bstormweb.com and subscribe for free today!

Editor's note: I love this free subscription source that scans hundreds of articles from dozens of news sources every week and emails in a format that takes me a couple of minutes to read.



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Editor's note: This is the easy way to know what's new in the business literary world. Sometimes the summary is all I need, other times it intrigues me enough to order the book online.

Stories Wanted

Share Your Experience as an Entrepreneur

We are always looking for business expertise, knowledge, and stories about your experiences, challenges or wins as an entrepreneur for use in future newsletters. The focus can be educational or inspirational.

Please contact Mari-Lou Shoulak at **604-781-9101** or email shoulakm@douglascollege.ca

It's Tax Time

Tax Tips for You and Your Family

by Diane Skidmore, CGA - Skidmore & Co CGA (SE Alumni)

Have a Financial Plan

If you don't already have a financial plan, NOW is the time to get one. If you have one, NOW is the time to review it. Focusing on your goals helps you control where your money goes!

Contribute to RRSPs

Provided you have contribution room, you can defer tax and save for retirement by contributing to your RRSP. Try to contribute a set amount of your gross earnings every pay cheque.

File on Time

Your tax return is due April 30 unless you or your spouse report self-employed earnings in the year in which case your return is due June 15. Regardless of when your return is due, the balance owing is due April 30. To avoid penalties, file your return by the due date even if you cannot pay the balance owing.

File a Return for Your Child

When your child has earned income, filing a tax return will establish RRSP contribution room that can be carried forward to future years.

Claim Your Child's Unused Education Amount

If your dependant child attends a qualifying educational institution and has unused tuition and educational amounts available for transfer, ask them to transfer to you for an immediate benefit.

Review Tax Changes

Each year our government responds to changes in the economy, public opinion, and the law by implementing tax changes. It is important to review these changes and your personal situation to ensure you are claiming all the tax credits and deductions available to you – keeping your taxes as low as possible.

For additional tax info: www.cra.bc.ca

Skidmore & Co CGA, located in Port Coquitlam, provides tax and accounting services to business owners. Like many small business owners, Diane is driven by entrepreneurial spirit and has a passion for helping her client's succeed. She develops tax strategies that look at the big picture – you, your business, and your family. Check her Blog at www.skidmorecga.com for additional tax tips or call 604-949-0992 to book an appointment.

EI Now Optional for Self Employed

The Canadian government has responded to the needs of Canada's self-employed workers by introducing the voluntary EI benefits plan through the Canadian Economic Action Plan.

These benefits include:

Maternity Benefits

Maximum 15 weeks available to birth mothers.

Compassionate Care Benefits

Maximum 6 weeks, available to people who must be away from work temporarily to provide care or support to a family member who is gravely ill with significant risk of death.

Parental/Adoptive Benefits

Maximum 35 weeks, available to parents while caring for a newborn or newly adopted child. May be taken by either parent or shared between them.

Sickness Benefits

Maximum 15 weeks, available to a person who is unable to work due to sickness, injury or quarantine.

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The Success of the Program is Portrayed Through the Success of our Alumni... ...that is why we involved them in our advertising!

If you drove from the Fraser Valley to Coquitlam via the Pitt River Bridge last month, there is a good chance you saw the large digital billboard featuring successful graduates of the Douglas College Self Employment Program.

The SE Program is the first area of the College to use the new billboard for an ad campaign. The ads also appear on the backs, sides and interiors of some 30 buses in the Lower Mainland.

"We have participants from all over the Lower Mainland attending the program, and this is a very effective and affordable way to increase awareness of the program city-wide," says Mari-Lou Shoulak, Marketing Manager of the SE Program.

The best way to advertise the SE Program is to showcase its entrepreneurial participants.

"What better branding for the program than successful grads? We want people to see them and say, 'that could be me, doing what I love to do!'"



The grads featured are: Dr. Cobi Slater, owner of **Essential Health Natural Wellness Clinic**; Todd Polich, owner of **Guardian Graffiti Solutions** and **Earth Foundation Conservation Society** founder; Sharon Chai, owner of **Bamboobino**; and Melanie Burke, owner of **Burke & Hair**.

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Disabling the “Disability Myth” A market with “special needs” and buying power

More than 54 million North Americans with disabilities have a combined income exceeding one trillion dollars US. Their needs and abilities present a great economic opportunity. Accessibility Means Business.

Roger B. Jones

Marketing to People with Disabilities

by Matthew Danchuk

Until recently, people with disabilities were rarely acknowledged as consumers, even though their buying power is over \$25 billion dollars in Canada, according to estimates from the Royal Bank of Canada (Conference Board of Canada study). With an aging population and more people developing different disabilities, from vision loss to mobility issues, there is a greater need for products to serve them.

While some companies might be apprehensive about marketing to people with disabilities, wanting to remain sensitive, people want to know there are products available that can make their life easier.

Roger B. Jones, a quadriplegic who has been a prominent Canadian voice on disability and diversity issues over the past 20 years, shared that he enjoyed using a portable headset telephone with larger buttons, which made it easier for a wheelchair user. Jones found out RadioShack was going to be discounting this model, and he and others contacted them to suggest that they market the phone to people with disabilities, as it was popular in the disability community. RadioShack included a section in their paper catalogue called, *Simple Solutions for Your Special Needs*, which featured electronic products with easy-to-use functionality, which grew and expanded over the years as sales of these products increased.

Unique, easy-to-use products have the potential to reach niche markets, like people with disabilities. Consider what new and innovative products and services could increase the quality of life for people who have unique needs, as the opportunities are limitless.

Some examples of products and services:

- Traveleyes is the world's first commercial international air tour operator to specialize in serving blind as well as sighted travelers.
www.traveleyes-international.com
- The Safeway Step is a product and installation method designed to provide seniors and individuals with disabilities easier access into the bathtub area.
www.safewaystep.com
- Sammons Preston specializes in adaptive equipment, with unique products like Sure Hand Utensils that have larger handles.
www.sammonspreston.ca

Entrepreneurs with disabilities can take advantage of ABLED (Advice and Business Loans for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities) program to launch or expand their small business, with a loan up to \$35,000. Contact Vancity (604-877-7000) or Coast Capital (604-517-7000) for more information.

Roger B. Jones is a speaker, trainer and entrepreneur who specializes on disability issues and inclusion in the workplace. He is also a former Douglas College Board Member. www.rogerbjones.com
Matthew Danchuk works for the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce and promotes the business case for becoming Disability Confident with the Tri-Cities 10 x 10 Challenge. www.tricity10x10challenge.com



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The biggest challenge to an Entrepreneur is “I don’t think I can do it”

Meet Glenda Watson Hyatt, a SE Entrepreneur with cerebral palsy who can type only with her left thumb. Glenda believes she “can do it”—and she has!



Making It as an Entrepreneur: 3 Important Lessons

Photo and article by Glenda Watson Hyatt

Without any employment opportunities on the horizon in the fall of 1998—no doubt my cerebral palsy and wheelchair scared off potential employers—I plunged into the Self-Employment Program. My business idea was to work with businesses and organizations to improve accessibility of their websites. By making their websites accessible, businesses would increase the number of people—including 10% of the population living with various disabilities—capable of accessing their sites and, in turn, increase their customer base, translating into increased profits. Their corporate image would also improve because no group, including their own employees with disabilities, would be excluded from using the website.

By March, I had landed my first paying project with a local dot com company. My task was to develop guidelines for choosing website colour schemes readable by people who are colour blind. I was to write a report on a topic I knew absolutely nothing about. Fake it till you make it became my new mantra.

Next came a contract for choosing colour schemes to be used on the Government of British Columbia’s website. Seeing my colour schemes on the provincial government’s site, I felt I had accomplished something of significance for those people living with colour blindness.

With those two small projects under my belt, I thought I was on a roll. But I soon realized it was beginner’s luck. Over the years I landed several contracts; some of which were related to web accessibility, many of which were not. However, with these varied projects, my husband and I saved enough for a down payment on a condo, a home we’re still enjoying today.

Over time websites changed and other programming languages were added to the mix. I began feeling this red-headed chick wasn’t geeky enough to keep up with the pace of technology. Although I was still passionate about making websites accessible so that people with disabilities could use and benefit from the web, I was less and less confident that I could provide clients with the depth of expertise they required and that one day I would be “found out”.

Around that time I discovered blogging and set to learning as much as I could. I was content diving into this exciting, new phenomenon. Yet, paying projects still landed in my lap without needing to chase after

them, constantly pulling me back into the web accessibility field. After a lengthy internal tug-o-war, last year I decided to combine my two passions by bringing the web accessibility concepts and techniques to the blogging community. Since then I have been full speed ahead!

A couple of months ago I launched Blog Accessibility Mastermind: a six-lesson online course designed to introduce bloggers to web accessibility. Also on my over-heaping plate are two web accessibility audits to conduct – both repeat clients, one of which is a blogger; two speaker proposals to write for upcoming blogger conferences in the States; and, one presentation on blogging and people with disabilities to prepare for a conference in Virginia – all in less than six weeks!

After struggling at being self-employed for nearly twelve years, I finally have a crystal clear picture and plan of where I am headed; one I am excited and passionate about.

Through this entrepreneurial journey, I have learned three important lessons:

- Being self-employed doesn’t mean always doing things myself. There are ways to collaborate and work with others, even on a thinly worn shoestring budget.
- To surround myself with supportive and knowledgeable people who I can go to with questions and to act as sounding boards. Likewise, I need to give freely of my own expertise and experience.
- To be continually learning, whether it be new and innovative marketing strategies, how to use the newest social media tools, or keeping up with changes in web accessibility.

Earlier this week I heard “Entrepreneurship is controlled chaos.” Very true. But, man, what a ride it is! I am glad I’m not stuck at a boring 9-to-5 job!

For ten years Glenda has worked with three levels of government, transit authorities and non-profit organizations to increase the accessibility of their websites for people with disabilities. She is now combining her web accessibility expertise with her passion for blogging to bring blogs to the rest of the masses.

www.blogaccessibility.com

Glenda blogs at Do It Myself Blog about various accessibility-related issues, including web and blog accessibility. www.doitmyselfblog.com



Years & 3,000
businesses
launched!



Is your Business Socially Connected?

If your Self Employment Program launched business is on Facebook, My Space, Twitter, Flickr, if you have a blog, or videos embedded in your site or on YouTube, we want to hear from you!

Please email: thompsond@douglascollege.ca

Give Back to the Self Employment Program

Do you remember the day you presented your business plan to the Local Review Committee? Remember how important the committee's input was to the acceptance of your plan?

If you or someone you know would make a good Local Review Committee Member, please contact Coquitlam Campus at thompsond@douglascollege.ca or New West Campus at sepgv@douglascollege.ca

To be eligible for a spot on the committee you must:

- Be a well connected community member or have a minimum of four years experience running or owning a business.
- Be familiar with a business plan.

Graduates, Have You Checked Your Business Directory Listing?

Would you like to have your business added? Then please go to www.douglas.bc.ca/selfemployment and refer to the Business Directory to update or add your contact information.

Self Employment Program Staff List

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