



South Suburban Small
Business Association

The Voice

Upcoming SSSBA's 13th Annual Summit Awards Breakfast

SSSBA's 13th Annual Summit Awards will be held at the elegant Idlewild Country Club in Flossmoor, IL at 7:30 am on February 11, 2015. For more information about this event and to register visit www.sssba.org/13th-annual-summit-awards.

The Awards honor leading business people and organizations that have contributed to the economic and cultural growth of the region. Each awardee is carefully selected from the many businesses and organizations in the region for their outstanding performance and excellence in their qualifying category. The five categories and the 2013 winners are:

- **Training Excellence of the Year Award:** Carl Buddig, South Holland, Illinois
- **Creative Arts Award:** Paul Henry Arts Gallery, Hammond, Indiana
- **Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award:** Jesus Fernandez Ortiz, Thornwood High School, South Holland, Illinois
- **Small Business of the Year Award:** Bill Burton, Professional Systems Inc, Riverdale, Illinois
- **Economic Development Leader of the Year Award:** Rachael Jones, Marketing & Public Relations Manager, Village of Homewood, Illinois



This year we are trying something different and are giving you a chance to help pick our Small Business of the Year awardee. Small Business of the Year Award recognizes a business's management ability, continued growth, innovativeness of their product or service, and contribution to the community or others. If you would like to nominate a small business for this award visit www.sssba.org/13th-annual-summit-awards and click on '[Nominate Small Business of the Year](#).' Deadline is December 19, 2014.

SSSBA Membership

SSSBA is an organization dedicated to the concerns and issues affecting small and minority businesses located within our service area. Our strength and our voice comes from our membership, the small businesses located throughout the South Suburban Region.

To learn more and become a member, please visit www.sssba.org/membership.

Contact us at 708.596.2000 ext.2663 email: info@sssba.org website: www.sssba.org

Cloud Computing Part 2: Selection and Contracts for Small Business

By Techie Vinnie Forde

*One of the most influential technology innovations is the advent of Cloud Computing.
Cloud computing has made powerful technology accessible to small businesses.*

Part 1 described the history of Cloud Computing and how it can effectively support the technology needs for small businesses. Use of The Cloud provides the computing power necessary to transform business operations from effective and efficient to dynamic and agile. The goal is to make technology accessible, affordable and scalable to proactively respond to changing small business market forces. Better alignment of cloud services with company goals provides small businesses with access to latest technologies and systems.

Part 2 focuses on the issues and decisions around selecting and contracting for a cloud provider that has the best services to support your company's unique needs. Simply put, Cloud Computing is contracting with a provider for server, software and infrastructure resources to support your small business. Small businesses can define, increase and lower the amount of services they want in hour, day, week or year increments. It is that flexible. This is a very cost-effective way to have the computing services available when you need them.

Cloud Computing is a utility-oriented model where you pay only for what you need and use. You can get space and computing servers when you need them, with the operating system you want. You can choose to install the operating system and configure the server, or you can get it preconfigured. You can manage the server operation and storage space or have the operation managed for you with the provider putting upgrades and upgrade patches on the system. Using The Cloud requires a fast network with a reliable and secure connection.

To embark on procuring services for your company, first define how you will use Cloud Computing. What business functions or processes do you want to support? Is it a combination or all of the following, or something else? Sales? Customer Service? Accounting? Purchasing? Marketing? Website? Email? Telephones or Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)? Manufacturing? Production Controls? Warehousing? Inventory? Distribution? Logistics? Building Security and Cameras with Video Capture? Human Resources? Payroll?

Next, determine the Cloud solution model that best supports your business. What type and level of support does your business need? Do your Cloud services need to address a specific issue, function or process? Do you need to support one or more functions? Or does it need to support the entire business? Perhaps a hosted application or a type of Cloud service where the vendor provides the application, and maintains, updates and manages it, called SaaS (Software as a Service), better supports your needs. The single fee for SaaS includes the software licensing fee(s), server, disk storage space, help desk and support. Who will back up the system and data? Do you want to have some data retained and stored on local computers or all in the Cloud?

What flexibility and capacity do you need? How many people will be using the system at once? What level of growth do you expect, in the short- and long-term? What level of support and help desk responsiveness will you require? How many people from the business will have authority and access to call the help or support line? One or two people or anyone that uses the system? Do you have an we have IT person on staff who can do everything for your company, do you want to very little to nothing, or are you in between?

What are your hours of operation? Do you require technical support or help, and for what days and timeframes? Monday to-Friday? 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.? Second Shift hours? Third Shift hours? Saturdays? Sunday? 24 hours a day by 7 days a week by 365 days a year? A la carte? Ad hoc?

Finally, identify and select Cloud vendor(s) that provide services that best match the support your business needs. The Internet is a primary place to start your search. References from other small businesses may also provide leads for providers you should consider. Contact the provider by phone, email or web chat and discuss you needs.

Ask all the questions you need so you understand the details of services provided by each Cloud provider. Once you have evaluated the information and made a selection for the Cloud services that will best support your business, enter into a contract for those services.

You can contract for as little or much as you want. There are several factors to consider when entering into a contract. How long a contract do you want to enter? What can you afford? What are the inherent risks of your business? Will any data or intellectual property rights pass to the Cloud provider where you want to retain ownership and need to stipulate in the contract? Backup and recovery are benefits of Cloud computing if you included it in your contract. Are any fees or penalties invoked for cancellation or changes? Is there an easy-out escape clause? Does the contract include a service level agreement or availability guarantees?

Cloud services contracts typically require little negotiation and are simple and easy to understand what they are providing and what you are getting. If the contract has lots of technical jargon or complex terms and conditions, try another provider or seek legal counsel to understand what you are getting into.

Cloud Computing levels the playing field and provides small business access to computing that was previously available only to larger organizations. Engaging a Cloud computing provider can be a rewarding experience for your small business, lowering cost of operations and returning increased profitability.

Look for the final column on Cloud Computing Part 3: Safety, Cyber-Security and Privacy in the Cloud, which focuses on this very hot topic in a future edition of the SSSBA Newsletter The Voice.

Tech Bytes is a regular column about technology for the Small Business in the SSSBA Newsletter.

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Recap of SSSBA's 17th Annual Luncheon



SSSBA's 17th Annual Fall Meeting and Luncheon was held at Odyssey Country Club in Tinley Park on September 17, 2014. Our Annual Luncheons are held for a twofold purpose: to educate attendees on a topic of current economic importance to them and to provide networking opportunities.

The keynote speaker was David L. Withrow, the Director of Taxable Fixed Income for ClearArc Capital. Mr. Withrow is responsible for the management of actively managed fixed income portfolios for ClearArc Capital. His keynote presentation, "What's Next?" was his answer to the question: "Based on where we are now in the

economy, what can we expect to happen?"

His interesting and enlightening talk, based on his 25 years of investment experience and his vantage point from his executive position with Clear Arc Capital, was contrary to what many of the mainstream financial institutions espouse. He believes the economy and markets are not dead yet and a rebound may be coming. He supported his position with statistics showing that American businesses have been upgrading their infrastructure, including their equipment, facilities, and resources. Projected earnings have been met for the most part and businesses' net worths' have increased. If the markets are any indication of the accuracy of his analysis, in the two months since the day of his presentation, the DJIA, NASDAQ, and S&P 500 have all increased 4.7%, 4.2%, and 4.3% respectively and all are at or near all time highs. He predicts continued growth of the economy and markets well into 2015.



The Importance of Mentorship

By Kristie Daeda, Director of Program Development for The Family Business Consulting Group, Inc., a leading management consulting firm serving the unique needs of multi-generational family businesses worldwide

"I have had my 15 minutes of fame and enjoyed my time in the spotlight and walking at the head of the parade. I believe that to whom much is given, much is expected. I want to give back. I enjoy watching younger people learn and develop. By helping others, I may in a small way be able to influence the next generation."

- Jack Pycik, former CEO, in interview with Family Business Consulting Group Principal Steve McClure

In our work with families on succession planning, much time and effort is spent in considering how the next generation will be prepared to step into leadership roles in both the family and the business. One important piece of the puzzle for these emerging family leaders is mentorship.

Mentorship relationships take many shapes and sizes. Some are very formal, with agendas, regular meetings and development goals. Others are more fluid, with meetings as needed or when the mentee requests them. Some of these relationships include guidance and feedback on wide-ranging topics from career goals, to leadership, to professionalism, to family dynamics. Others are very focused, such as a CFO helping a young manager improve their understanding of company financial performance.

Mentoring Benefits All Involved

Regardless of the structure or content, both mentors and mentees can benefit greatly from a mentoring relationship. Some benefits of a mentoring relationship include:

For the Mentee:

- * Experience at building professional relationships, especially with senior staff/company leaders.
- * Support and feedback.
- * Regular focus on professional goal setting and long-term career thinking.
- * Sounding board on how to handle complex work issues and interpersonal challenges.
- * Direct access to advanced knowledge about the business and industry.

For the Mentor:

- * Personal enjoyment of helping another professional succeed.
- * Reaffirmation of professional knowledge and experience.
- * Increased perspective on other areas of the business, trends and challenges.
- * Recognition from superiors as an organizational leader and contributor to overall success.

Mentoring Can Greatly Accelerate Professional Development

The best business lessons often don't come from textbooks, and our best wisdom often comes from someone who has learned the hard way.

When done well, a positive mentoring relationship can lead to much quicker advancement – not just in job title, but in key success areas like communication, leadership, collaboration, and business thinking. The experience of learning from a mentor's successes, failures and hard-won perspective, with the opportunity to ask questions and work together to apply these lessons to one's own day to day work, can create great leaps in learning.

A mentor can also be an advocate ("sponsor") within the company, helping the mentee identify opportunities for growth and smoothing their path to advancement.

Mentors can be Impartial Advisors

Lastly, and perhaps one of the greatest advantages of mentorship within family businesses, is that a mentor is often viewed as impartial in a way that Mom and Dad are not.

When Mark hears that he needs to step up his communication skills from his father, that message comes with the baggage of the family dynamic, no matter how healthy it may be. The same message delivered by an independent third party can be received very differently. The mentor's perceived disinterest allows them a unique position as trusted advisor, a plus for both the organization and the mentee.

It's clear that mentorship is a powerful tool that carries a wide range of benefits for all involved. How might your family embrace mentorship?

This article originally appeared on the [FBCG Blog](#) and is presented here by SSSBA. Learn more at www.thefbcg.com.

3 Steps to Getting Your Business on Facebook

By Lauren Esolato, Business Advisor, Illinois Small Business Development Center at Governors State University

The social media revolution has quickly changed the way businesses market to their customers. If you are not on Facebook yet, you should be. Even if you don't personally use Facebook, a majority of your customers do. Users spend an average of almost 16 hours on Facebook per month, with each visit averaging 22 minutes.

1 - Announce your Facebook debut with flair

Put the Facebook logo everywhere - your flyers, your website, anywhere you advertise, in print or on Pinterest, Google+, Flickr, etc. Use QR codes and link them to your new Facebook page. Put those QR codes that direct people to your Facebook page on all your flyers, advertisements, and website.

Go big or go home - announce a special offer for the first 100 followers or announce a new product or service in conjunction with the launch of the Facebook page. Have a Facebook debut event at your location and have a computer or tablet set up for people to sign on and like your page on the spot.

2 - Give your customers a reason to "like" your page

Offer an incentive by giving a coupon or discount clients can only find on Facebook once they "like" your page. Encourage your new followers to "share" this special with all their friends to increase your number of likes. Create a video or a special campaign.

3 - Engage and reward your followers

Once you build up your following, start asking questions they will respond to in order to promote lively conversation on your wall. Make sure you respond to their questions and thank them for their feedback. Customers like to know their ideas are being taken into consideration. Also, if you make a change due to a customer comment, make sure you announce that change is a result of a loyal follower's feedback.

You will quickly see which of your followers are most often commenting on and liking your posts. Those are your brand ambassadors. Every time they like or comment on one of your posts, their activity is posted on all their friends' and followers' news feeds. Their friends may check you out just to see what others are talking about.

Reward those loyal followers by thanking them publicly and sending them rewards or special offers you don't give anyone else. If they own a business, promote their business by posting pictures of their products and services on your page.

For more info go to www.govst.edu/sbdc or email lesolato@govst.edu.



Last But Not Least: Meet Ella Grays

Who: Ella Grays, CEO of Gareda Home Care. Gareda is a winner of the Training Excellence Award from SSSBA, and a corporate sponsor of SSSBA.

What does your typical day look like?

I generally deal with our stakeholders; Department on Aging, HFS, DHS, Care Coordination Units and Managed Care Organizations. I spend a great deal of time meeting or speaking with my CFO trying to come up with more creative ways of offering richer benefits to our employees, especially our external employees (Home Care Aides) as they are one of the many reasons for our continued growth. I also enjoy meeting with my Program Directors as we together can brainstorm and come up with means to do things more efficiently and effectively.

Tell us something exciting you're doing right now.

We're moving from one agency management system to another. It's a lot of work and I have some very dedicated people at my office. When we get it in place it's going to be phenomenal for tracking, monitoring outcomes for client satisfaction, and productivity. You need to know exactly what you're doing and that you're making a difference.

One of the things I do, especially at the holiday season (in addition to giving everyone a bonus) is send out a song... something inspirational. I look at lyrics of songs that make us realize what it is we do and how fortunate we are to be able to do that.

Why did you decide to train ALL of your employees?

When I came to Gareda I saw that training was always on the agenda but there was never time, contacts, or resources. Where I came from we had just recently gotten in contact with South Suburban College (Business & Career Institute) and had a curriculum ready to go. It was an opportune time to take advantage of things already developed. My staff was very grateful for that. Everyone, myself included, is always in the learning stage.

What do you enjoy most about what you do?

My enjoyment comes from serving others. In the CEO role you don't get a chance to be in the "day-to-day" but what I love most about my job is being able to develop people to help serve our customers better. My persona is about service and serving others. One of the quotes I have on my email signature is something that I stand by: *"You come to this planet with nothing and you leave with nothing, so you'd better do some good while you're here."* -Alex Van Halen. I think I've always been like that, a trait I inherited from my mother.

It sounds like you're a growing business operating with the heart of a small business.

We try to be as family-oriented as much as we possibly can. One of my goals for next year is to sit down with all employees in small settings and meet everyone. A lot of CEOs of big corporations are just seen on monitors. I'm going to have meetings with 40 people at a time during January and address their concerns personally. The first thing I did when I joined the company is put a suggestion/comment box at each office and now it is time that I address or act on their concerns

Do you have any advice for business owners?

Be true to yourself. I believe that we are put on this planet to do something that makes a difference. I want people to say I'm a person that served. I believe we will be an organization that continues to grow. As long as your leader shows that people will catch on. Gareda's motto is, "Where there is a need there's Gareda." I don't want anyone to say, "We don't do that." If we don't do it we need to be able to refer people to someone that does do it. I want to be a resource for people in the community.