



Report to: Economic Development Committee

Date Report Authored: Sept. 12, 2012

SUBJECT: 2012 Markham Small Business Centre Marketing Plan
PREPARED BY: Don De Los Santos, Manager, ext. 3663

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report entitled "2012 Markham Small Business Centre Marketing Plan" be received and endorsed.

And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Markham Small Business Centre (MSBC) is a core service within Markham's Economic Development program. The MSBC's 2012-2013 Marketing Plan is designed to build on the success of the program to-date, and to respond to the growing demand for services from Markham's diverse and dynamic communities.

PURPOSE:

To highlight the performance and business results achieved in 2011-2012, and to present the Markham Small Business Centre's 2012-2013 Marketing Plan.

BACKGROUND:

MSBC was established in June 2003 and is funded by the City of Markham and the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation (MEDI), in partnership with the private sector. MSBC provides Markham's aspiring entrepreneurs and existing small businesses with high quality one-on-one management consulting, educational training, and the business resources needed to sustain their growth in today's intensely competitive marketplace. MSBC focuses on providing support to entrepreneurs, start-up businesses, and small enterprises (SMEs) during their first five years of operation by offering advisory services, building strategic partnerships, providing access to expert speakers and seminars, educational programs and helpful resources. MSBC is managed by a full-time Economic Development Professional, Don De Los Santos, who is assisted by a full-time Small Business Co-ordinator, Tiffany Mak.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

MSBC is supported by an Advisory Board of funding sponsors and partners that meets quarterly to review the MSBC operation and provide feedback and advice relating to the strategic direction of the Centre. Members of the Advisory Board are:

Co-Chairs:

Carolina Moretti
Ward 4 Councillor
Chair of Economic Devt. Cttee.
City of Markham

George Simpson
Partner
BDO Canada LLP
Chartered Accountants & Advisors

Members:

Stephen A. Chait
Director of Economic Development
City of Markham

Catherine Biss
CEO
Markham Public Library

Elizabeth Cornish
Regional Advisor, Central Region
Ministry of Economic Development &
Innovation

Erik Ianuzzo
Program Manager, Business Markets
PowerStream Inc.

Deepak Bajaj
Director, Industry Innovation
Seneca College

Richard Cunningham
President & CEO
Markham Board of Trade

Alan Kwong
President
Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs

Performance Indicators

Among the key accomplishments of the MSBC in 2011-2012 were:

1) Economic Impact

MSBC is dedicated to strengthening Markham businesses and creating economic growth. Its efforts have made an impressive impact on the small business community. By providing useful business information and advice to start-ups and existing small businesses in Markham, MSBC facilitates new business starts, business expansions and increased employment. Based on the results of on-going client surveys, 90 businesses were either started or expanded in 2011-2012 (Table 1).

Most importantly, by providing early-stage support to SMEs, MSBC caters to helping these businesses succeed, thereby generating a long-term impact that benefits and helps to sustain the small and medium size business sectors.

Table 1: ECONOMIC IMPACT TARGETS

Economic Impact	2011-2012 Projected	2011-2012 Actual	%
Business Started or Expanded	72	90	+25%
Jobs Created	88	120	+36%

2) Support and Encourage Entrepreneurship:

MSBC has been involved in many programs, activities and events to support and serve the small business community in Markham. In 2011-2012 MSBC received/completed:

- 2,030 general client inquiries
- 363 one-on-one consultations
- 22 seminars/workshops/networking events
- 3 site visits to existing businesses

In addition, the Centre continued to deliver the following premier small business events to facilitate small business growth and development:

- In partnership with the Markham Board of Trade and the Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs, MSBC celebrated the “Small Business Month” with a prestigious small business conference that attracted 122 small business owners and leaders from Markham and the surrounding area.
- The bi-monthly Small Business Networking Group provided networking and wisdom-exchange opportunities to entrepreneurs.
- To celebrate International Women’s Day, in partnership with the Women’s Centre of York Region, MSBC hosted a “Getting Started in Business” Workshop. The event attracted nearly 50 attendees, men and women, and provided them with a comprehensive overview of start up and business readiness considerations. 100% of Attendees rated the session as being either excellent or very good. Discussions about hosting a similar event again in the future are underway.

3) Address diverse needs of Markham businesses:

- MSBC was an exhibitor at Diversity Job Fair and ACCE Business Forum (total attendance: 605)
- Organized in partnership with Richmond Hill SBEC, Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre, and York SBEC the 2nd annual: Going Global: York Region Import & Export Conference 2011. Supported by: Canada Border Services

Agency, Government of Ontario, York Region Export Development Program
(112 attendees)

- To celebrate International Women's Day: in partnership with the Women's Centre of York Region, MSBC hosted a "Getting Started in Business" workshop (48 attendees)
- Presented four "Business Start Up Basics" sessions to community service groups, including the YMCA Business Centre, Women's Centre of York Region, Seneca College, CICS (Centre for Information and Community Services) and York Region Catholic Community Services (total attendance: 135)
- Formed relationship with, and initiated discussion with Ismaili community leaders about hosting a similar "Business Start Up Basics" session to their Economic Planning Board.
- In partnership with the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, hosted a workshop on "Orientation and Onboarding for Culturally Inclusive Workplaces" (30 attendees)

4) Promote and encourage Youth Entrepreneurship among Markham youths:

- MSBC delivered the 9th Secondary School Business Plan Competition to Markham youths. We received 25 business plan submissions, from 26 students, and from 7 different Markham High Schools. Despite weakness in this program experienced in other regions in Ontario, this continues to be a strong program for the Markham youth community.
- Successfully administered the Ontario Summer Company Program and seven Markham youths were awarded cheques and given recognition after successful completion of the Program. Since 2001, 54 students have successfully completed the Summer Company program through MSBC.
- Presented "Entrepreneurship" sessions in 11 different High School classes, in five local schools/youth groups (attendance: 484).
- Participated in new and innovative Secondary School entrepreneurship educational programs. For example, with St. Augustine CHS, Gr. 12 Advertising class – connecting the class to an actual business for students to use as a real-life case study, and pitching their advertising plan to the owners and judges, including MSBC.
- MSBC is a founding member of a newly established Young Professionals Committee of the Markham Board of Trade. A special launch event was held in April 2012.

5) Maximize and leverage partnerships and collaborations to benefit clients and stakeholders:

- Markham Board of Trade offers privileged membership program to MSBC clients.
- BDO Canada LLP Chartered Accountants and Advisors provides free 30-minute accounting/taxation consultations to MSBC clients. Four clients benefited from this service during 2012.
- In November 2010, MSBC successfully relocated into the newly created Markham Convergence Centre (MCC). It is within close proximity to the Markham Civic Centre, and has been generating an increase in drop-in visitors. The new 2,000 sq. ft. location includes access to boardrooms and meeting spaces, a walk-in business resource centre and a well-equipped training room. The MCC brings together various business development and assistance organizations such as: ventureLAB, Central Counties Tourism, Innovation York, Markham Board of Trade, and York Technology Alliance. Being physically located in the same building with these organizations allows for enhanced leveraging of these partnerships. This has already resulted in MSBC partnering directly with “neighboring” organizations on events such as our October Small Business Month event (with the Markham Board of Trade and ACCE), and a few other seminar/workshop topics. A joint Open House event was hosted by all the MCC tenants in September 2011, attracting over 200 people to the building.

6) Increase external funding and generate earned revenue:

- Obtained non-regular additional funding of \$16,180 from Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation.
- Raised \$8,500 cash contribution from private sponsors.
- Earned event revenue of \$5,800.

7) Promote and position Markham/MSBC as a leader in providing business development assistance:

- Invited to deliver presentation at Economic Developers Council of Ontario’s 2012 Conference in February on the topic of “Fostering Innovation Ecosystems in our Communities”, highlighting Markham’s example of working cooperatively between the SBEC and the local Regional Innovation Centre (RIC).

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- Received extensive media coverage in English media and other language media from across GTA for events hosted. In addition, MSBC was featured in two special articles:
 - May 16, 2011- Toronto Star insert by Media Planet – “New and Modern Business”
 - Jan 31, 2012 – Markham Economist & Sun- Living in Markham 2012 Community Guide - “Cultural Diversity is Good for Business in Markham”
 - Continued strategic alliances with Markham Board of Trade, ventureLAB, Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs, Philippine Chamber of Commerce, Seneca College, and Business Development Bank of Canada.

2012-2013

Key Objectives and Strategic Plan

To meet the growing demand for services, MSBC’s key strategies in 2012-13 include:

- Pursue strategic partnership with diverse business groups:
 - Statistics show that Markham is the most ethnically diverse community in Canada. In keeping with the City’s diversity strategy, the Centre plans to raise its awareness among immigrant entrepreneurs who are underserved.
- Enhance MSBC’s services to support existing businesses:
 - Centre Manager plans to carry out site visits to existing businesses to bring services to the businesses, to address their common needs and to collect market intelligence, which in turn will benefit small businesses.
- Improve outreach of MSBC services to Small Businesses in Markham:
 - The new MSBC facility will better serve the growing needs of MSBC’s small business clients. MSBC will work to increase its profile and raise awareness of its new location by undertaking additional marketing efforts and keeping all partners and stakeholders updated on changes. MSBC hosted a very successful open-house event at the MCC on March 30, 2011. The MSBC website has been redesigned and features a new logo. Further, a joint Open House event was hosted by all the MCC tenants in September 2011, attracting over 200 people to the building and featuring a motivational talk by Michael “Pinball” Clemons. Additionally, MSBC is exploring the possibility of marketing through social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn.
- For most of the 2011/2012 fiscal year, MSBC was operating with only one business consultant in the office, supported by a small business assistant. The major challenge for MSBC in the new fiscal year is to meet increasing demand for services within available budgeted resources while maintaining the high level of

services that it is currently delivering. The hiring process for a permanent full time small business coordinator has been completed, and the new staff member, Tiffany Mak, started in May.

Key objectives to serve the three major client groups and action plans to achieve these objectives are described as follows:

1) Business Start-ups:

- Objectives:
- i. Increase support to start-ups.
 - ii. Maintain the number of seminars and workshops.
 - iii. Maintain level of support to Cultural Industries.
- Actions:
- i. Explore the option of “Meet The Expert” program.
 - ii. Run events in collaboration with Markham Culture Department and Economic Development Department.
 - iii. Host industry specific business events.
 - iv. Follow-up on initial client consultations through a formal process.

2) Existing Businesses:

- Objectives:
- i. Provide networking opportunities.
 - ii. Enhance business growth skills.
- Actions:
- i. Host industry specific events.
 - ii. Present seminar/workshop topics that are more advanced and/or relevant to existing businesses.
 - iii. Carry out site visits to existing businesses.

3) Youth and Recent Immigrants:

- Objectives:
- i. Increase awareness of entrepreneurship to community youth.
 - ii. Increase awareness of resources available to immigrant entrepreneurs.
- Actions:
- i. Maintain regular communication with local youth groups, business heads and teachers to inform them of youth entrepreneurship programs.
 - ii. Enhance information displays in libraries and community centres.
 - iii. Outreach to settlement service providers and ethnic business associations.

Conclusion:

For the 2012-2013 year, MSBC plans to assist 2,200 client enquiries, offer 300 consultations, and deliver 22 seminars, workshops and networking events. MSBC will also be promoting and administering youth entrepreneurship programs such as Summer

Company and the Secondary School Business Plan Competition. MSBC will continue to enhance the programs and services that are offered.

In the face of growing demand for services, the MSBC Manager and the Director of Economic Development will monitor the demand for service over the course of the year and will pursue discussions with community partners regarding strategies for increasing the capacity of the MSBC to service growing demand.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Markham Small Business Centre is a core service within the approved Markham 2020 economic strategy. This Marketing Plan is in synch with Markham's Sustainability Plan by seeking to foster increased local economic prosperity and to reduce travel to receive services.

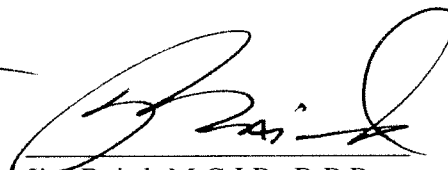
BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

MSBC Advisory Board.

**RECOMMENDED
BY:**



Stephen Chait, Ec.D., CMC
Director of Economic
Development



Jim Baird, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner of
Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

None.