



Report to: Economic Development Committee

Date Report Authored: Sept. 12, 2011

SUBJECT: 2011 Markham Small Business Centre Marketing Plan
PREPARED BY: Don De Los Santos, Manager, ext. 3663

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report entitled “2011 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 the Town’s Economic Development program. The MSBC’s 2011-2012 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 2010-2011, and to present the Markham Small Business Centre’s 2011-2012 Marketing Plan.

BACKGROUND:

MSBC was established in June 2003 and is funded by the Town of Markham and the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT), 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 start-up and small enterprises (SMEs) during their first five years of operation by building strategic partnership, providing excellent management assistance, 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 Assistant, Amy Lau.

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.
Town of Markham

George Simpson
Partner
BDO Canada LLP
Chartered Accountants & Advisors

Members:

Stephen A. Chait
Director of Economic Development
Town of Markham

Catherine Biss
CEO
Markham Public Library

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

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 2010-2011 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, 134 businesses were either started or expanded in 2010-2011 (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 the small and medium size business sectors.

Table 1: ECONOMIC IMPACT TARGETS

Economic Impact	2010-2011 Projected	2010-2011 Actual	%
Business Started	60	117	+95%
Business Expanded	12	17	+42%
Jobs Created	88	176	+100%

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 2010-2011 MSBC received/completed:

- 2,022 general client inquiries
- 67,787 web-based client contacts
- 353 one-on-one consultations
- 20 seminars/workshops/networking events
- 8 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 100 small business owners and leaders from Markham and the surrounding area.
- The bi-monthly Small Business Networking Group continues to provide networking and wisdom-exchange opportunities to entrepreneurs.
- In conjunction with the local accounting community, the Accounting Mentorship Program provided professional advice to 11 clients.
- To address the regulatory shift in Ontario from a regime of two separate sales taxes to the implementation of HST, MSBC offered three separate training sessions, bringing in experts from the Canada Revenue Agency and BDO Canada LLP, Chartered Accountants and Advisors (reaching out to over 200 small business owners).

3) Provide high level of specialized support to the Cultural Industries:

- In alignment with Town of Markham’s strategic focus, and in collaboration with Markham Arts Council, the MSBC organized two industry-specific events to link

arts and cultural enterprises to resources and training to help them grow their business:

- Conducted special workshop on “Building Websites for Non-technical Business People” targeted to Arts community to teach artists how to develop their own Flash-based, visually appealing website.
- In conjunction with the Markham Arts Council, offered a special Film Production Workshop for Teens to guide participants through the art of making films.

4) Address diverse needs of Markham businesses:

- Presented (in English and Mandarin) four "How To Start A Small Business In Ontario" seminars to ethnic business associations and community service groups (total attendance: 240).
- Participated as an exhibitor at Diversity Job Fair and ACCE Business Forum (total attendance: 560)
- Organized in partnership with Richmond Hill SBEC, Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre, and York SBEC a new initiative: “Going Global. York Region Import & Export Conference 2010”. Supported by: Canada Border Services Agency, Health Canada, Government of Ontario, York Region Export Development Program (164 attendees)
- In partnership with the Markham Board of Trade, MSBC offered an Accessibility Lunch & Learn, directed to existing business owners to help them understand and implement the requirements of the Customer Service Standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

5) Promote and encourage Youth Entrepreneurship among Markham youths:

- MSBC delivered the 8th Secondary School Business Plan Competition to Markham youths. We received 38 business plan submissions, from 67 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 six Markham youths were awarded cheques and given recognition after successful completion of the Program. Since 2001, 43 students have successfully completed the Summer Company program through MSBC.
- Presented “Entrepreneurship” sessions in 14 different High School classes, in five local schools/youth groups (attendance: 378).

- 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.

6) 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 continues to provide free 30-minute accounting/taxation consultations to MSBC clients.
- In November 2010, MSBC successfully relocated into the newly created Markham Convergence Centre (MCC). The facility is centrally located in Markham with superior visibility and transit accessibility and ample free parking. 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 (previously Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham and YORKbiotech Inc.), Markham Board of Trade, York Technology Alliance, Innovation York – York University, Concept 2 Clinic, and Wilson Vukelich LLP. Being physically located in the same building with these organizations allows for enhanced leveraging of these partnerships. It provides great opportunities for cross-promotion to each organization's member clients. 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.

7) Increase external funding and generate earned revenue:

- Obtained non-regular additional funding of \$33,180 from Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.
- Raised \$8,500 cash contribution from private sponsors.
- Earned event revenue of \$6,600.

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

- Received extensive media coverage in English media and other language media from across GTA for events hosted.
- 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.

2011-2012 Key Objectives and Strategic Plan

To meet the growing demand for services, MSBC's key strategies in 2011-12 include:

- Pursue strategic partnership with diverse business groups:
 - Statistics show that Markham is the most ethnically diverse community in Canada. In keeping with the Town's diversity strategy, the Centre plans to raise its awareness among immigrant entrepreneurs who are currently underserved.
- Enhance MSBC's services to support existing businesses:
 - In collaboration with the Economic Development Department, consultations are currently underway with Markham's two Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to determine what educational training would be of value to their members. MSBC will be working on delivering educational programs to meet the specific needs of this particular existing business sector.
 - The MSBC 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 the small business community.
- 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 community outreach fair by all MCC tenants is planned for September. Additionally, MSBC is exploring the possibility of marketing through social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Key objectives to serve the three major client groups are established, 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 regularly.

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 2011-2012 year, MSBC plans to assist 2,200 client enquiries, offer 300 consultations, and deliver 20 seminars/networking events/workshops. MSBC will also be promoting and administering youth entrepreneurship programs such as Summer Company and 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.

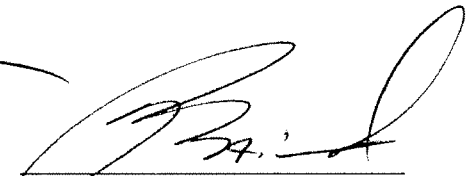
BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

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