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BUSINESS LINK

Spotlight on Volunteer

By Wendy Hue, PCC, CSP – Partners in Progress

Communication Artistry owner, Marnie Hughes has been volunteering in some capacity for several years. In the early nineties, Marnie was introduced to the Literacy Council of York Simcoe where she tutored adults in both literacy and numeracy, assisting new Canadians in language skills with job applications or preparing for drivers tests. She found this opportunity to be very rewarding, in time becoming Chair of the organization. Marnie extended this volunteerism to assisting in the schools with literacy concerns, working with the All Star program.

More recently, Marnie found Links 2 Care and their Friendly Visitor program and was matched with a visually impaired resident at the Bennett Centre, to whom she read many books. Marnie found that her new friend's life experiences were very different from her own and their discussions very rewarding. Marnie currently visits a senior living on her own and they share conversation, tea and a few laughs each week.

Marnie also volunteers with the business sector, as a valued member of the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce BusinessLink newsletter. Other Chamber activities have included the Home and Leisure Show Marketing Committee. The power of networking provides knowledge, information and links to the community. Marnie believes that mem-

bership in the Chamber provides business owners, especially sole proprietors, with networking opportunities and business connections.

A strong background in marketing, accounting, human resources, and television gives Marnie Hughes a significant edge in responding to corporate needs. She believes that clients must be able to analyze the attributes that make them and their company unique and more attractive to prospective customers. While Communication Artistry focuses strongly on marketing communications, Marnie is also proficient in project management and co-ordination, writing case studies from start to completion, making connections with graphic designers, printers and technology experts to get the job done.

Countless volunteers have commented that it is through volunteering that one receives more than one gives. Marnie Hughes is an exemplary individual who has given much of herself to help others.



**Marnie Hughes,
Communication Artistry**

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Identifying Risk in Your Supply Chain

By Laurie Turnbull CITT, PMM - www.cole.ca

Supply chain management plays an increasingly important role for many companies in terms of their success, or failure. And although Canadian companies have access to the best transportation systems in the world, few understand the risks involved when suppliers and customers are dependent upon international supply chains.

Transportation, warehousing, inventory management and customs compliance are all building blocks of a successful supply chain, but they can also be the source of unexpected costs and delay.

Adopting a proactive approach to understanding your supply chain requirements is the best way to protect your company from costly, and embarrassing, mistakes. Here are a few suggestions for identifying and managing risk in your supply chain.

Supplement "learning on the job" practices with resources for regular employee training. Giving employees an opportunity to better understand, and deal proactively with the challenges they will face can pay significant dividends by avoiding surprises. Professional associations, including the Chamber of Commerce frequently offer networking events and seminars on topics your employees will find helpful.

Develop an understanding of Incoterms and shipping terms of sale. Many companies view transportation (domestic and international) as an expense that simply has to be negotiated as "prepaid" or "collect". But what happens when shipments are delayed, lost or damaged in transit? Applying the correct Incoterm or domestic shipping term of sale to your documentation can help to avoid unexpected losses.

Evaluating suppliers on a regular basis is a good technique for managing costs and improving service levels. When asked why someone uses a particular supplier for example, how often have you heard the response "we've always used that supplier"? Regular review of available suppliers, their rates and service levels, fuel surcharges, insurance options and claims policies helps to ensure you're getting the best return for your supply chain dollars.

Implement performance metrics in your operation. As the old saying goes, "if it isn't measured it won't improve"! Developing processes to measure supplier performance as well as internal metrics for cost, inventory levels and customer service are essential tools for growth and reducing risk in your supply chain.