

# General Manager's Report

At our Annual General Meeting held recently, outgoing President Helen MacCormack thanked retiring Directors Melanie McCracken, Dale Holman, Wendy Hue and Pat McLeod's dedication to the Chamber. Helen had the opportunity to thank all the chamber volunteers that contributed to the success of her term and the continued growth of the Chamber. Delegates at the AGM voted in new Directors Cindi Campbell, Grant Lee, Mark McIntyre, Cynthia Simmons and Mary Ann Stockdale. Jamie Schumacker is now beginning his term as President. Would you like a copy of our Annual Report? Please contact the Chamber office and we'll mail you a copy.

Many thanks to the businesses that contributed to the Volunteer Gift bags. We've received many thanks from our hard working volunteers. These gift bags contained items from: ActivEars Hearing Centre, Andrews Scenic Acres, Artcast, Asbuilt Climatecare, Baskets and Botanicals, Best Western Inn on the Hill, BMO - Bank of Montreal, Caledon Laboratories, Dan Lawrie Insurance

**General Manager's Desk**

**Sue Walker**

Brokers, Diesel Doctors, Eagle Ridge Financial Services, Elliott Custom Brokers & Storage, Fred's Towing, GMA LLP, Halton Hills Public Library, Independent & Free Press, Mary Kay Cosmetics - Barbara Martin, North Halton Roofing, Partners in Planning Georgetown - Helen MacCormack, Prosperity One, Royal Bank of Canada, Scott Becksted - Scotia McLeod, Sheridan Nurseries, State Farm Insurance - Lora Greene, Ted Arnott, M.P.P. Waterloo-Wellington, The Stuffed Olive, Tiburon Business Services, Town of Halton Hills and TransCanada Energy Ltd.

Halloween and Christmas are coming! For details on Halloween events, Santa Claus parades, local craft shows and special events, check the Chamber website for dates and times on all our local holiday events.

# The Power of Networking

By Mary Judge  
Virtually Working For You

Networking - Gathering of acquaintances or contacts; the building up or maintaining of informal relationships, especially with people whose friendship could bring advantages such as job or business opportunities.

How can networking benefit your business and why is it SO important? The growth of any business is directly related to the number of people who know about it. Have you ever heard the saying "it's not what you know, but who you know"? More importantly "it's not who you know, but who knows you" that's important. This is where networking comes in.

Networking is one of the most essential skills any start-up entrepreneur must have. It is an economical and efficient way to grow your business by meeting the key people who could become your clients, suppliers and support systems.

In a recent survey conducted by the Virtual Assistance Chamber of Commerce, 24% of respondents reported that Networking was the top way that their clients found them; followed by Referrals from other clients (18%), Internet (12%), and Networking Referral Groups (9%). So you can see how important Networking can be.

Networking is an effective way of prospecting customers and seeking out people who can help your business grow. However, it also involves leaving your comfort zone which can be a challenge.

The thing I miss most about not working in a corporate office is the day to day contact with other people. Commuting to my home office is a pleasure but when I arrive there is

no one else at the 'water cooler' to discuss anything. That is why I love networking so much.

In fact, networking is the best marketing opportunity even when you are an impoverished home-based entrepreneur. All that is involved is the most economical activity using a simple skill: talking.

Here are some tips to make networking a part of your business.

- How will you effectively tell your story? Why are you in business? Have a clever opening line to introduce yourself or why you are in business. I tell people that "My former employer gave me the opportunity to pursue other interests".
- Learn to communicate. Set a goal of meeting at least two people at each event you go to. Good networkers are good listeners, too.
- Identify your target market and know how to find them.
- Everyone you meet is a potential client. That person you are talking to might not use your service, but they may have a friend or business acquaintances, who may become your most valuable clients.
- Get involved. Participate in organizations, professional groups and networking groups that offer opportunities for you to meet and greet. Join your local Chamber of Commerce. Volunteer with a local charity or organization.
- Be a "connector"; actively introducing people to each other. If you give referrals they may reciprocate.
- Maintain contact information.
- Make networking a part of your everyday life. Speak with new people wherever you go. Don't be afraid to give out your business cards.

Chartered Accountants

Graeme Goebelle, FCA (retired)

A. Brian MacAdam, CA, CFP	David Alexander, CA
Melanie McCracken, CA	Ron Starret, CA
Anne Starret, CA	Darren Turcotte, CA, CPA
Tracey Bastedo, CA	James Raptopulos, CA

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