



Guiding you on your business adventures

Professional Approach to the Home Based Business

info@otterideas.com 519 823 9456

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Seminar agenda

- Introductions and seminar goals
- Challenges for home based businesses
- Key business elements
 - Your brand
 - Print materials
 - Communication
 - Appearance
 - Community
- Questions and answers

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Introduction of Otter Ideas & Consulting

- Platypi Designs founded in October 2002
- Otter Ideas founded in September 2009
- Have been networking since coming to Guelph in 2003
- Known for our personal approach to business interactions with all current and prospective clients

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Seminar goals

- Define some challenges that owners of home based businesses experience
- Define some key business elements that lead to success
- Learn what professional means within those business elements
- Seeing and maximizing value in a variety of opportunities
- Understanding your business better

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Challenges for home based businesses

- Some competition have office space
- Home life can be distracting and too comfy
- Your own confidence in product/ services can be lower
- You don't feel like a "real" business
- Lack an appropriate office space for meetings

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Key business elements

To develop a professional home based business it is recommended that you spend your efforts on:

- Your brand
- Print materials
- Communication
- Appearance
- Community

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Your Brand

- Who, what, where, when, why and how
- Your passion about your business
- Your look and feel of the business throughout all mediums
- Your expectations of yourself and your prospects and clients
- It's all about you...as your business!
- If you can't represent it – it's not you.

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Your Brand cont'd

- Custom logo design
- Font and colour decisions
- Usage guidelines for logo, tagline, fonts, colours, etc.
- As your business changes so might your brand but keeping some elements of your original brand will make the transition easier

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Print Materials

- Come in all shapes, sizes, colours, prices, etc.
- Some/all preparation can be done on your own following your brand guidelines
- Leave the printing to the professionals
- Have someone else edit your print work – you're too close to the project

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Print Materials cont'd

Notes about business cards:

- 1 side should be matte
- Graphical not just text
- Professional email address (i.e. name@yourcompany.com)
- Leave printing to the professionals
- If you like "odd" shaped business cards have an "odd" **AND** standard shape

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Print Materials cont'd

Notes about brochures and postcards:

- Look at media for inspiration before visiting graphic designer
- For the do-it-yourselfer follow your brand guidelines for consistency, ensure you have graphics and text and print on high quality paper
- No photocopying brochures

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Print Materials cont'd

Notes about tradeshow booths:

- No one expects you to have a 10'x10' booth in your first few years of business
- Staples has some great options **IF** you combine the solution with professionally printed graphics
- Ensure all marketing materials follow your brand guidelines

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Print Materials cont'd

Notes on various signage options:

- If clients come to your home, have a magnet created to stick to your front door of your house with your logo
- Wear professional name tag at networking events rather than a sticker

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Communication

- Happens every day in meetings, conversations, emails, voicemails
- Be honest and open, objective and helpful when working with prospects/clients
- Tracking client/prospect conversations for future reference
- Follow up on conversations, voicemails, emails, etc.

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Communication cont'd

Notes about phone communication:

- Have a dedicated phone line or a "ident-a-call" feature on phone so you can answer appropriately
- Change your voicemail daily
- Answer the phone with a smile

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Communication cont'd

Notes about email communication:

- Address emails promptly even if you don't have the answer - acknowledge that you got the message
- Address the email with their name and sign off politely
- Have signature function working so that your contact details are included in the email
- Use the auto-respond feature when you're going to be away
- Spell check and re-read emails before sending
- Pay attention to spelling person's name correctly, etc.
- CAPITAL LETTERS are translated as you shouting

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Communication cont'd

Notes about communication at networking events:

- Wear a custom name tag on your right hand side of body
- Shake hands properly
- Trade business cards and later write what event you met them at and keep on file
- Repeat their name at the end of conversation
- Use their name when introducing them to one of your contacts

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Communication cont'd

Notes about in-person meetings:

- If at a coffee shop, identify yourself as the person with the business card on the table
- Have a promo package ready
- Shake hands properly

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Appearance

- The way you look can influence how people interact with you
- Dress according to the industry standard for the event you're attending
- Includes the accessories that you bring to a meeting (i.e. briefcase, portfolio, binder)

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Community

- Treat others as you would like to be treated
- Get involved in business organizations, community groups by volunteering for committees, etc.
- Donate your product/service as an in-kind sponsorship

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Questions and answers

If you have any questions after this seminar, please feel free to contact us at 519 823 9456 or info@otterideas.com

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