

INSIDER



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from NATALIE

Dear members,

Is it me, or are we all getting older, the days running faster and we're collectively busier than ever!? I'm excited that autumn is here. The cooler weather and the amazing programming scheduled for our last 5 months of the year, it just seems like 'a new year' to be grateful for. And I am. It's been an incredibly busy summer and when I look at our events calendar I can see why.

First off, let me say how excited I am about our Business Achievement Awards! We had a tremendous amount of nominees, for which I recognize each and every one of the individuals that took the time to nominate, AND take a look at the list of finalists! Congratulations to all of you and if you want to attend a great networking event, full of surprises &

fun join us on November 10th for the Peter Perry & Business Achievement Awards. Our theme is 'ice' – doesn't that conjure up all kinds of creative and imagery?

Lots took place this last quarter, including our new hire to help ramp up some key activities in the chamber: Advocacy, DEI, Mentorship & the DBA. Welcome Preeti! And what a great time to join us – from attending The Business Summit, to being engaged with some amazing volunteers on these various committees, to meeting more of our members at upcoming events like 'What's Holding You Back' at Durham College, our DEI event focused on broadening your skills at hiring and retaining talent.... So many options to help build your business that are free! Preeti has her work cut out for her as she begins to learn more about us!

Our team is growing, and this still means we continue to listen, learn and ensure we provide content to help our membership businesses grow. Thank you to those that continue to respond to our Membership & Advocacy Survey, as well as Net Promoter Score measures after our signature events. Your input is not only reviewed by the team, but our board – and actioned!

I look forward to seeing you soon,

- Natalie Prychitko, Chief Executive Officer, Whitby Chamber of Commerce



UPCOMING EVENTS

WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?

oct 11

LUNCH WITH LORNA

oct 19

CONNXGEN SOCIAL AT 8BIT BEANS ARCADE

oct 20



Key Learnings From My First Business Summit

For WCC's Business Summit – Resilience and Reinvention, I walked into the hall at Deer Creek Golf Course with my fresh coffee and croissant in hand (Thank you to our breakfast sponsor Durham College!) and was immediately drawn to the red MicroAge booth, our event sponsor. I spoke to Bill Noonan who helps MicroAge customers accelerate and strengthen their tech infrastructure, and efficiently integrate into our modern digital existence. Our conversation set the tone for what would be a day of exploring new opportunities and reinventing old strategies. So, how does one reinvent and become resilient?

Our first presenters were Brion Hendry of BDO and Dennis Croft of Durham College, who drew valuable comparisons between companies that adapt and those that remain rigid against market and consumer trends. One of my biggest takeaways from their talk was the

frequency and speed with which the standards and “playbook” for businesses is changing; while historical trends showed such shifts every couple of decades, industries are now reinventing every couple of years. Is your business future ready? Is strategic and agile planning for the coming years part of your business’ process? To tackle these challenges, the duo explored key areas businesses need to evaluate, including profit sources and a successful workforce.

Stratifying businesses for our ever evolving and challenging economic world is integral for their success and sustainability, and it looks different for everyone. Fortunately, the opportunities to reinvent can be endless if we make dedicated efforts to explore them. Our second speaker, Asif Khan from Ground Level Insights drew the crowd in with his company’s “creepy cool” software that analyzes anonymous phone data to help clients determine how

and where their company should evolve. Do visitors to your business have other commonalities? Where are they visiting from? What opportunities for growth does this data expose? Is your business on the right track? The fact is, relevant and up-to-date data is invaluable and it should guide how we reinvent in order to make our risks calculated and minimal.

Denise Laframboise of LaframboiseMortgage.ca hosted a business panel with Mike Libbey from Your Bottom Line, Chris Vanclief of Brock St. Brewery, Rhonda Jessup from the Whitby Public Library, and Bruce Watson of Home Hardware. Their experience brought life to the ideas we were exploring as they shared how they were each able to reinvent and be resilient, while having fun! Whether it was Whitby Public Library going “viral”, saving on office space and working from home in PJs, or having your customers’ beers paired with the perfect book, the

panel highlighted how small and big ideas could open the window to exciting new opportunities. If we think about our services as always being in beta mode, we give ourselves permission to learn and grow; this in turn gives our customers the best we have to offer, always. Isn’t that the whole point?

Returning to our tables after lunch, the audience had the honour to hear from Mark Harrison, the founder of MH3 Collective and we explored what it means to be a changemaker; because nothing really happens until each of us as individuals commit to action and growth. Mark spoke passionately about the change that was brought forth in him following the death of George Floyd, it inspired him to reevaluate how he held himself accountable to the tough realities and inequities of our society, both as a person of colour and a leader. He highlighted his 4 P’s, purpose, passion, profit and people as priorities that guide him when he is planning the future of his work. Mark’s address was

an important reminder that good work, that feeds and benefits not just you but also your community, involves identifying your strengths and privileges and how they fit into the needs of society; it’s not only a productive approach but a just one too.

Our final speaker for the day was Allison Hector-Alexander, the Director of Diversity Equity and Inclusion at the Region of Durham. Building on Mark’s message, she implored us to acknowledge all the ways that make us unique and the value of not only accepting those differences, but celebrating them. As Whitby’s community grows and diversifies, we would be remiss if we did not explore all the new and exciting opportunities we have for collaboration; and it all begins from understanding who is in our community. Allison used the anecdote of Oprah’s famous “everybody gets a car” giveaway, to wisely remind us that not everyone really needs a car, and how could we know what people actually needed if we didn’t know them and meet them as they are? This knowledge allows us to

service our customers better and collaborate with our workforce more successfully.

If we want to strive in unique and unprecedented times it cannot be “business as usual”, and the speakers at this year’s summit honed in on the magic of the “unusual” and unprecedented when it comes to business success. As we saw at the summit this year, there are many ways to reinvent and be resilient against challenges, but knowledge, compassion, and a passion are essential building blocks.

– Preeti Sangwan, Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Whitby Chamber of Commerce





The fourth annual Lynde Creek Cleanup hosted by our Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals (YEP) Committee and generously sponsored by Meridian Credit Union took place on September 16. Participants braved the rain to help make a difference in our community.



Special thanks to our presenting sponsor Meridian Credit Union for their continued support, our Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals (YEP) Committee, Aspira Lynde Creek Manor and to all those who participated. See you next year!



LORNA LEARNS

The awesome stories of
WCC members!

With summer ending and our sun-filled vacations becoming a distant memory, it's a great time to start planning and scheduling time to participate in our fall Chamber activities. Have you looked at the events calendar lately? What a line-up we have in store for us!

The Twisted System event discussed the harsh realities in today's job market and focused on how to make hiring practices more effective. A truly eye-opening event.

Next, we brought the business community, college faculty and students together for an interactive event led by Sunjay Nath, a globally recognized speaker. This interactive session helped us uncover areas of our thinking that might be holding us back from increasing our business performance. The event was free, but the lessons will be invaluable.

Our Peter Perry and Business Achievement Awards are just around the corner and give us all a chance to celebrate our successes. Join us for an evening of fun as we recognize the great achievements of our business community members. Congrats to all the nominees!

If you are an early riser, our Java jolts continue and are a great way to meet new people and engage in a current and business-focused discussion. To make them easy to attend, these caffeine-filled networking events are running in person and some virtual events are available on select dates. Remember, these Java Jolts are free to attend and open to non-members as well. I challenge each of you to invite at least one non-member to a Java Jolt over the next few months.

Ready. Set. Go!

- Andrew Scuse, Manager,
Corporate Training Services,
Durham College.

WCC Board President.



BUILD YOUR NETWORK!



Our Young Entrepreneurs & Professionals Committee are looking for members to join the committee! Entrepreneurs, employees or students are all welcome to participate and refresh a long-standing committee of the WCC. Take a look at the great events they host:



If you're interested in growing your network, creating events that draw the business community in and meet like-minded business leaders in our community, check out our Young @ Heart page to learn more, or contact susanne@whitbychamber.org.



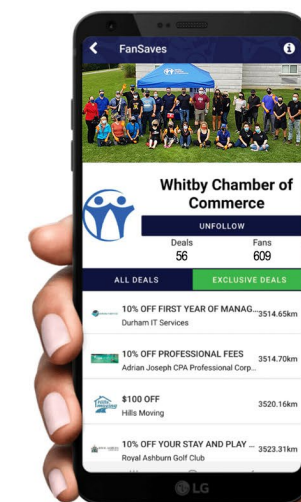
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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Update

It is vacation season! However, the WCC's DEI committee under the guidance of Natalie carried on good work. The resource library continues to be updated and enriched. In relation to resources, the committee is actively trying to engage community partners that we could provide input and hopefully get tools and ideas that can be shared with WCC's members. We will keep you posted!

In line with having a more DEI lens in choices of events, WCC has a great event coming up that explores the diverse lived-experiences in seeking employment. "2022 Twisted System Harsh Truths for Hiring Today" on October 4th will be a safe space to have tough conversations between job seekers, employees and employers. This would be an ideal event if you are an employer who is trying to increase the DEI quality of your workforce, or you are a HR professional who

would like to understand diverse resumes, or you are a job seeker that would like to share your experience. Fellow DEI committee member, Veronica Utton, will moderate a great set of panelists! [Learn more here.](#)

connXGEN Socials are also WCC's way of having more diversity, while helping students and below-30 entrepreneurs and professionals increase their network and share resources. Please check out our calendar for more details on [connXGEN social at 8 Bit Bean Arcade in downtown Whitby.](#)

Before I cap off this short and sweet entry, I would like to give a shout out to Preeti Sangwan who will start representing WCC in future DEI committee meetings. Preeti brings a wealth of experience as a legal practitioner with international human rights experience. We will miss Natalie's moves and grooves during our meetings!

- Ana Rejab, Account Manager - Small Business, Business Development Bank of Canada

WCC Board Director, DEI Committee Conduit

Membership Committee Update

After a busy summer, which included the Chamber Fairway Friday Golf Tournament on the pristine greens of Royal Ashburn Golf Club, YEP Volleyball networking event, a couple of incredibly attended Chamber on Taps, ConnXGEN social event, and a number of Java Jolts the Chamber is full steam ahead entering the Fall. September has the Mayoral Forum, YEP Lynde Creek Cleanup event which is always a great time, The Business Summit discussing resilience and reinvention, both fascinating topics and ConnXGEN has their social event taking place at 8Bit Beans Arcade. Which should be a lot of fun.

October ramps up even more with such amazing events as 2022 Twisted System: Harsh Truths for Hiring Today, where we explore the truths about hiring for today. Later in the month is the Regional Chair's Forum, which leads us into the Peter Perry & Business

Achievement Awards being held in November. As you can see there are plenty of opportunities to network. Please register for these events as they tend to sell out quickly.

As always the Membership Committee is always open to new ideas and suggestions to enhance the Chamber experience.

- Dean Smalley, President, Unique Media Solutions.

WCC Board Director, Membership Committee Conduit



Membership Directory Advertising

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Proud Member

geekspeak Commerce: A Whitby Success Story

It's not everyday we see a local business, whose clients include industry giants such as Amazon, Walmart, Indigo, Honeywell, New Balance, just to name a few. This is what we have with the incredible tech and innovation leader, geekspeak Commerce; an ecommerce marketing agency that helps you sell more online.

Led by Founder and Chief Strategist, Isaac Wanzama and Managing Partner and Client Success Leader Tricia Williams, their team of specialists have helped countless organizations turn casual browsers into loyal buyers. For almost 20 years, geekspeak Commerce have been offering a variety of ecommerce services, tailored to meet individual client requirements and budgets, including product content services, digital marketing and more.

Starting his career in corporate communications and ad agencies, Isaac leaned into digital

advertising as an area of focus before branching out on his own. His communications and advertising background, paired with experience working in the frontlines of retail as an assistant store manager, are what propelled his passion for eCommerce and digital marketing. He started geekspeak from his basement, where we created technical content and manuals for consumer brands. From there, as the web took off, he realized there existed a need for more robust eCommerce content services and started laying the groundwork for the company that geekspeak is now.

The first few ecommerce projects included writing taglines for General Motors and creating web content

for brands like Vaseline and Sunlight. Their passion lies in customizing ecommerce content services that align with each business, whether they're selling one product or thousands, they are committed to delivering the product content companies need to drive sales online.

In addition to being a leader in the ecommerce space, both Isaac and Tricia make time to give back to their local community. Isaac is a board member of the 1855 Whitby Tech Accelerator, and Tricia is the former Chair for Whitby Chamber of Commerce's DEI committee. Playing an integral role in the development of the committee, creation of the terms of reference, project plan and so much more.

Isaac was a part of the Whitby Economic Development community recovery steering committee throughout COVID-19, focused on helping businesses bounce back and thrive during the pandemic. While Tricia was a member of the steering committee for the Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Whitby's 5-year plan.

As geekspeak continues to grow, corporate responsibility remains forefront in their mission. geekspeak Commerce created, Hack for Good, an annual hackathon event that they host, where teams of software developers, graphic designers, engineers and marketers come together to create software prototypes that address a chosen cause.

They also proudly support Simcoe Hall Settlement House, an organization that serves Durham Region through their food bank, after-school support and seniors programs,

all designed to provide wellness opportunities to families and individuals in need. geekspeak Commerce actively volunteers with the Settlement House and leads fundraising efforts throughout the year.

Canada Learning Code, an organization that makes computer science and technology accessible to anyone, is another organization they support.

When they're not busy helping organizations thrive online, supporting their local communities and causes they believe in, they can be seen sharing ecommerce strategies in their web series Point of Purchase.

"The growth of Whitby as an innovation hub is a vision both Tricia and I share, particularly when it comes to building knowledge around our community. The work that incubators like 1855 and Spark Centre are doing to build innovative businesses is so important and we're happy to help




contribute to that growth however we can. Personally, I'm always looking to challenge myself and to grow both as a business owner and a member of the community."

"Social responsibility is a part of our culture at geekspeak. We recognize that there's more than just ourselves to take care of and be responsible for. Any business that has social impact as part of their plan will be received and welcomed in the community. It's great for the community and it's also great for your business - they go hand in hand.

No one should participate in social causes just for the sake of it, but people certainly look to and want to work with companies who care for things beyond revenue alone. We work in an amazing community, but one with people who are dealing with challenges at all sorts of levels, so ensuring that we recognize that and work toward solving some of those challenges as best we can is important to us."

Isaac Wanzama


- Uchechi Ezurike-Bosse
My Empowered Living
WCC, DEI Committee
Founding Member

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Chamber
of Commerce

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Advocacy Committee Update

The Whitby Chamber of Commerce (WCC) Advocacy Committee had a busy and enjoyable summer. A welcomed sign of summer was in-person events picking up some steam, which of course provided us with the opportunity to speak and meet with valued members – taking away a few tidbits of feedback along the way. We look forward to more events in the near future and hope to see you all there!

In addition to informal feedback at events, we have reviewed the results of our membership survey completed this summer. We paid close consideration to all of the feedback provided – and we thank you for taking the time to complete it! After review, labour and skills shortage within the parameters of our business community is the number one issue for the next 12 months. We've heard you loud and clear.

To show our support for these issues, we recently wrote a letter to Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, along with other pertinent Ministers, drawing attention to the Blueprint to Bolster Ontario's Prosperity, released by the Ontario Chambers of Commerce. The Blueprint respectfully offers insight and recommendations in key areas of concern, including labour market challenges, administrative burdens and regulatory structures, environmental and energy policies, local and regional transportation, support for small businesses and entrepreneurs, and the delivery and optimization of our health care services.

Lastly, Mayoral campaigning is in full swing as we look ahead to the municipal election on October 24. It is clear this is a very important election for our membership, as we had over 60 people join us for the Mayoral Forum held on September 14th. For more information, check-out Preeti's blog on the WCC website and look-out for recording details of the Forum coming soon from Rogers Communications.

- Matthew Parish, RBC Wealth Management & WCC Board Member, Advocacy Committee Conduit



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Vegan Delights by Lisa-
Ann
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CHECK OUT OUR COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR



whitbychamber.org/communityevents



All Whitby Chamber of Commerce initiatives
are made possible with the support of our
membership, partners and volunteers.

...thank you.