



IN THE SPOTLIGHT - OCTOBER 2017

THE CRADVANTAGE – MUNICIPAL BROADBAND NETWORK, GROWING THE TECH ECO-SYSTEM, AND CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Mark November 8 and 9 on your calendar.

As part of our “Modern Entrepreneur Workshop Series”, we are pleased to welcome Keith Ippel from Spring, a start-up support company based in Vancouver. Spanning two evenings, this workshop will focus on how to fund and grow your business, as well as provide access to resources that can get you started on the path to success.

The entrepreneurial landscape in Campbell River is rapidly expanding, and companies like Spring are starting to take notice.

Local businesses have been making big waves throughout the province, bringing attention to Campbell River and the business opportunities available here.



JOIN CITY STAFF AT THE MODERN ENTREPRENEUR WORKSHOPS ON NOVEMBER 8 AND 9.

PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT:

Warren Kalyn (Information Technology Manager)

Rose Klukas (Economic Development Officer)

Nina Baksh (GIS Coordinator)

Sara Baxandall (Economic Development Analyst)

THE MODERN ENTREPRENEUR SERIES

- November 8** 5 Steps to Growing Your Business
- November 9** Your Business' Financial Health & Funding
- November 9** Spring will have office hours during the day for entrepreneurs to schedule 15 minute time slots with mentors
- November 27** Social media workshop
bit.ly/grow-your-business-cr

CRADVANTAGE

- November 2** CRadvantage launch
cradvantage.com



MEET MATT FROM EARWORM SOUND

Matt Gionet grew up in Campbell River. He started working in the sound editing industry after graduating from college in Vancouver. "I got an internship at my dream company and loved it!" says Matt. "After the internship finished I called them almost every day asking about a job. I think they hired me just so I would stop bothering them."

Matt remembers enjoying his job as a studio operations manager, overseeing the sound editing work. "However, I was looking for a way to become a hands-on editor." In 2009, he began thinking about moving back to Campbell River.

"I wasn't sure what I would do there though," he says. "The mill had just closed, I didn't know about any other work opportunities. It was my mom who suggested I continue sound design in Campbell River."

In addition to his mother's encouragement, Matt says that the North Island Film Commissioner, Joan Miller, was influential in convincing him that Campbell River was somewhere he could pursue his passion. With support from Community Futures Strathcona, he launched EarWorm Sound in 2011 from his mother's dining room table.



Matt has since grown EarWorm Sound into an award-winning company. His clients include APTN, The Nature of Things, and Telus. A recent project involves cleaning up audio for a well-known online streaming service.

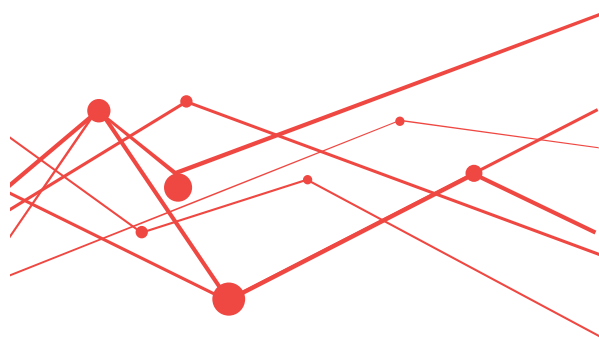
"We've done over 500 shows for them I think," says Matt. "We work on descriptive audio, which helps visually impaired viewers enjoy the show as much as anyone else."

HOW DO YOU THINK TECHNOLOGY IS ADVANCING CAMPBELL RIVER'S ENTREPRENEURIAL ECO-SYSTEM?

As Matt sees it, Campbell River is on the edge of becoming a destination for entrepreneurs, especially those in the tech industry.

“The city is making a valuable investment by expanding fiber-optic Internet access; I think CRadvantage will be a game-changer. Businesses like mine need that kind of Internet. I couldn't operate without it.”

High-speed Internet access draws in businesses and entrepreneurs that prefer off-site work, meaning they don't need to be in a single large office building every day. Matt says the low cost of living and the beauty of Campbell River combined with the possibility of remote work opportunities, could mean big things for business here.



WHAT CAN ENTREPRENEURS IN CAMPBELL RIVER DO TO GROW OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

“The main thing is to find one another,” says Matt. “It's surprising in a town this size, but it can be hard to find each other! It's important to get together, network and grow our contact lists.”

Matt says this is an issue, especially for tech companies that tend to work in small groups without much need for outside services. He sees the value in groups like YPCR and CR Connect.

“When I go to these gatherings I always meet new people that I can work with, and that's great. I would love to do more local projects, and that takes getting to know who's around me. Having those networking spaces is so important.”

This year, EarWorm Sound won a coveted Leo Award from the Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Foundation of BC in the category of Best Sound, for their work on the APTN show Coyote Science. They were also nominated in the same category for their work on Tribal Police Files. Matt recognizes that getting this type of attention is good for all entrepreneurs in Campbell River.

“It's all about taking the plunge, like I did. You can do it from here.”

“[EarWorm Sound] went up against some industry veterans and won. It's really helped to expand our network of contacts and shows people around the province that we do good work, and that reflects well on the business opportunities in Campbell River.”

As for the future, Matt says he would really like to see training initiatives in high schools and at North Island College, creating a pool of local talent to pull from. “I would love to step into a teaching role someday, show others what I do and how to do it. I think there's interest here. When you have willing teachers, that really boosts opportunities for young people.”

MEET LAUREL, CO-FOUNDER OF SOCIABLE SCIENTISTS

Sociable Scientists is a truly homegrown business that has found its niche in Campbell River. Laurel Sliskovic co-founded the company four years ago after completing her Masters at Vancouver Island University. She was keenly interested in how leisure activities impact a community's development for both residents and visitors. In Campbell River, that means assessing how amenities such as trails, cultural centers, and essential services intersect with the sustainability and social aspects of our community.

One of her current ventures is a pilot project with VIU (now in its 5th year), conducting visitor experience surveys with tourists that visited our region over the summer. It involves collaboration with Vancouver Island North Tourism and Tourism Nanaimo. Sociable Scientists is also working with the Campbell River Recreation and Culture Department to survey users of the new skate park at the Sportsplex.



"The data from these projects help our communities with destination marketing strategies, as well as pinpoint areas that need improvement or additional resources," says Laurel. "It's important to give the people that use these leisure amenities a voice."

Laurel is also in her second year as president of the Young Professionals of Campbell River (YPCR), and feels optimistic about the growing number of entrepreneurs in our city.

"I've definitely noticed an increase in the diversity of our membership these past two years, as more entrepreneurs emerge in the community," says Laurel of YPCR. "And technology has certainly played a role in attracting entrepreneurship here."

HOW DOES THE ADVANCEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY IN CAMPBELL RIVER HELP YOUR BUSINESS?

According to Laurel, the changing tech landscape in Campbell River has enabled entrepreneurs to collaborate with each other, as well as reach more diverse industries and regions.

"I feel that technology plays a role in enabling more face-to-face conversations. In a community the size of ours it's important to get out and connect on a personal level with people, which is the end goal," says Laurel. "When you introduce technology into a network, it helps expand that network, which is good for Campbell River's business community."

Growing our business community is something that Laurel is actively involved in. During her two years as president of YPCR, she has organized reading circles that encourage innovative business approaches for entrepreneurs.

The first book read was “Start-up Communities: Building an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Your Community” by Brad Feld. This year, the selection was “The Road to Reinvention: How to Drive Disruption and Accelerate Growth” by Josh Linkner. Laurel says the main takeaway of the book was “that the ways things have been done in the past are not necessarily the way they have to be done now.” She hopes it encourages new entrepreneurs to take risks and try new approaches when starting a business.

“It also helped to create Campbell River Connect, a space for business owners and people that are new to the area to meet and build a network that benefits all of us. As business owners, just finding one another can be a real challenge. Groups like YPCR and CR Connect help with that problem.”



WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH FUTURPRENEUR CANADA?

When she was first thinking about starting her business, Laurel attended a Vancouver workshop hosted by Small Business BC, where she learned about Futurpreneur.

“Futurpreneur was instrumental in our early stages,” says Laurel of her experience. “We didn’t need a lot of money, but having a mentor to guide us through the process was invaluable.” During those early days of business development, Laurel’s co-founder decided that entrepreneurship was not the right direction for them and moved on to other ventures. “Having a mentor facilitate those difficult and detailed conversations with an objective voice saved our relationship, and set Sociable Scientists up for success.”

“It’s like planting little seeds in the community, starting the conversation and creating spaces for people to find support and pursue their ideas. Through that, you can start inviting others to Campbell River to take part in the growth opportunities here.”

Futurpreneur offers free resources to new business owners such as a Business Plan Template and Cash Flow Projection Template. They also provide access to their funding program, which is contingent on participating in the mentorship program, offering advice and support from a successful volunteer entrepreneur.

“We were able to express our needs or weaknesses as a new company and find the right mentor to help in those areas,” says Laurel. “I would definitely be interested in becoming a mentor for a new entrepreneur in the future. Futurpreneur is such a valuable resource.”

As for the up-coming workshops in November, Laurel believes that they demonstrate how the entrepreneurial fires are burning in Campbell River.

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Spring isn't the only one looking to help new start-ups in Campbell River. Futurpreneur Canada also helps new entrepreneurs with funding. However, their most valuable asset is their access to thousands of successful entrepreneurs across the province and the country. Futurpreneur will be joining Spring in Campbell River at the Modern Entrepreneur Workshop Series.

MEET MINA FROM FUTURPRENEUR CANADA

Mina Haghighi is a Business Development Manager for Futurpreneur Canada in British Columbia. She is, tasked with finding and connecting with new entrepreneurs from the Lower Mainland Vancouver Island and across BC. She works with local organizations to provide start-up support, and recruits volunteer mentors from across different industries and skillsets. Mina says that having a healthy list of strong mentors is crucial to the success of entrepreneurs in the Futurpreneur program.

“We help entrepreneurs under age 40 launch successful businesses, providing access to critical start-up funds through our mentorship program,” she says of the organization. Entrepreneurs can apply for start-up financing up to \$45,000 with Futurpreneur, and approval for funding means you will be paired with a business mentor here in BC.



Futurpreneur started in 1996 as a charity, and has since grown into a nationwide non-profit. Their two-pronged approach—funding which is conditional on accepting mentorship—is the pillar of the company. Futurpreneur has built a vast network of successful businesspeople willing to share their knowledge with those who are just starting out. They have over 3000 mentors across Canada, and that number is growing.



“It doesn't matter where you are, we have the structure in place to help you build and maintain those crucial relationships”

Creating this network is incredibly rewarding, says Mina. “Connection is everything at Futurpreneur. All of the mentors are volunteers, providing valuable insight and advice to newcomers free of charge. It is so valuable.

HOW DOES TECHNOLOGY HELP YOU BUILD ENTREPRENEURIAL ECO-SYSTEMS?

Technology plays a significant role in building relationships at Futurpreneur. It is not uncommon for entrepreneurs to be linked with mentors in another part of the province. Mina points out that over the four years she’s been at the company, programs like Skype, Google Hangouts, and the rise of social media have facilitated incredible growth through Futurpreneur.

“While we understand the value of face-to-face meetings, it might just be the case that somebody in Kelowna has the skills and experience to help somebody in Courtenay or Campbell River launch their business.”

Futurpreneur has only one physical office in Vancouver. Entrepreneurs outside the Lower Mainland can easily participate in the program through online platforms.

“Spring is one of our strongest partnerships. We even work in the same building in Vancouver! Our teams have great synergy together.”



WHAT IS FUTURPRENEUR’S CONNECTION TO ‘SPRING’?

“Spring is one of our strongest partnerships,” says Mina, “we even work in the same building in Vancouver! Our teams have great synergy together.”

Futurpreneur and Spring have co-hosted many events and workshops together, supporting entrepreneurship in smaller towns and cities.

“Keith (Spring’s CEO) told me a month or so ago that he was looking at Campbell River, and we started talking about it,” Mina remembers. “The question was how can we best fit into Campbell River and support entrepreneurship there specifically? Because every town has its own needs.”

Mina will be present at the upcoming November workshops, answering questions related to start-up funding and helping to support the growing community of entrepreneurs working in and around Campbell River. Her knowledge and experience can benefit entrepreneurs at any stage of business development.

MEET KEITH FROM 'SPRING'

Only four years into business and the Vancouver-based Spring is already operating in over 30 countries around the globe.

“I think that so far we have helped about 450 entrepreneurs launch around 250 businesses,” says Keith Ippel, co-founder and CEO of Spring. “We are active in BC, across Canada, and in countries like Bosnia and Latin America.”

Spring aims to bring together “entrepreneurs that are trying to change the world.” Through a strong system made up of workshops, programs and peer networks, Spring has built a roster of diverse entrepreneurial pursuits, of which 80% are what Keith terms “tech-enabled.”

“Really though, the line is becoming more blurred between tech and non-tech operations, and that is a huge help in building a strong eco-system of entrepreneurs. It’s essential to those connections.”

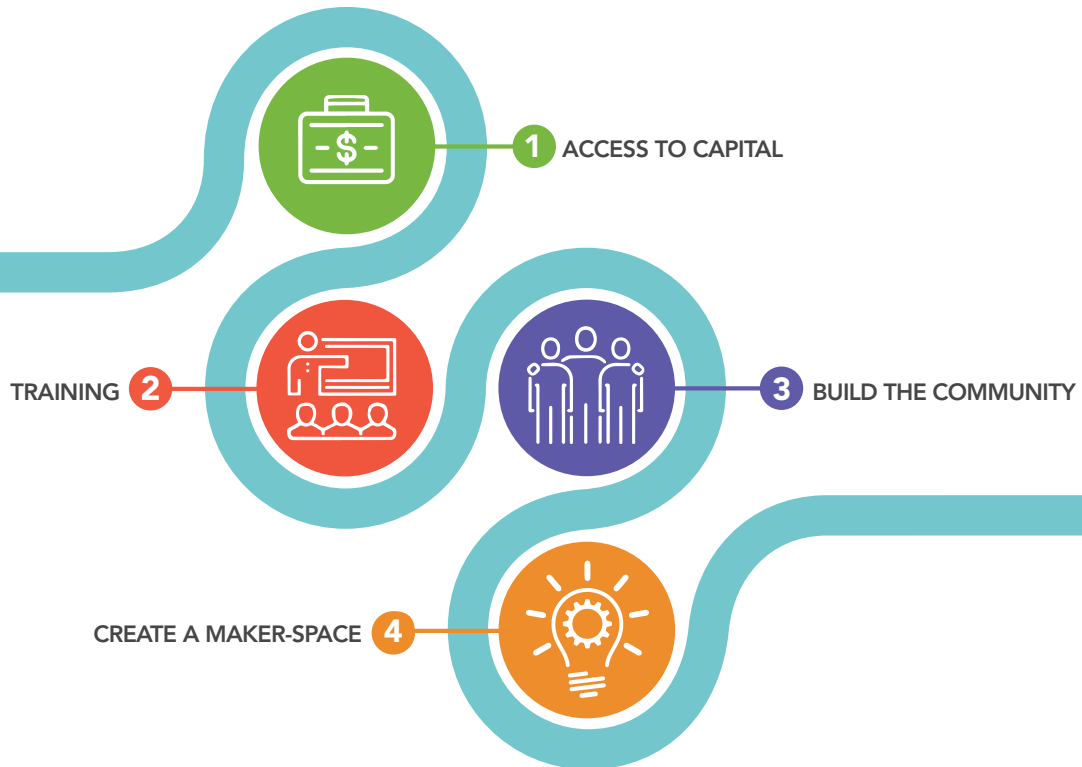


Spring provides resources and programs to new businesses that follow a growth path, from incubation through to acceleration and onwards.

“Incubation is pre-launch, where you clarify ideas and make preparations for your business. Acceleration is after launching, when you start work to unlock growth. After that, you can focus on specifics like Customer Discovery and Funding,” Keith explains. “We also hold Founder Roundtables, which are on-going peer support groups. There you gain access to knowledge to help you scale your business, as well as hold you accountable to your growth plans.”

WHAT DOES AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ECO-SYSTEM LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

According to Keith, there are four required steps to building a healthy environment for entrepreneurs to flourish in:



1. ACCESS TO CAPITAL: “Grants, loans and investment money must be accessible to entrepreneurs for them to start their journey.”

2. TRAINING: “Bringing in workshops, enlisting mentorship programs and creating access to those pools of knowledge from around the region is incredibly important.”

3. BUILD THE COMMUNITY: “Facilitate growth by expanding the community to include other experts, industry and non-industry leaders with experience. This is essential for an entrepreneurial eco-system to thrive.”

4. CREATE A MAKER-SPACE: “A community hub for ‘tinkerers’ and entrepreneurs to gather and network with one another while pursuing their passion.”

These four strategies help to create an environment in which business can thrive, which in turn provides economic benefits to the community at large. Increased investment, job creation and even real estate boosts can all result from a business-friendly approach. In addition, it fosters and retains local talent, and attracts new business development to Campbell River.

“It’s important to realize that, especially in smaller communities, this system benefits almost any business in any industry within the community,” says Keith. “As the eco-system grows, so does PR for the region, which filters down to hotels, restaurants and other locally-owned businesses.”



MODERN ENTREPRENEUR 2-DAY WORKSHOP

As for Spring's November 8 and 9 workshop, hosted by the City of Campbell River, Keith says that it will boost the entrepreneurial eco-system in Campbell River in two ways.

The first workshop is on the evening of November 8, and will focus on growing your business. "We want to help take your business to the next level," Keith explains. This session is designed to speak to entrepreneurs in the early to mid-range stages of their business development, and explore the ways they can unlock their growth potential.

The following evening will be all about the financial health of your business in two parts. It will start with a deep dive into topics like how to

read your financial statements, improving cashflow and knowing exactly where your money is going. The second half will focus more on funding - where to get it and how to use it effectively.

There will also be a bonus A.M.A (Ask Me Anything) segment during the afternoon of November 9, where attendees will have the opportunity to meet with experts and mentors from around the region and ask specific questions.

"Growing the entrepreneurial eco-system in your city helps to create jobs, create positive PR and ultimately boost the economy," says Keith. "It's a worthwhile thing to pursue."



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