

womanink

NAWBO Buffalo Niagara • P.O. Box 1165 • Orchard Park, NY 14127 • www.nawbowny.org

september 2010

NAWBO Buffalo Niagara Chapter 2010/2011 Year

The chapter has made significant changes this year!

We are welcoming a new chapter administrator in 2010; **Jeanne Hellert** will be handling our membership database, taking dinner meeting reservations, and checking in attendees at our monthly dinner meetings, among other duties. You can contact Jeanne with your membership questions or changes to your business information for the chapter database at jhellert@roadrunner.com or 716-238-2461. We also have a new address for the chapter: **NAWBO Buffalo Niagara, P.O. Box 1165, Orchard Park, NY 14127.**



WomanINK has additions to our staff.

A warm welcome to *WomanINK*'s new editor, **Celeste DiStefano**, and our recently-created newsletter editorial board, which consists of the editor, current chapter president and immediate past president; respectively Celeste, Laurie Albertsson and Nicole Fiorella for the 2010/2011 year.

Welcome to our new officers and board!

The 2010/2011 officers are Laurie Albertsson, President; Dottie Austin, President-Elect; Donna Scalfaro, Secretary; and Nicole Fiorella, who will serve on the board of directors as Immediate Past President. New incoming directors include Barbara Crouthamel, Pat Gillen, Barbara Oliver, and Sharada Varanasi. Returning directors are Joyce DeLong, Nancy DeTine, Celeste DiStefano, and Carolyn Valenti.

Committee positions within the chapter are being filled by Katharine Smith, Communications; Leanne Oldenbrook, Corporate & Economic Development; Barbara Maira and Lisa Taravella, Fundraising; Pat Potts, Governance; Katie Clark and Patty Zimmerman, Membership; Nicole Fiorella, Nominations; Dottie Austin, Program; and Victoria D'Angelo, Scholarship.

Some great upcoming programs and events have been planned.

September will feature Erie County Clerk, Kathy Hochul, who will discuss current trends in small business. Planned as well is a signing ceremony with NAWBO Buffalo Niagara and the Canisius College Women's Business Center; commemorating the national coalition and declaration of support between the two organizations which took place at NAWBO's conference in Washington, D.C. in June 2010.

Our October meeting is *all* about business: Rick Wallace, owner of Next Step Coaching, will present "The 9 Lies that Are Holding YOUR Business Back." Building trust and a relationship with clients is the focus of our November presentation with Jan Owczarczak, vice president business development for Employer Services Corporation. In December we're featuring Saxman Slim, the one-man live music act! Slim will blow soulful saxophone renditions of pop classics for your enjoyment.

Our popular member-only "Breakfast Bunch" will be hosted this year by Marilyn Coté-Miller. The first breakfast will be held on Thursday, September 2, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. at The Original Pancake House, 5479 Main Street in Williamsville. Our discussion will be "How do you manage your business over the summer with vacations, perhaps a drop in activity?" Stay tuned for information on the "Lunch Bunch" schedule, moderated by Amy Remmele.

Make your plans now to attend NAWBO Buffalo Niagara's great meetings for fellowship and networking plus informational programs created to help you grow your business!

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2010/2011 program

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Location Sean Patrick's Restaurant
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Time 5:30 p.m. Networking
6:00 p.m. Dinner

Cost \$30 Member
\$35 Prospective member

RSVP Cancellations 48 hrs in advance.
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make your dinner reservation online at: www.nawbowny.org

Please include your full name, telephone number, dinner choice, and if a guest, the name of the NAWBO member who invited you. Mail pre-payment (check payable to NAWBO) to: NAWBO, P.O. Box 1165, Orchard Park NY 14127. We now accept paypal: log onto our Web site and follow the prompts for payment.

Questions? – Please contact our Chapter Administrator Jeanne Hellert at 238-2461 or nawbowny@gmail.com.

Please RSVP by the afternoon of the Friday before the Wednesday night meeting.

september 8, 2010

From the County Clerk's Office: Trends in Erie County for Small Business and How We Can Help You

Kathy Hochul, Erie County Clerk, will discuss current trends in small business and what the County Clerk's Office can offer businesses. We will hold a signing ceremony with **Laurie Albertsson, president of NAWBO Buffalo Niagara** and **Melinda Rath Sanderson, executive director of the Canisius College Women's Business Center**; demonstrating our organizations' joint commitment to support and advance issues impacting the success of women entrepreneurs, nationally and locally.

october 13, 2010

The 9 Lies that Are Holding YOUR Business Back

Our speaker, business coach **Rick Wallace**, is the owner of **Next Step Coaching**. Rick has more than 30 years of management experience in sales, sales management, corporate training, product management and marketing at two Fortune 1000 companies, Burroughs Corporation (now Unisys) and Standard Register Company. He was formerly senior vice president of marketing and new business development at the Western New York-based company, International Imaging Inc. (IIMAK).

november 10, 2010

Networking: Build Trust and a Relationship and the Sales Will Follow

Jan Owczarczak is the vice president business development for **Employer Services Corporation**. Jan joined ESC's executive team in 2002. Prior to joining ESC, Jan spent 22 years with Computer Task Group (CTG), a \$300 million technology-consulting firm where she last served as Managing Director responsible for business development, business start-ups, and turnarounds.

december 8, 2010

Saxman Slim

For our holiday get-together, we're featuring **Saxman Slim**, the one-man live music act! Slim will blow his soulful saxophone renditions of pop classics from yesterday and today, accompanied by his custom-made recorded track. Check out the Saxman on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Saxman-Slim>.

january 12, 2011

Save the date!

Program to be announced.

thursday september 2, 2010

Breakfast Bunch

Our member-only group meets each month for business talk, problem solving and fellowship on the first **Thursday morning of the month at 8:00 a.m.** at **The Original Pancake House, 5479 Main Street in Williamsville** (www.originalpancakehouse.com). A room at the back of the restaurant has been reserved for NAWBO. Our discussion will be "How do you manage your business over the summer with vacations, perhaps a drop in activity?" Please RSVP to Marilyn Coté-Miller at 208-9548 or Marilyn@ArtfulThreadsEmbroidery.com.

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Editor	Celeste DiStefano, Director
2010/11 Editorial Board	Laurie Albertsson, President Nicole Fiorella, Immediate Past President Celeste DiStefano, Editor
Design/Layout	Katharine Smith, Communications Chair

All contributed articles must be original work; all previously published works must be accompanied by the publisher's authorization to reprint. *WOMANink* reserves the right to edit contributed articles for clarity and length, and reserves the right to refuse to publish any contributed article.

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president's message

Let's all work together!

I joined NAWBO Buffalo Niagara in October 2000. During that time it has been my privilege to serve on the board of directors and hold several leadership positions within the chapter, including secretary and treasurer. I have been chair for the membership, public relations, programs, and awards committees as well as an active member of the fundraising committee.

This is the path that has led me to this year as your chapter president. It has always been my belief that an organization's president should maintain an open door policy; encouraging members to voice their opinions and share their ideas. It's so important to hear what we can improve as well as what is working. I will strive to do my best to keep that open door policy throughout my 2010-2011 term.

My first goal this year is to strengthen our chapter by increasing membership. I also hope to increase the networking opportunities for NAWBO members.

The support of our corporate partners has been greatly appreciated; without their financial backing our chapter would not have been able to offer many of our past programs and events. I plan to strengthen the bond we have with Keybank, M&T, and HSBC in the upcoming year and my second goal is to attract more corporate partners. I offer my greatest thanks to our member chapter partners and hope that you will continue to support the chapter.

Then there are our members – the backbone of NAWBO Buffalo Niagara – without your enthusiasm, support, and hard work our chapter would not survive. "Thank you" for your continued involvement and I look forward to serving as your president.

Laurie Albertsson
NAWBO Buffalo Niagara, President 2010/2011

To contact Laurie with your ideas, comments, or questions, please e-mail her at laurie@fernwoodcapital.com or call 694-9302.

welcome members

Hyunja Lee, President
Jainlee, Inc.
3973 Harlem Rd. • Snyder, NY 14226-4705
telephone 716-839-7105 • fax 716 839-7103
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Melissa Neal, M.D., Owner/Founder
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Gretchen M. Nichols, Attorney at Law, Partner
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501 John James Audubon Pkwy. • Suite 300 • Amherst, NY 14228-1143
telephone 716-688-3800 • fax 716-688-3891
e-mail gnichols@nfdlaw.com
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Erin L. McCabe
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**JAECKLE
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ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Jean C. Powers
Partner
Direct Dial: (716) 250-1903
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Universal Communication Skills

by Amy Remmele

Everybody has ideas about what influences good communication in the workplace. Some say it's that men and women are from different planets. Some say it's about generational differences. Some even say it's impossible!

After years of counseling couples in my private practice and business owners and employees in my business consulting practice, I say that it comes down to relying on precious metals. Or more specifically, looking at two rules named after precious metals.

The first is something we have probably all heard, The Golden Rule. Treat others the way that you want to be treated. When it comes to giving global advice about interactions, this old adage is the best. By asking what we ourselves want from others, we will be guided to: be respectful; listen and attend to what the other person is saying. We will be genuinely interested in what others think and feel, be honest while being gentle, give support and advice, but will not rescue, share our knowledge and expertise in a humble way, laugh *with* others, not *at* them, include everyone so nobody feels left out, share power and control and give more than we receive.

The second rule applies to more specific communication. It is the Platinum Rule. This rule states that you should communicate with people in the way in which they want to be communicated. In other words, check out the other person's "interaction style" and adjust your communication based on this information. This does not mean that you will be changing "what you say," just "how you say it." Your message, your values and beliefs and what you say are a part of you. We are not asking you to change that. But how you say it, the style and language you use, can make the difference between being heard and understood or being misunderstood and dismissed. Sometimes when you watch people of different styles interact, it is like watching people talking two different languages or dialects trying to be understood.

Here is a very brief overview of styles, which are based on some basic belief systems. Some people believe that the world is a very friendly place, while others are more suspicious and cautious. Some people believe that they have some power and some effect in the world, while others believe that they have very little power or effect. When we take these belief systems and mix them together in varying degrees, we get many different types of interaction styles. We have people who like to do business

while being social. We have people who want all the facts and figures to be perfect. We have people who just want results and want them fast. We have people who cannot work unless the whole team is on the same page. We have people who want to come up with ideas while other people follow through and implement the ideas. We have some people who like to listen and some who like to talk. There are many different types and there are ways to get each type to understand what you are saying and ways to get each type to "join the team."

When people are behaving naturally, you can observe their basic interaction style. This will probably not change dramatically. But style can be adjust-

Imagine a supervisor who wants fast results and who does not like to "waste time on idle chit chat." Now imagine that this supervisor is about to go into the office of someone who likes to socialize and "play" a bit around her work.

ed in order to make communication smoother and more productive. Ask yourself some questions before you interact with someone. How does this person like to interact? Does he/she like to chit chat? Does he/she like all the i's dotted and t's crossed? Does this person hate conflict? Does this person get flustered if time becomes too pressing? Once you have assessed the other person's style, take a moment to adjust your style so that the interaction will glide right along.

Imagine a supervisor who wants fast results and who does not like to "waste time on idle chit chat." Now imagine that this supervisor is about to go into the office of someone who likes to socialize and "play" a bit around her work. The supervisor could just storm into the office and demand the overdue report. This would probably result in a "thrown together" report and hurt feelings that may jeopardize the future relationship and future projects. What if the supervisor paused for a moment, reminded herself of who she was about to interact with and adjusted accordingly. She could take the time to ask about the upcoming office party or the new grandchild (reminding herself that the moment

taken now to follow the Platinum Rule will prevent the time needed to repair the relationship later) and then move into the matter at hand.

This may be a good time to interject some "universal communication rules." No matter what style you or the people in your life are, check out your body language. Your body speaks way louder than your words. In fact, anywhere from fifty to seventy-five percent of what we say is in our body language. So, if you are shaking your finger in someone's face, no matter what is coming out of your mouth, they are hearing you say, "I am threatening you." If you are looking down at the ground with slumped shoulders, they are hearing that you are afraid. So,

be very aware of how your body is behaving. And there is an overall Cardinal Rule of communication. Never show disgust to anyone that you want to continue having a relationship with. If you are unsure what your body is saying, check it out. There may be someone in your life who will give you honest feedback on what your tone and body are conveying. If there is not, beware! You are probably scaring everyone.

In the most efficient and productive workplaces (and homes) everyone knows everyone else's interaction styles through formal assessments. Owners and supervisors and parents then lead and manage based on the styles. All interactions at all levels are done through mindfulness and awareness. Everyone feels respected and all voices are heard.

Imagine how much more interesting and exciting a supervisor's day will be when she interacts with each of her employees in a different way that lets them know they are being treated as individuals. Imagine an even better scenario when they make a special point of adjusting to her and to each other. When everyone becomes the best communicator that they can, synergy happens, solutions are created, and productivity goes up and up.

So, while generation and gender play their roles in communication, styles and how they are managed will go much farther toward effective and productive interactions.

NAWBO Buffalo Niagara member Amy Remmele owns Peak Of Success. She is a personal and professional consultant, working with people who want to overcome the roadblocks to success and make positive sustainable changes. Contact her at: 716-626-5977, amy@peakofsuccess.com, or online www.peakofsuccess.com.

Six Marketing Plan Essentials for Small Businesses

Boost Impact Without Increasing Your Budget

by Joyce DeLong

Mention marketing to a small or mid-sized business owner and you will often hear, "We can't afford much advertising." While advertising is one way to reach customers and prospects, today's businesses need a carefully considered strategic marketing plan to get the most from their efforts.

Success in today's highly competitive marketplace means that any size company must look beyond single day-to-day tactics and think strategically. This is especially true of small and mid-size companies that lack the budgets of the big guys. While developing a strategic marketing plan is often best left to professionals, there are some fundamentals that any business can follow.

1. Understand market trends. Determine what your business or organization must do to achieve its objectives based on an understanding of current and future markets. In other words, make sure you have a product or service that the marketplace wants.

Solicit honest feedback from customers. Become obsessive with measuring customer satisfaction and loyalty. Use acquired knowledge to aid future product and service development and to adapt marketing efforts to specific customers or market segments.

2. Segment the market. A major trend among businesses and organizations of all sizes is to align their offerings and strategies according to market segments. Market segments are characterized by demographic traits (age, education, geographic location, etc.) and lifestyle traits (adventure seekers, busy moms, active seniors, etc.).

You can make your offers more relevant by customizing language, imagery and information that is targeted to each segment. Today, reaching narrow market segments is much easier and more cost effective than ever. For example, digital print technologies have made it economical to replace a single mass mailing with multiple customized pieces.

3. Build a meaningful identity. Develop an identity that will get attention and motivate customers to choose your products and services over the competition. The concept of identity or "branding" goes far beyond a catchy name, logo or slogan. Define your products and services in a way that will resonate most with customers and prospects. Then articulate your message in a manner that will get their attention.

Build this identity through a variety of tactics: product labeling, signage, newsletters, product/service brochure, Web site, promotional products or even a direct mail campaign capturing the interest of your target market.

4. Remember your employees. Employees are an often overlooked but highly-effective marketing tool. Their behaviors, along with their ability to communicate with customers and gather feedback, are all essential parts of a strategic marketing plan. Make the identity you developed in Step 3 part of your organization's culture. Reinforce this through visual reminders such as banners, apparel and signage as well as through staff rewards and special events.

5. Optimize customer interaction. Smart businesses know that the most effective way to grow a business is with current customers. Develop ways to

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Empire State Development - Woman Owned Business Enterprise

It's Time to Create Your Business Legacy

by Nancy Jo Eckerson

Documenting the history, purpose and future prospects of your business through the creation of a Business Legacy is now more important than ever. A Business Legacy serves to solidify your purpose and make your business far stronger than before. It is a must for survival in these critical times.

Joy, pride and appreciation are the building blocks that go into each Business Legacy. And those positive attributes are contagious. Your clients will sense your positive attitude and want to infuse their businesses and lives with the very same foundations.

Your enthusiasm is directly translated to increased profitability. There is nothing as enticing as a company owner who has a passion for his/her work. And that is the purpose of creating a Business Legacy.

The style and length of each Legacy may vary according to the size and age of your business, but the end result is the same – renewing your spirit – your enthusiasm. In addition, it is through this examination that new paths will be uncovered, and confidence in all the hard work and effort you have expended in the past will increase.

These new paths, you will soon discover, are the yeast that will make your business rise. They are the sparks of creativity that infuse your product or service with energy, because they serve to enliven you! And, as everyone knows, vitality is a magnet – attracting new and repeat customers.

Each Business Legacy is tailored to suit the particular needs of the individual organization, but all contain the owners' hopes, mission and spirit of their company. The final product could range from a one-page piece for a brand-new, sole proprietorship to a 100–page, bound manuscript for a larger corporation with a history of decades in the business.

A Business Legacy, beginning with essentials such as the background and photograph of each founding member, if applicable, photographs of the evolution of your storefronts or company headquarters, initial brochures, advertising campaigns and all other memorabilia, helps to cement an appreciation for what it has taken to grow and excel in your industry.

Since a Business Legacy is a document where original terms, agreements,

and initial motivations in creating the business are recorded, documenting in this way, from the start, avoids many problems. Businesses that were initiated through handshake deals, which eventually proved ineffective because family members or associates forgot the original terms, will now have a hope of surviving, now that the terms and motivations are recorded.

When demands of time and energy deplete our enthusiasm, a Business Legacy becomes a resource to consult providing a shot of adrenaline or energy into the process for you or your employees.

Having a treasure such as your Business Legacy at your fingertips will serve to supply strength during times of conflict and be a repository for the success stories that produce the profitable periods. Imagine a written record of the compliments made by satisfied customers, or a document containing comments and reactions of the change of guard as one generation retires the ledgers to the next. Insights and enlightenment enhance your business style.

Along with ensuring every possible chance for successful revenue, a Business Legacy promotes harmony. By articulating direction on issues such as inheritance rights, the importance of documenting regulations and the establishment of written policies, many disagreements can be avoided. The Business Legacy establishes guidelines that can be referenced even during times of conflict.

A sure step to successfully assembling a Business Legacy is the employment of an experienced Legacy Facilitator. Their mission is to facilitate the founders' recollection(s) of when and why they felt compelled to take the risk inherent in a business start-up and to organize all materials into a cohesive presentation.

Most importantly, the written Business Legacy facilitates the creation or renewal of a deep sense of pride for each owner of the company. A Business Legacy is a must have for success in these turbulent, yet exciting times.

NAWBO member Nancy Eckerson welcomes questions and comments. Please e-mail her at njeckerson@verizon.net or call (716) 542-6544 for information.

bits and bytes

A world not made for visually impaired...

by Renee Cerullo

Imagine waking up one Saturday morning with plans to just relax and read the newspaper. Then you pick up the paper and you can't see any words. It's just all gray. And you realize *everything* is very distorted and fuzzy. This is what happened to me this past Memorial Day weekend. I didn't think about it too much since I was recovering from gall-bladder surgery, so I just slept the weekend away. Tuesday, after the offices were back open, I went to "see" my eye doctor. I did start worrying when they were doing a lot of huddling and talking about me. It turned out that I'd had a reaction to a medication and fluid built up in my eyes. This caused my vision to be severely degraded.

This experience was, to say the least, "eye

opening." I thought I'd share what I experienced so people can realize what the visually impaired go through 24/7 while trying to function in society. I work with technology on a daily basis and I was very shocked at what I had to deal with until my vision came back. In a world driven by technology not much thought has been put into making sure it is usable by *all*.

iPhone/iTouch

This device was not completely unusable. I could use my iTouch to read e-mail and the web more easily than other devices because I could enlarge it but that is where it stopped. There's no way to increase the font size on the iTouch itself so

the buttons could not be made bigger. Also I found that most applications were not accessible. I was shocked to see that the Facebook app had no accessibility features, making it completely unusable. The next app I tried was ABC News: Even this big news agency was not accessible. I'm surprised big corporations like these can get away with not having their applications meeting the U.S. Section 508 Accessibility guidelines. These devices could not be used by a visually-impaired person. My smartphone was just as bad. There was nothing I could do on it to increase the font size. My phone was useless. I couldn't make calls on it; the keypad is small to begin with so I wasn't even able to dial a
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NAWBO Buffalo Niagara

2010/2011 board

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Laurie Albertsson 694-9302 laurie@fernwoodcapital.com

President-Elect

Dottie Austin 632-7663 Daustin@cpibn.com

Immediate Past President

Nicole Fiorella 565-1944 nicole@fiorellasearchgroup.com

Secretary

Donna Scalfaro 632-0165 donna@carpetcareservices.net

Directors:

Barbara Crouthamel 745-5043 barbara@lovinmybags.com

Joyce DeLong 634-5966 jdinsty@roadrunner.com

Nancy DeTine 207-7374 nancy@nancydetine.com

Celeste DiStefano 310-5274 cmdistefano@verizon.net

Pat Gillen 855-1111 pgillen@dhpqlaw.com

Barbara Oliver 204-1297 jeweler@Barbaraoliverandco.com

Carolyn Valenti 204-9000 cvalenti@lvbwcpa.com

Sharada Varanasi 206-1504 Varanasi@hcswny.com

Chapter Administrator

Jeanne Hellert 238-2461 jhellert@roadrunner.com

2010/2011 committees

Communications

Katharine Smith 839-3696 whiterabbitdesign@roadrunner.com

Corporate & Economic Development

Leanne Oldenbrook 864-1194 crescmnyoga@yahoo.com

Fundraising

Barbara Maira 634-5353 barbaram@lisahunterjewelry.com

Lisa Taravella 932-3966 taravellamktg@mindspring.com

Governance

Pat Potts 892-3290 pat@harbisonbros.com

Membership

Katie Clark 832-0138 katie@midcityoffice.com

Patty Zimmerman 695-5566 pzimmerman@kisinvestments.com

Nominations


Nicole Fiorella 626-5520 nicole@fiorellasearchgroup.com

Program

Dottie Austin 632-7663 Daustin@cpibn.com

Scholarship

Victoria D'Angelo 250-2850 vdangelo@jaeckle.com



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Laurie Albertsson
p 716.694.9302 ext. 15
laurie@fernwoodcapital.com



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www.nawbowny.org calendar

Did you know the NAWBO Buffalo Niagara Web site will list YOUR business events in the chapter's calendar? Having a sale? Are you having an open house? Is a charity or community group you're involved with having a special event or fundraiser? E-mail the details of your upcoming event to Renee Cerullo at cerullo@rcomputing.com for inclusion in NAWBO's online calendar.

Make Your OWN Tax Break in 2010

by Laurie Albertsson

Congress extends the amount that small businesses may write-off for capital expenditures: \$250,000!

Business Equipment

Business owners who acquire equipment for their business: machinery, computers, and other tangible goods, usually prefer to deduct the cost in a single tax year, rather than a little at a time over a number of years. This deduction is known by its section in the tax code, a Section 179 deduction.

Under Section 179, businesses that spend less than \$530,000 a year on qualified equipment, may write-off up to \$250,000 in 2010. The rules are designed for small companies, so the \$250,000 deduction phases out when a business purchases more than \$800,000 in one year. (Companies cannot write off more than their taxable income).

Benefits of a Non-Tax/Capital Lease

The benefit of a Non-Tax/Capital Lease is that it can take advantage of Section 179: expense up to \$250,000 if the equipment is put in use in 2010. In addition, you may depreciate any excess on the depreciation schedule for that asset. Examples of Non-Tax/Capital Leases include a \$1.00 Buyout Lease, an Equipment Finance Agreement (EFA), and a 10% Purchase Upon Termination (PUT) Lease. Example: Assume you finance business equipment, put it in use in 2010, and take advantage of Section 179. Your tax savings could be significant:

Equipment Cost Example: \$300,000

1st Year Write Off: **\$250,000**
 (\$250,000 is the maximum Section 179 write-off in 2010)

50% Bonus Depreciation **\$25,000**
 (On remaining value: $300,000 - 250,000 = 50,000$;
 $50,000 \times 50\% = 25,000$)

Normal 1st Year Depreciation: **\$5,000**
 (Depreciation calculated at 5 years = 20%; $25,000 \times 20\% = 5,000$)

Total 1st Year Deduction: **\$280,000**
 ($250,000 + 25,000 + 5,000 = 280,000$)

Tax Savings Assuming Rate of 35%: **\$98,000**
 ($280,000 \times .35 = 98,000$)

1st Year Net Cost after Tax Savings: **\$202,000**
 ($300,000 - 98,000 = 202,000$)

NOTE: For complete details, or changes to the tax incentives, please visit www.irs.gov or contact the IRS helpline at: 800-829-4933.

Tax Code Section 179 and Election to Expense Detail

The election, which is made on Form 4562, is for the tax year the property was placed in service or an amended return filed within the time prescribed by law. The total cost of property that may be expensed for any tax year cannot exceed the total amount of taxable income during the tax year. Section 179 property is property that you acquire by purchase for use in the active conduct of your business. To ensure property qualifies, reference Publication 946.

This expense deduction is provided for taxpayers (other than estates, trusts or certain non-corporate lessors) who elect to treat the cost of qualifying property as an expense rather than a capital expenditure. Under Section 179, equipment purchases, up to the amount approved for a given year, can be expensed (deducted from taxable income) if installed by December 31st. Non-Tax leases qualify for this deduction in their year of inception. Any excess above the expensed amount can be depreciated depending on the equipment type. Not all states follow federal law. Contact your tax advisor for further detail or visit www.irs.gov for specific detail.

Tax/True Lease Benefits

If a lease is a Tax Lease/True Lease, the lessor retains ownership and you, as the lessee, may be allowed to claim the entire amount of the monthly investment as a tax deduction. Many rental contracts qualify as a true lease including a 10% Option and a Fair Market Value Lease.

Example Calculation: Assume that you have a Tax/True Lease with a \$1,000 monthly payment, the below tax savings that may be available:

Example:
 Monthly investment = \$ 1,000
 Finance Term = 36 months
 Tax bracket = 35%
 Monthly tax savings = $1,000 \times .35 = 350.00$
 Total tax savings over the term of the contract = \$12,600.00

Act Now!

To take advantage of the incentives and the substantial tax savings, your business equipment must be put in use by year-end. Please contact your tax advisor to learn about the specific impact to your business.

Interested in learning more? Contact Laurie Albertsson at Fernwood Capital: laurie@fernwoodcapital.com or 694-9302.

A world not made for visually impaired...

number on it.

Computers

Trying to make my laptop/desktop usable was a challenge. Windows® has many accessibility features built in and most work really well. I first needed to increase my font size so I could actually see it. On my desktop that was no problem since I had the option of 200% (and that which worked for me!). Unfortunately, my laptop did not have that option. I had to really hunt around to find the advanced display options. This allowed me to read my e-mail and use the Microsoft® Office products.

I found out that not all software uses the operating system settings. I needed to use QuickBooks® to do some invoicing. The interface had increased in font size but the screens became unusable. The buttons were off the screen and could not be clicked. The program was not usable until the font size was decreased. Even my label maker program would not open because it said the screen resolution was too low.

Web browsers had their menus bigger but the actually Web sites were still the same small font sizes. Every Web site I went to I had to manually increase the font sizes. Most Web sites have absolutely no accessibility features built into them. Developers tend to take for granted that everyone else sees the way they do. They forget to add those font size buttons on their Web sites or even the contrast changing buttons. Simple things like adding these buttons make a person's life so much easier. I know I will never forget or let a client pass on that again.

Skype is another program commonly used by businesses these days. This program has no way to increase the font size. In my company I use this application all the time to communicate with my employees. I couldn't see any messages I was being sent. I had to ask everyone to use e-mail until I could see again. In my opinion that is just unacceptable.

Everyday tasks

You don't think of all the little things that you do in a day that a visually-impaired person will find difficult to navigate. Reading a bank statement and balancing the books was an impossible task. My mother had to come over and read the statement to me. I had to buy a bridal shower gift and I had to use one of the swipe credit card machines. There is no standardization among those credit card machines; many have different buttons to press and the keys are in a different order. I was able to my computer work because I've memorized the icons and where things are.

One thing I never thought of before was going out to eat and reading a menu. How many restaurants do you know that have large print menus. Not many. Even watching my niece, who is two months old, proved to be difficult. I could not see the lines or numbers on her bottle. My sister put tape on the bottles so I knew when to stop filling them. I know many visually-impaired people have kids. Why do those numbers need to be so small?

Not having my sight made me completely dependent on others to drive me places and do to simple daily tasks. I'm now *much* more aware of what a visually impaired person goes through and just how hard it is for them to be independent. Boy, I give them a lot of credit for coping in a world that is not very user friendly.

On another note, as a small business owner this proved to be the most difficult logistical nightmare I've ever experienced. I could answer e-mails and that was about it. It started me thinking about what might have happened if I didn't have an amazing employee who stepped up and handled everything. How do small business owners handle medical emergencies when they are the business owner and run day-to-day operations? This is one to ponder . . .

Contact Chapter member and Web developer, Renee Cerullo at Cerullo@RLComputing.com or RLComputing.com. Renee has since recovered and looks forward to "seeing" her fellow NAWBO members!

Six Marketing Plan Essentials for Small Businesses

Continued from page 7

stimulate repeat purchases, cross selling of other products and services and referrals. Use every opportunity to educate existing customers about your company and what you offer. Use product labels and inserts to invite feedback, drive customers to a Web site and reinforce company philosophy and customer commitment.

Offer incentives to customers who purchase one product or service to buy others through coupons and incentives. Make it easy for customers to share information with coworkers and friends through e-mails, newsletters and other marketing communications they will want to share.

6. Choose the right channels. Part of your marketing strategy includes how to most effectively – and cost effectively – reach targeted customers and prospects. New developments in information and communication technology have created numerous new channels. One example is database marketing, which enables businesses to target market segments as well as individual customers. Although traditionally done via direct mail, database marketing now includes a wide range of media: mail, telephone, personal selling, coupons and e-mail.

Also consider new media for reaching potential consumers quickly and inexpensively. Your marketing strategy might include interactive cable TV, electronic brochures, CDs, blogs, Web sites, e-mail campaigns, Webcasts and podcasts.

Remember that marketing is a process: Listen to the marketplace. Refine your products and services to meet changing needs. And, you'll attract customers' attention.

NAWBO member Joyce DeLong is the owner of InstyPrints. Joyce has been helping businesses develop print communications and other promotional tools for more than 25 years. She consults with businesses and organizations about their strategic marketing initiatives. Contact her at jdinsty@roadrunner.com or 634-5966. Visit the company's Web site at www.instycheektowaga.com.

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SPECS:

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articles

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DON'T MISS OUR SEPTEMBER 8th MEETING!

From the County Clerk's Office: Trends in Erie County
for Small Business and How We Can Help You

Kathy Hochul, Erie County Clerk, will discuss current trends in small business and the County Clerk's Office. Signing ceremony with Laurie Albertsson, president of NAWBO Buffalo Niagara and Melinda Rath Sanderson, executive director of Canisius College Women's Business Center; demonstrating organizations' joint commitment to support and advance issues impacting women entrepreneurs.

Sean Patrick's Restaurant • 3480 Millersport Hgwy • Getzville, NY
5:30 p.m. networking • 6:00 p.m. dinner • \$30 Member/\$35 Guest

Register online at www.nawbowny.org.

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