



**County of Simcoe**  
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## MINUTES

**SUBJECT:** Local Immigration Partnership Business Development Sub-Council

**MEETING DATE:** November 29, 2012 **TIME:** 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Simcoe County Administration Centre, 1110 Highway 26, Midhurst, ON  
Oro Medonte Severn Board Room

**CHAIR:** C. Oosterbaan (County of Simcoe)

**ATTENDANCE:** C. Benedetti, A. Dorsey, N. Gavarre, K. Hurst (Scribe), S. Laycock, S. Lee, I. Pozgaj, R. Wisken.

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1. Welcome and Introduction  
The meeting was called to order by C. Oosterbaan at 1:42 PM. Introductions were made for those present.
2. Review of Notes of Meeting of November 2, 2012  
Approval of the minutes, circulated electronically, is deferred until the January meeting.
3. Portal Update  
I. Pozgaj reviewed highlights of a recent meeting in Chatham Kent with Provincial MIIO partners, and provided a 2 page handout summarizing information from their research on various 'Doing Business' pages.

Highlights and findings are listed on the handout (headings, subheadings, and key information) and discussion/questions followed:

- Many sites have launched, some continue to develop content
- Portal can be used to promote business in our community – especially if information is made specific to their area and non-generic
- Include links for direct information – adds value, low maintenance
- Ensure easy navigation
- Provide local labour market information for skilled workers, employers, investors
- Back up statements with measurables: statistics, articles, trends
- Northwestern Ontario used a static main banner and columns – see diagram on p. 2
- Translation title tabs would be a positive feature
- “I Am A...” menu helps direct visitors within the site and page
- Investment prospects constantly change - real-time, sector-specific information for investment is a bonus; Chatham Kent is developing a business opportunities website and creating a link to it; an idea that has merit, and includes property description, photos, business partnership opportunities, etc.
- Upgrades, updates, and monitoring of content can be managed by LIP – though we rely on partners to identify existing content that must be edited, and any additional content to include
- At the March 2013 launch, begin with basic, valuable information, and refine it with further input (from Chambers of Commerce, etc.) as we go
- Sub-Council to forward ideas, progression, enhancements to come
- Consider developing an initiative that facilitates business purchase and activities, business contacts, and mentoring into the community, even as a referral to other sites; ensure option for anonymity in a business sale, with attributes, but not full disclosure; capacity may limit our ability to do matching on other than an informal basis

- Performance metrics (identifying how browsers enter and move through the site - analytics of navigation, unique visitors, length of time they remain) will help us to differentiate content; ensure the site will be competitive with other communities
- Is there value in modifying existing content from other sites, rather than developing all new content?
- Consider what should be 'standard' on the site; build from there
- Focus group might provide further insight into site use - who is our target group, what are the barriers, do they understand the terminology, does the structure and content make sense to them as well as us; survey will also help to identify information that is not considered relevant
- Video could be incorporated, i.e. highlights of an immigrant entrepreneur, virtual tours

Action: Sub Council members are requested to send additional ideas (for headings, content, links, other templates to use) to irena.pozgaj@simcoe.ca prior to the January 17 meeting.

I. Pozgaj departed the meeting at 2:10 PM, immediately following this presentation.

#### 4. Survey on Newcomer Entrepreneurs

R. Wisken reviewed the handout, which included:

- i) preamble - the survey's purpose, objectives, methodology, formatting, dissemination plan; and
- ii) draft questions.

Comments and input were summarized in edits made, real-time, on-screen.

Considerations:

- Are there existing support networks and business resources that we might not know about, here or abroad?
- Location of business? (Provides a sense of areas developed, marketing gaps, challenges of language, culture, what is attractive.)
- French/English vs. business language used; include a preamble: Canada has two official languages – E/F. Use census language – 'no knowledge, very little knowledge'. Provide context. 'Comfortable' is a wrong term; substitute 'Understanding of'. Refer to/mirror Stats Canada wording – they spend a lot of time getting it right in terms of phrasing. Split it out into English, then French. What language are they using as the primary language? Follow with what their knowledge is of E/F. Do you use your home language in your business? With suppliers, versus customers? We're asking, to understand if language is a benefit or opportunity, vs. barrier. Or if it even has relevance. Do they operate in their native tongue? 'Do you need knowledge of one of the official languages to offer your business?' can be asked. Nothing prevents us from following up for more information or context after the fact.
- Questionnaire is for people already here, or in process of starting a business here.
- Check also for length of time in Canada. Is it pre-arrival information? Census Canada uses 5 year chunks of time. If they've been here 15 years, when did they start their business, or immigrate to Canada? Provides context to interpret the information.
- Field trained in? Education and work experience could be different.
- Re-order the questions in terms of chronology (following a natural timeline) and number the questions, i.e. what did you do, what were you thinking, what have you done?
- Add: if not, why not? If business is not related to experience (provide examples: credentials, upgrading, couldn't get certified, equivalency, letters of permission, capital, equipment, etc.) or leave it mostly open-ended. Add the word, 'other'? Word it in a way that's more understandable. If not, why did you not utilize your training, etc.?
- How familiar were you with Canadian business practices? Scale this question and ask for other details. We want to know where their knowledge came from. Family members, internet research, websites, print, voice, media, other: subways, billboards, consulates, private organizations, investor groups, federal/provincial ministries, educational institutions.
- C. Oosterbaan to make inquiries per Jason Kenny's announcement – how do they track it? Education institutions, international students. International studies programs – going into student body in a welcoming way – explaining public transit, providing tours for international students. Georgian College's entrepreneur centre.
- First Business ever owned? add 'here or abroad' or 'in Canada'?
- Investor class fast-tracking – include this information on the website. Where does the link take them? And how quick is the response? Develop this fully.
- Qualify what this means 'investor class', have a generic blurb, and job portal links, etc.
- For your Canadian business...what stage are you in. Add the lead-in words 'Canadian'.

- Is your business expanding...if not, why not?
- Careful about the number of questions.
- Take the first couple of phone surveys to polish the language of the survey.
- Barriers: this gets to the core of our survey – it will be different answers for those maintaining versus expanding business. Do a ‘what stage are you in’ and then jump to the detail questions. Starting barriers, versus purchasing or maintaining barriers.
- Consider managing customer relationships (think: global, internet marketplace).
- Change ‘red tape’ – to rules & regulations.
- Remove ‘too few programs’ - the line that’s highlighted.
- Don’t make the survey too long or complicated. Make the survey so that they can return to it.
- Don’t discard an incomplete survey. All information is valuable.
- Don’t feel we have to consider all permutations. Make the barriers list chronological in terms of business development.
- Expand on funding question: i.e. finding, understanding, accessing, and applying for financial assistance (capital, venture, grants, loans). Refine this further.
- Soft launch will provide opportunities to polish language.
- Mary Armstrong (Barrie Chamber of Commerce), and the Orillia and South Simcoe Chambers may be able to help us identify new business owner contact names.
- Featured in a recent Ontario Library Newsletter and shared by A. Dorsey – ‘Ottawa hosts a newcomer business session’. Event partners were business groups. An idea to pursue.
- Response rate. Can it be subbed out from primary respondents too?
- LIP has stipend funds for incentives, etc. - can it be used to build an event, or for honorariums to newcomers? If 20% is expected, and a good return, how many surveys do we have to send out initially?
- Communicate to focus group participants that we provide refreshments, and reimburse travel costs, in the interest of enhancing numbers/turnout/value/networking.
- After the survey a facilitator could drill down on specifics.
- Ask Chambers if there is an existing base for focus group - be part of a panel. Might elicit other/additional information we might not have anticipated.
- Centrally locate the event – it’s not feasible to offer it in all areas. 1/3 of newcomers in Simcoe County are living in Barrie. Rely on word of mouth spread.
- Conduct phone survey first. Set some targets. Envision, to start – pilot telephone interviews. Build momentum. Ask ‘would you be interested in being part of a larger focus group/meeting?’. ‘Is there something you’d like to tell us that we haven’t covered?’  
This will provide valuable anecdotal information.
- This form will be a question guide for the telephone calls, and personal visits.

Action: C.Oosterbaan and R. Wisken to go through revisions, make edits, re-circulate to entire group with changes, using the reviewing toolbar and track changes.

5. Immigrant Directory – “Starting Your Own Business”

Defer discussion and approval of this working draft to January’s meeting. The Employment Sub-Council assisted with the document preparation, and is asking for a final review.

Action: R. Wisken will send electronically for review prior to January’s meeting.

6. Succession Planning – deferred to January’s meeting.

7. Other Business – no other business was raised.

8. Next Meetings

Successive meetings will be booked monthly, R. Wisken to circulate the next three meeting invites for: Thursday, January 17th, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM, Thursday, February 14th, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM, and Thursday, March 7th, 10:00 AM -12:00 PM.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned @ 3:48 PM.

An Action Items List was prepared and circulated in December, post meeting.