



MARCH 2009

Focus your business in 2009

Here is a workshop you won't want to miss!

Improve your sales culture with the **5 Minute Sales Strategy** workshop.

The workshop covers:

Your organisation's values.

What are you really selling?

What are the characteristics of professional sales people?

What are the laws of selling?

What are the greatest secrets to increased productivity?

A universal strategy to link the "back room to the front room" and three ways to grow your business and some useful strategies to get the most out of everything you've got.

The workshop is presented by Trevor Marchant of Freeman Road. Trevor and his partner Eve Dallas are rated in the top ten businesses and marketing consultants in Australia by an independent survey.

To be run on 18 March 2009

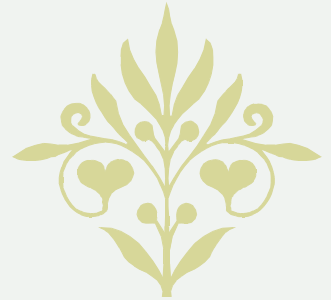
2pm – 5pm

Cost is \$137.50 pp for the workshop, GST inclusive.

Refer attached file for details

Welcome to new members:

- NHH Consulting
- RHM Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd



Inside this issue:

Employee of the Year

It is now time to cast your vote for the Employee of the Year.

The monthly winners have been:

September
Kylie Byron
Noah's in the Valley

October
Janet Thompson
Phillippe Brasserie

November
Leanne Goldthorpe
Big W

December
Tim Robinson
Auto One

January
Katrina Pang Cum
Ryan's Newsagency

February
Nerchar Fleming
Glossy Locks

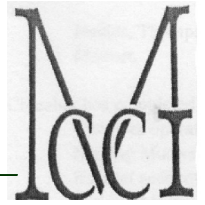
Voting forms will appear in the Muswellbrook Chronicle over the next two weeks so

please get your vote in before it is too late.

Good luck to all the contenders!



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Industrial Relations and Human Resources Workshops

Over the next six months the NSW Dept of Commerce, Office of Industrial Relations will be holding a series of workshops to assist employers of staff in New South Wales.

The first workshop on 26 March is free and covers Industrial Relations in NSW. It is important that you understand current industrial relations legislation and how this affects your business whether you are covered by state or federal law. Do you understand the changes proposed under Forward with Fairness? Do you

have questions about legislated employee entitlements such as parental leave, long service leave, award entitlements?

The workshop will be regularly updated throughout the year as additional Forward with Fairness information becomes available.

This workshop will help you:

- ✓ Understand the employment laws that apply to you
- ✓ Understand the changes under federal industrial relations law

✓ Provide you with details of obligations in relation to employment records, payslips and award entitlements

✓ Understand various leave entitlements

✓ Know where to go for further information and assistance

Duration 3 hours

To register phone 131 628, Extension 4612

Email win@oir.commerce.nsw.gov.au

Chamber Breakfasts

March—Tuesday 3, 7.00 am hosted by Abigroup at 11 Blakefield Road, Muswellbrook.

This breakfast is being provided free of charge by Abigroup but proceeds collected will be donated to the Victoria bush fire victims through the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation for distribution to various welfare organizations.

April—Tuesday 7 April 2009—hosted by 12/16 Hunter River Lancers at the Chauvel Training Depot, 8 Francis Street, Muswellbrook, 7.00 am.

The topic for the breakfast will be the financial benefits of employing an Army Reservist. There will be an opportunity to inspect the latest Bushmaster Armoured Vehicle—and take a ride!

May—Tuesday 5 May, 2009 - our guest speaker is expected to be Bob Otjen from Queensland Hunter Gas Pipeline with the latest news on the venture.

Stop Press....

It helps to have the Best Connections....

www.bylongvalleyway.com

...Connecting Australia's Best !!!

The new website will be live on the internet in the Next couple of months.

GREAT NEWS

The beautiful Bylong Valley Way is now fully sealed

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Back to Business Basics

Sometimes it pays to change your business for the sake of change. At other times, you have to change your business because the market tells you to. If you don't change, you're dead.

Market forces worldwide are causing a whirlwind of creative destruction for businesses and their owners. The question is, how will you react to our current economic circumstances, and how can you make the money you'll need to survive?

First you must realize that the needs of your customers and your market are different to those needs a year ago—or even six months ago.

You will have to adapt to those different needs and change your business in the direction of meeting those needs in order to survive. The new vision for your business should be highly focused and scaled to what your customers truly want. In these times, success won't necessarily be based on what you want to offer, but rather what the market is telling you to offer.

You will also need to put an extreme focus on profitability. This may mean scaling back plans for expansion—now is not necessarily the time to overstretch.

While other companies will use the next boom to chase after any market or sell any product—your efforts now to pare down and narrow your focus will keep you from making the same mistakes in the future.

In addition to a changed mindset and business focus, you'll need to commit to marketing at every level of your business. This doesn't mean buying high priced ads in newspapers or on TV. It means creating a marketing and sales oriented culture that runs your business—from how your team answers the phone, to how they greet customers and guide them through the sales process, to developing a solid customer data

base.

It has been discovered only about 7% of all business owners know what their breakeven is on a given day—let alone over the course of a month or year.

Do you know yours? Isn't it time you found out?

Focus, marketing mastery and numbers mastery will be crucial if you want to ride out this downturn. Put another way—it's not your competition that is forcing the game this time. It's the market.

You simply cannot run a successful company without profit and without systemized ways to grow your customer base and keep them coming back.

Leverage, as many companies have brutally discovered, is great when the economic tide is rising and lifts all boats.

In a downturn, the squeeze of debt on business cash flow and overstretched operations can be ruinous.

The upside of all of this is that right now the world's economic stage is being set for the next big boom. When will it happen? Who knows?

The point is that now is the time to get your own basics right so when the economic recovery hits full swing, you'll be ready to capture even greater profits and success. So start now and take the next few days to develop a new vision and plan for your company—based on what your customers, and the market is telling you.

That feedback could be the foundation for some of the best (and most profitable) decisions you could ever make for your business.

Source: My Business, February 2009 from the article by Brad Sugars.

Ludicrous Laws

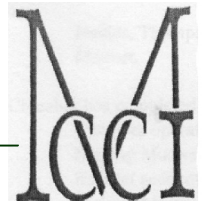
Under the UK's Tax Avoidance Schemes Regulations 2006, it is illegal not to tell the taxman anything you don't want him to know, although you don't have to tell him anything you don't mind him knowing.

Since this law came in to being in 2006, the Office of HM Revenue & Customs has brought over 27,000 cases to court of people and companies not telling the HM Revenue & Customs, something that they did not want the Office of HM Revenue & Customs to know.

So far only three cases have been completed. ALL three were dismissed.

In Vermont, women must obtain written permission from their husbands to wear false teeth.

In Kentucky, it is illegal to carry a concealed weapon more than six-feet long.



New IR Laws will need careful attention

The change from 'Work Choices' to 'Fair Work' (the new system will be in two stages. The first stage is scheduled to begin on 1 July 2009, which includes the reintroduction of strong unfair dismissal laws, including the abolition of exemptions for small and medium businesses that have less than 100 employees.

Small businesses will also be made to adhere to a 'Fair Dismissal Code', which includes a delicately worded checklist. This also sees the introduction of 'Good Faith Bargaining' which is a potential significant risk to all businesses whether they have one or one hundred employees who are members of a trade union.

The first stage also sees the abolition of Australian Industrial Relations Commission, Australian Fair Pay Commission, Workplace Authority and Workplace Ombudsman. These will be replaced with a one-stop-shop with the aim of performing all these functions as a super-body.

The second wave of change is scheduled to commence on 1 January 2010 and includes:

- New 'National Employment Standards' (NES), which includes the statutory right to redundancy pay for all employees (although there may be some exemptions)
- A statutory right to 'family friendly provisions', including two years unpaid maternity leave
- 'Modern Awards' which will impact virtually every employment contract and agreement that employers and employees have agreed to.

Unfair Dismissal is back across the board.

'WorkChoices' exemptions are gone including the exemption to small and medium businesses with fewer than 100 employees. Businesses with 14 employees or less (including casuals)

will have a 12 month qualifying period in which they can dismiss employees free from unfair dismissal, while those with 15 and over have 6 months.

Small businesses will have to adhere to the 'Fair Dismissal Code' - a checklist in which employers will be required to tick all the boxes in order for the dismissal to be deemed fair should it fall outside the qualifying period.

If employers act in good faith in ignorance of changes and/or technical definitions, they will be subject to a range of penalties, including reinstating the employee and paying damages. Employers should consider using independent workplace investigators as an independent party as a buffer in the process to increase the likelihood of proving the decision to dismiss as correct beyond the balance of probabilities.

Policies will need to be developed as a watertight legal platform from which you can manage the process of unfair dismissal claims.

The practical implications of the increased risk means businesses will have to strategise with an Industrial Relations/Employment Law specialist in conjunction with their accountant on assessing their workforce prior to May 2009. Of concern is that businesses with 15 employees or more (including casual employees) will be regarded in law as the same as a multi-billion dollar conglomerate with any army of IR and employment law professionals.

Source: My Business, February 2009

Martial Arts & Health day

Saturday 21st March 2009

At Muswellbrook Uniting Church
110-112 Bridge St
(next to Holden Dealer)



- 8:00 am Christian Chi Gung
- 8:20 am Kung Fu
- 9:30 am Breakfast
- 10:30 am Stretch for health (Yoga)
- 11:30 am Mixed Martial Arts
- 12:20 pm Christian meditation
- 12:40 pm Lunch

Instruction by

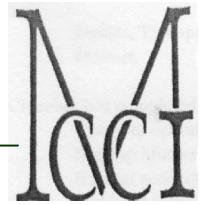
Rod Eadie
Ken Hargreaves
Harry Ford

Begin a life changing experience with some of the finest instruction. Learn techniques to relax the mind and body and how meditation can improve overall health. Try some of the most proven strategies for healthy weight reduction and get into peak physical fitness through the use of Martial Arts, stretching & breathing. Learn Kung Fu and stretching forms that will improve health and self-defence and develop skills to enhance your work-outs and eating patterns. Register before 18th March to book your place as numbers are limited.

Register now! \$80 for the day includes breakfast & lunch
Early bird deal \$60 if you book before Friday 13th March
Family deals can be arranged
Phone: 02 6543 3592

Sponsored by
The Australian Tenshu Association
Dragon & Tiger Kung Fu Academy
Stretch For Health





Press Release—2009 Bylong Mouse Races

The 21st Annual Bylong Mouse Races will be on **Saturday March 28th**. The Bylong Hall Committee Inc presents this annual event that has attracted visitors from all over the countryside and last year we are proud to announce that the **BYLONG MOUSE RACES** were awarded "**Community Event of The Year**" at the 2008 Mid Western Regional Council Australia Day Awards ceremony.

Get a mouse.....ring now on 02 6379 8252 to get your mouse for the big day only 80 mice available with limit 2 per family cost \$10/mouse must be paid before the day

Mouse Race Day

Gates open at 10 am, first race is at 11 am and the day winds up at 7 pm due to liquor licensing regulations. The Day consists of an 11-race program and all mice are provided for the day's racing and trained for this championship event, the races include ten heats, followed by the Bylong Cup to decide the champion mouse of the day.

Entry fee is only \$3 per person and kids under 12 years free.

Buses available from Muswellbrook, Denman & Sandy Hollow : cost \$15 per head phone Cowans 02 6547 4416 now to get on the bus.

The day is fun filled for all ages. The kid's tent operates all day with show bags, lucky dips, tattoos & their famous cake stall. For the adults there are also great opportunities to walk away with prizes from the raffle, chocolate wheel draw or have a bet with the bookies.... A BBQ and full bar facilities will operate all day. **We guarantee you won't have eaten a better steak sandwich!**

Other attractions on the day include : background music, Pooka the clown with magic show, auction, Calcutta, guess the weight, jumping castle and a mechanical bull ride for all ages.

This year also sees the running of the **5th Annual Ute Show**, with prizes to be won in the following categories; Best Ford, Holden, 4x4, B&S, Chicks, Work, Most Feral, Loudest, Best Pig Rig and Champion Ute of The Show. Judging starts at 12 noon.

Ute Show entry fee is \$20 & includes entry to the Mouse Races.

All money raised on the day is distributed to charities throughout the local area. Our community is proud to boast that over \$240,000 has been distributed since the inception 20 years ago. Bylong is nestled in the mountains of the Great Dividing Range, surrounded by the Wollemi and Goulburn River National Parks. Bylong is 77kms north east of Mudgee, 100kms west of Muswellbrook and an easy and scenic 3.5 hr drive from Sydney.

For a wonderful day of fun filled entertainment at a very unique event, don't forget the
2009 Bylong Mouse Races on March 28th.

STRICTLY NO CATS ALLOWED

All enquires please contact 6379 8252 or 6379 8246



Dates for the Diary

3 March	Breakfast—hosted by Abigroup at 11 Blakefield Road, 7.00 am. Proceeds from breakfast will be donated to the (Melbourne) Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund in aid of victims of Victorian bush fires.
4 March	Muswellbrook Women's Network Dinner at Noah's in the Valley, 6.30 for 7.00 pm. Members of Toastmasters will entertain.
6 March	Chamber Board Meeting
9 March	Breakfast for international Women's Day at Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, 7.00 am, \$15.00. Guest Speakers—Jan & Sadie from Carrie's Place, Maitland and member of the Choir or No More Knocks. RSVP to Dion 6543 1913, by 4 March
14 March	Help Holly Cocktail Evening—Muswellbrook RSL A great night of entertainment is planned with a massive charity auction. Live entertainment, finger food and champagne on arrival. Tickets are \$50 each and can be obtained from Colonial Classic Salon in Muswellbrook (6541 1663) or Denman Lions Club (Steve Carter 0428 472 549) Donations can also be made into a special account at St George Bank—Help Holly—112-879 4910 43282
18 March	Focus your business in 2009— <i>see attached for details</i>
21 March	Martial Arts and Health Day— <i>see page 6</i>
26 March	Office of Industrial Relations workshop—Industrial relations in NSW. 9.00 am–12.00 noon. at Muswellbrook & District Workers' Club
27-28 March	Upper Hunter Show—full details www.upperhuntershow.com.au
28 March	2009 Bylong Mouse Races—for information contact 6379 8252 or 6379 8246
28 March	Earth hour
4 April	Muswellbrook Business Awards, Muswellbrook RSL. 6.30 pm
14 May	Office of Industrial Relations workshop—Recruitment and Retention 9.00 am to 1.00 pm at Muswellbrook & District Workers' Club. Cost \$99

\$17 M Centre to boost creative industries

A \$17 million Creative Industries Innovation Centre will provide free hands-on assistance to small and medium businesses in the creative sector to boost their productivity and realise their potential for wealth and job creation. The national centre, hosted by the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), was launched on Tuesday 17 February by Innovation Minister, Senator Kim Carr, and Arts Minister, Peter Garrett.

The centre is one of six Innovation Centres funded under the Government's \$271 million Enterprise Connect initiative. Other centres focus on sectors such as clean-energy, mining and remote enterprises. While the centre is based at UTS' Sydney city campus, it will have a national focus on industries including design, publishing, writing, architecture, visual arts, television, radio, advertising, performing arts, music and interactive entertainment. Services are provided Australia-wide through UTS' consortium partners, a national business adviser network and other Enterprise Connect centres. Each year the centre will provide up to 300 business reviews, 50 incubation services, and assist 2000 businesses through workshops, seminars and networking opportunities.

Further information: www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au

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Clubs Muswellbrook & District Workers Club Muswellbrook Race Club Ltd Muswellbrook RSL	Local Government Muswellbrook Shire Council	Security & Locksmiths Elks Security Locksmiths Muswellbrook Security
Community Services Challenge Disability Services Hunter Valley Youth Express Muswellbrook PCYC Upper Hunter Community Services Upper Hunter P & A Assoc Inc Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service	Liquor Sales Campbell's Corner Liquor Marketplace Cellars	Shopping Centres Central Arcade Pty Ltd Muswellbrook Marketplace
Computer Sales & Service NCCS Pty Ltd NHH Consulting	Media Hunter Valley News Muswellbrook Chronicle Radio Hunter Valley	Solicitors Curtis Gant Irving Halletts Solicitors Lawlers Solicitors & Conveyancers Mark Diggins Solicitor Sparke Helmore Lawyers
Construction Abigroup	Medical and Health Brook Medical Centre Curves—Muswellbrook Healthy Touch Humanomics	Steel Merchants Muswellbrook Steel Supplies P/L Surveyors Boardman & Peasley Telecommunications Telstra Country Wide Thoroughbred Horse Stud Coolmore Australia Veterinary Hospitals Muswellbrook Veterinary Hospital Wagering Muswellbrook TAB
Education Hunter TAFE Muswellbrook South Public School	Mining, Industrial, Agriculture Anglo Coal (Drayton Management) P/L Bengalla Mining Company Coal & Allied Darryl's Bobcat Pty Ltd Ecowise Environmental Pty Ltd Mt Arthur Coal Muswellbrook Coal Co Muswellbrook Crane Services Resco Open Cut Services Thomas & Coffey Xstrata-Mangoola Coal	Water Carriers K Milwain & Sons
Electrical Services Ambiance Electrical	Not for Profit Mission Australia	Web & Graphic Design Service Total e Solutions
Electricity Generation Macquarie Generation	Olive Grove Pukara Estate	Wineries Arrowfield Estate Pty Ltd Crested Butte Winery Pty Ltd
Engineering G & S Engineering RHM Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd Thomas & Coffey	Optical Aaron Henry Optometrist Muswellbrook Eyecare	
Government Services 12/16 Hunter River Lancers Centrelink	Pharmacy Berry & French Chemist Works and Sub Newsagency	
Hairdressing/Beauty Salon The Colonial Classic Salon		
Hospitality/Tourism Baybrook Motor Inn Benson's Hospital Shop Centabrook Motor Inn Comfort Inn Noah's in		