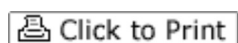


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Chamber gives tools to help struggling businesses

Organization presents 'Ask the Expert' series to members

By AMANDA LLEWELLYN
VIEW STAFF WRITER

These days, the small business owner who stays ahead of the crashing marketplace may have to do so by any means necessary. Discovering what those new means might be, well, that's the hard part.

North Las Vegas Chamber president and chief executive officer Sharon Powers said that the organization is doing a number of things to help small business members survive the ailing marketplace.

Powers said that the chamber plans to begin a series of free workshops featuring professional services and advice.

The "Ask the Expert" series will give individual members an opportunity to hold specific conversations with attorneys, certified public accountants and human resource professionals who will be on hand to answer questions pertaining to individual business practices throughout the year.

For more information, visit www.northlasvegashamber.com.

"If you're lucky enough to be operating with a profit this year, it is because you've been really smart about operations," Powers said. "Everybody is being forced to look at how they conduct business right now."

The chamber hosted a breakfast workshop at Santa Fe Station in early February, when members had the opportunity to learn about the value and methods of incorporating social media and networking sites into their marketing strategies.

"This is a step that anyone can take to promote his or her business at little or no cost," Powers said.

Cheryl Bella, chamber member and senior vice president of The Firm Public Relations and Marketing, said that social media is a great way to promote individual businesses, large and small.

"Blogging, micro-blogging, podcasts, the social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are all great resources," she said. "We use them at my company on a daily basis."

Powers said that chamber officials plan to implement three to six more free workshops for members throughout the year, most of which will be aimed at helping small businesses save money as revenues decrease.

Many of the local businesses attempting to weather this economic tempest are doing so for the first time, Powers said.

"We've been riding the success wave for so many years," she said. "Many companies have never had to change their processes to survive."

Powers said that she is not sure that the economy will ever recover to a level where businesses see operations return to the successful heights of yesteryear.

"We're a business organization," Powers said. "The chamber's goal is to help build a strong economy that will keep the business community strong."

Powers said that many of the services and information that will be offered through the workshops would not otherwise be available to owners of small businesses due to a lack of resources.

"They don't have access to these tools, so we provide those resources for them when we can."


Powers said that the majority of the seminars, the nature of which are still being discussed, will focus on methods for cutting costs and operating more efficiently.

"We are all working smarter and harder these days," Powers said. "Whatever we can do to help our members, especially those smaller businesses who are struggling, that's what we're here for."

Contact North Las Vegas and Downtown View reporter Amanda Llewellyn at allewellyn@viewnews.com or 380-4535.

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