



For Immediate Release
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Small Business BC Announces Fifth Annual Business Plan Contest

Vancouver, B.C. - Small Business BC (SBBC) kicks off its 5th Annual Business Plan Contest on Monday, September 17, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Small Business BC, 601 West Cordova St. Vancouver, B.C., (Waterfront Station).

If you are an entrepreneur or small business owner starting up or expanding a small business, don't miss this opportunity to find out more about the Business Plan Contest, network with other small business owners, and attend workshops and seminars led by local small business experts. The fee is \$49 and includes brunch.

This year's contest features two categories: businesses in the start-up phase and in operation for less than two fiscal years, and expanding businesses in operation for more than two fiscal years. The top three entrants in each category will share a prize made up of cash and in-kind donations valued at \$40,000 dollars. Small business professionals will judge the viability of entrant's business plans, financial projections and market research. Contest entry is free and open to all new and existing B.C. – based businesses.

SBBC CEO, **Tara Gilbert**, notes the contest's new and expanded format will attract more B.C. businesses looking to create or hone their business plans. "Sustainability and eco-friendly business practices are hot topics these days," points out Gilbert. "SBBC is making sure this year's contest and contest launch will be as eco-friendly as possible. We will be using 100% recycled paper for all our printed material, serving refreshments with biodegradable paper plates and cutlery, and sourcing promotional items from a local business working with ethical companies. Operationally, SBBC is looking at ways of becoming more energy and water efficient." Gilbert goes on to say that one of the charities which SBBC supports (with monies raised in-house), is Kiva , (www.kiva.org) an organization which allows people to lend money (\$25 to \$500) to entrepreneurs (mostly cottage industries) in developing countries.

It follows that one of the Contest launch's guest speakers, **Mark Stoiber** of Change Advertising, will explore sustainability branding for small businesses. Stoiber is recognized as an industry leader and has garnered many prestigious international awards from organizations such as Cannes, Eurobest, the Clios and more. Other guest speakers include Small Business BC Seminar Leader, **Bridget Field**, who will discuss the importance of motivation, attitudes, abilities and experience for the small business owner. Educator, **Bill Erichson** will examine business plans – the cornerstone of every successful business. Erichson will introduce 'Business Plan Fast Track – 7 Steps to Success' a program to guide entrepreneurs through the business start-up phase.

The deadline for business plan submissions is Noon, December 17, 2007. Judging wraps up February 15, 2008 with the successful applicants to be announced February 18, 2008. SBBC will host the 5th Annual Business Plan Contest Award Ceremony on February 26, 2008. Details regarding the time and location of the Award Ceremony will be posted on the contest website at www.bizplancontest.ca.

For **Business Plan Contest Launch** information please visit the contest's new website at www.bizplancontest.ca/calendar/events.php or call Candice Macalino at 604-775-6255.

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About Small Business BC

Small Business BC is a non-profit organization funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue. It delivers services, government programs and timely business information to communities throughout B.C. Entrepreneurs can access services and information such as: start up and expansion information; financing options and sources; registration and licensing requirements; government acts and regulations; a business library and bookstore; market research and consultation; business planning services; export consultation; business seminars and e-Business information. www.smallbusinessbc.ca