



Cottle's Professional Consulting NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 2

April, 2007

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Women Entrepreneurship

Dear Readers,

Small businesses are growing world wide, as are women owned, co-owned or operated businesses. Research shows that women from all walks of life, diverse age and ethno-cultural background embark on an entrepreneurial path. Research also shows that some women, who have been in the market place and worked at the corporate level, find a sense of achievement, job satisfaction and independence when they start their own business. Younger women are opting to developing and managing their own business to gain a sense of autonomy, creativity and economic independence.

In addition, some women who embark on a business venture have done so after retiring. Other factors that play a significant role as to why more women are becoming entrepreneurs include divorce, separation and migration. Consequently, for many women, embarking upon a business enterprise is what they turn to, to gain or regain independence and financial security. Many women entrepreneurs are able to successfully transform a craft, hobby, skill or educational expertise into viable business ventures.

Over the next few months **Cottle's Professional Consulting** will be examining these issues through our seminars, newsletter, web site and research. We invite you to participate and to provide your feedback on the topics at hand.

Sincerely,

Dr. Cheryl Cottle

Dr. Cheryl Cottle, Ed. D
Chief Consultant

Dress For Success: Tips

- * Dress professionally for all meetings or interviews
- * Wear appropriate apparel for your industry
- * Wear clothing that fit comfortably and is appropriate to your body type
- * Wear colours that compliment your complexion, hair and eye colour
- * Clothing should be made of a natural fiber. A light wool or linen will be preferable
- * A crisp, white, cotton shirt is a must have item

The Importance of Customer Service

In today's marketplace, an emphasis on customer service is becoming an important business strategy. Traditionally small businesses were operated by family members and were primarily located within the community where they lived for generations, and their customers were members of the same community. Everyone knew each other and as a result a familial approach to business was practiced. It not only facilitated social connection, but it

also fostered respect and a sense of community.

With urban expansion and migration it has meant that many communities have had a change in demographics and in turn a change in their traditional way of life, the way business was conducted has also been impacted. Customer service is no longer based upon the same level of personal conversation such as; "I heard that your uncle and his wife had a baby; how's the baby?"

Today, with communities changing, business owners and managers must find effective ways to connect with their customers and their cultural and ethnic diversities; therefore, making customer service a universal concept that requires a deeper understanding of multiple human elements. Courtesy and sensitivity will therefore go a long way in facilitating good customer service, business longevity and competitiveness.

The Impact of National and Corporate Culture on Technology

Dr. Cheryl Cottle

The national and corporate culture intersects to affect the capacity of an organization to absorb computer technology.

Research shows that culture plays an important role in technology innovation and use. Some societies are both producers and consumers of technology, whereas others are chiefly consumers who at the same time foster innovation and production.

Culture is of great significance to how technology is created and used. In this regard, both the national culture and the corporate culture play an equal role in how technology becomes infused within an organization and ultimately the society as a whole. In addition, research also shows that culture can be viewed as homogeneous and heterogeneous. A society with a homogeneous culture is comprised chiefly of individuals of the same racial and ethnic group, as well as socio-economic background who share the same ideology.

In contrast, a society that is heterogeneous is comprised of diverse individuals, and is regarded as multi-cultural or plural societies. Japan for example is one such society that is regarded as a homogeneous society, and has shown that they are both producers and consumers of technology. The United States of America on the other hand is regarded as a heterogeneous society. In spite of that they have been able to compete in the global market place as innovators and consumers of technology.

Further, research shows that societies that are heterogeneous are still able to successfully utilize technology to facilitate the operation of their business, increase productivity, and increase their

presence in the global market place. They are able to achieve such success because they have adopted cultural practices of homogeneous societies to make it possible. Some of the homogeneous practices include collaborative knowledge building and collaborative decision-making. These practices have been adopted and utilized by management in the successful implementation of computer technology within organizations. Although a common ideology may not exist, nationalism and patriotism seem to foster the climate to facilitate the successful implementation of computer technology at the organizational level.

The national culture as noted above does play a significant role in how computer technology becomes infused within a heterogeneous society. National culture, political ideology, and education are significant in how technology is used and applied. The political ideology is able to lay the foundation for the creation of nation-building and national solidarity in spite of the lack of an inherent collective ideology. The leaders' vision for nation-building is also a keystone for germinating national awareness, and thus changing the perception of the populace, in spite of its heterogeneous composition.

... Education also fosters a change in how people think and perceive new ideas ...

Education also fosters a change in how people think and perceive new ideas and changes within their environment. In some heterogeneous societies a great deal of emphasis is placed upon education. Education is seen as a prime agent for change and development, and it is given major priority within the economic development plan. Education is regarded as the foundation of social, economical and technological development. The government's allocation of funding

to education is often substantial to ensure that early childhood to tertiary education is developed and accessible.



Emphasis is also placed upon adult learning, business development, and technology training. Development and training are integral to the government's development plan, which spirals downwards to the citizens of the given society, which in turn have an impact and a transforming effect.

Social-incentive programs implemented by the government also play a significant role in how technology becomes diffused within a heterogeneous society. In my research on the implementation of computer technology, the organizations that formed a part of my case study were located within heterogeneous societies. Yet, there was evidence that they had successfully introduced technology within the workplace.

As an expert in the area of computer technology, I will like to suggest some working strategies that can facilitate the successful implementation of computer technology adoption. Such strategies include a change in management style and a change in the management structure of an organization.

ccottle@drcottle.com
www.drcottle.com

Managing Change

Businesses and organizations have to undergo some level of change to grow. In today's economy, computer based technologies have become a part of that growth and are significant for businesses to enhance their business practices, develop human resources, increase productivity, and gain a competitive edge in the market place.

Research shows that many organizations and businesses have had difficulties when implementing a new system. Regardless of the level of change, often management experience problems with employees and customers, which in turn, inhibit their efforts to successfully institute new systems.

One way to achieve effective system implementation is by involving employees and when possible customers in the design and implementation of your new system.

This approach facilitates:

- Opportunities for employees and customers to understand, appreciate the systems capabilities
- An opportunity for individuals to air their grievances and ventilate their fears
- Employees and customer commitment and appreciation for the new system

- Management acquiring valuable information about the needs of their employees and customers
- Management gains a more accurate assessment as to their technology and training needs

When management includes employees and customers as part of the change process, employees and customers are more likely to accept the change because they have been a part of the process. Their ideas, knowledge, and needs are taken into account, and they therefore pose less resistance to the proposed plans.

CPC Profile - Verona Collections

Dr. Cheryl Cottle has been interviewing various business women, to gain a deeper insight into the experiences of women in business. One such interview was with the designer and owner of Verona Collections, Yvette-Michelle Cottle. Ms. Cottle has owned and operated her company since 1994 in Toronto, Canada and launched her business in the Caribbean island of Trinidad and Tobago in 2006.

Q: How long have you been using the internet as a marketing tool for your business?

A: Since the establishment of my business in 1994, I have used the internet as a marketing tool.

Q: When did you decide to have an e-commerce site, and why?

A: At first the internet was a place for our customers to get information about us. We then started our on-line catalogue with a mail order form. Around 2002 we started thinking about adding a shopping cart feature. This was later done to allow us to reach more clients and make shopping with us on-line more convenient and secure.

Q: How viable have you found having an on-line business?

A: The forum has been excellent for our sales and for getting clients internationally.

Q: What would you say is an advantage to an on-line business?

A: It really allows us to reach more customers and to promote our products internationally, at a cost effective level.

Q: What has been one of the main challenges you have faced as an on-line business?

A: Because you are not dealing with clients in-person, establishing a human connection is a challenge, therefore making customer service extremely important.

Q: What do you recommend to others that are interested in starting an on-line business?

A: It's important to understand your target audience and to always keep your web site updated and interesting to your customers.



At CPC

CPC offers a range of services that can benefit individuals, businesses and organizations. Our new web site provides an overview of our services and also provides clients with ongoing information and other resources. Visit us at www.drcottle.com

Some of our services include:

Web Site Development and Hosting

Our web site design, development, hosting and management services are available to individuals, businesses and organizations. Big or small, your online presence can be enhanced by our range of services designed to produce unique web sites, web site optimization and e-commerce solutions. Visit us online for details about our \$99.00 (Canadian) web site promotion: www.drcottle.com/services/webservices.html

Business Forum

Our "Business Forum," is a great online marketing opportunity that is available to our clients. To learn more about how this forum can be of value to you visit: www.drcottle.com/business_forum.html

Computer Training

Individualized or group computer training programs are available. You can gain basic to advance skills in MS Word, Excel, Power Point and much more!

Computer Technology

Our experts in the field of IT will also work with your business or organization to facilitate the effective implementation of computer technology. We can develop a strategic plan, design, develop and facilitate the implementation and management of your project.

Education

Our in-depth services in the field of education encompass, curriculum development, multi-media presentations, computer mediated learning environments, the integration of computers in the curriculum and teacher training.

Business Development

Cottle's Professional Consulting can assist you in turning your idea into a viable business venture. Our range of services in business development is geared towards the growth of small to medium size businesses.

Workshops and Seminars

CPC conducts a series of workshops and seminars in Toronto, New York and Trinidad and Tobago. Visit us online for ongoing information about upcoming events!

Other services include:

- Editing
- Research
- Organizational Development
- Professional Development
- Newsletters
- Marketing Materials

Cottle's Professional Consulting

35 Nairn Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario
Canada
M6E 4G8

Cottle's Professional Consulting

5 Cottle Drive, Mc Bean Village
Trinidad & Tobago
West Indies, Republic
Telephone: 1 (868) 337-1768

Email: info@drcottle.com
Website: www.drcottle.com

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