

Think Global ...
Buy Local

Retirement Savings Plan

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Voluntary Retirement Savings Plans (VRSPs)

Nearly half the workers in Québec do not have access to a retirement savings plan offered by their employers, making it more difficult for such workers to save enough for retirement.

These workers will soon have access to voluntary retirement savings plans. VRSPs are group savings plans offered by employers and administered by authorized administrators. They are governed by the Act respecting voluntary retirement savings plans, which will take effect on 1 July 2014.

Eligibility

VRSPs are mainly for employees who do not have access to a group retirement savings plan with source deductions offered by their employers. Employees must be 18 or over and have at least one year of uninterrupted service, as defined in the Act Respecting Labour Standards.

Employees will not have to take any steps to sign up; it will be done automatically. Self-employed workers and any other interested parties will also be able to sign up for VRSPs by contacting an authorized administrator.

Useful Links of Interest to Business Owners

Funding: Canada Summer Jobs - Service Canada

Deadline January 31, 2014
www.servicecanada.gc.ca



Quebec Voluntary Retirement Savings Plan for Employers

<http://www.standardlife.ca/prpp/>

Deadlines for implementing a VRSP Enterprises covered by the Act must offer employees a VRSP at the latest by:

- 31 December 2016, if they have 20 or more eligible employees on 30 June 2016
- 31 December 2017, if they have 10 to 19 eligible employees on 30 June 2017
- the date determined by the government, which cannot be prior to 1 January 2018, if they have 5 to 9 eligible employees.

Other enterprises can offer employees a VRSP on a voluntary basis.

Info: <http://www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca/en/retraite/rver/Pages/rver.aspx>

Information supplied by R. F. MacKillop CFP.

New Chamber Member Benefit – Offsite Data Backup

Jericom Incorporated is now offering secure offsite data backup. Worried about theft, fire, flood, data corruption or hardware failure resulting in loss of sensitive electronic records? Give us a call at Jericom, we can securely back up your entire system or just a selected section containing your most vital records. Our back up service is currently the only backup service certified by Chambre des Notaires du Quebec.

Get protected today!!!

Call us at (819) 648 - 2990 or email at sales@jericom.biz

Pontiac Chamber of Commerce

www.pontiacchamberofcommerce.ca
info@pontiacchamberofcommerce.ca
bizdev@pontiacchamberofcommerce.ca
819-647-2312 or 1-866-861-0509

Canadian Chamber of Commerce Mystery Shopper Program

One benefit offered to our Chamber members by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce is a Mystery Shopper Program, through a business called Competitactics®.

Here are a few questions and answers concerning the program offered.

From the merchant's end of things, how does your mystery shopping program work exactly?

The owner/manager would call us. We ask him/her to describe their business and their typical customer.

What does the mystery shopper look for?

All aspects of the customer's experience are considered; examples include:

- Windows, floors, counter, washroom, eating utensils are clean
- Trip-and-fall hazard
- Garbage container is not overflowing and is kept away from food
- Food preparer-cashier washes hands (e.g. after touching currency; fixing hair)
- Greeted, thanked
- Resolves complaint (if applicable)
- Product knowledge – rather than reading label on the package
- Follows directions/contents of the order is correct
- Explains return policy (if applicable)
- Effective reaction to unique situation, if applicable (e.g. spills hot drink on self)

What does the report look like?

The mystery shopper completes a detailed checklist. If there are gaps

or gems. The mystery shopper makes detailed comments. Tips for improvement are also included in the report.

Who does the mystery shopping?

We do not recruit through e-mail blasts or the Internet. We look for people in the region who are detail oriented (e.g. a technical person who works from home; a school teacher).

Do you offer your program to Chamber members only? Or all businesses?

The program is open to chamber of commerce members. We have a second program for members of Distribution Canada, a national group of independent grocers; if a DCI member is a chamber member, they get a discount if they are also a member of their local chamber of commerce. We charge a much higher fee to non-members.

On average, what would be the typical cost to a merchant to use your program?

It depends how long a typical customer would spend in the store, but generally between \$200-\$300 plus taxes). If the mystery shopper has to spend money in the store, then the merchant would reimburse the agreed upon amount (e.g. \$50 shopping basket). If there is more than one visit during the same reporting period, then the price for the second visit is lower.

If you would like to take advantage of this program or more information, visit the web site at www.chamber-mysteryshop.com. Mention that you are a member of the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce. They will confirm membership with the Chamber.

News, article suggestions and letters to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. Content will be edited to fit the space available. We welcome press releases and news from our local business community.

Chamber Benefits

Being a member of the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce means that you are also affiliated with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC) — www.chamber.ca and the Quebec Chamber of Commerce (FCCQ) — www.fccq.ca

You and your business can take advantage of benefits listed on their web sites.

connected!
branché!

member of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and member of the network of the chamber of commerce of Canada

Fédération des chambres
de commerce du Québec



Group Insurance Benefits

Visit the new web site / view the video!

<http://www.chambers.ca>

Affinity Rewards Program

Data is one of every business's most critical assets. Protect it.

The Pontiac Chamber of Commerce and Quantum RBS are pleased to present a new Affinity Rewards Program — Secure cloud backup and recovery services.

Quantum RBS is a Canadian owned and operated company that provides over the Internet, offsite data backup and recovery services. With Quantum RBS, your data will be protected in the event your office experiences hardware failure, theft, fire, flood or any other type of disaster.

Don't take chances with your data. Contact Quantum RBS today.

For more information:

www.qrbs.ca/CCC_Member_Request.php

Contact: Quantum RBS

519.633.8903 or sales@qrbs.ca

Small Business Checkup

This article will be presented over four newsletters.

How healthy is your business?

The health of your business is a reflection of how well you manage all aspects of your operation. Smart business owners know they can avoid problems by keeping aware of the many elements that can affect growth and success. By conducting a regular business checkup, you can identify strengths and weaknesses. And much like your own annual physical, a business checkup pinpoint concerns, and enables you to take preventative measures so they don't become a health threat to your organization.

We've categorized your checkup into four key aspects necessary for business health: management & operations; marketing; financial & legal; and human resources. In a healthy and sound business, these four areas are in balance.

We hope you'll use this guide as a starting place to evaluate the health of your business. It is a tool, not a replacement, for your good management skills and provides a basic framework to help you examine critical areas.

Management & Operations

The business plan is your prescription for success. When was the last time you looked at your business plan? Have it handy while you read over this set of questions. If you can't answer them positively, it may be time to review aspects of your business that need attention.

Are you on target towards meeting your vision, mission and goals?

Business plans are meant to be living documents, not just something you write to convince the bank to finance you. A good plan provides direction and sets the course to get there and is also flexible enough to adapt to changing market.

Who is your sounding board?

Smart business owners build an advisory team of business professionals, including a lawyer, banker, accountant, insurance advisor, human resources consultant and others who can offer an expert opinion when needed.

Do you have a strategic plan?

Plan for your future by identifying your strategy for success. How are you going to achieve your long-term goals?

When did you last update your written operations plan, including contingency measures?

Systems change, old procedures are discontinued, and new practices are developed. Your operations plan details the how-to of your day-to-day activities as well as recording your short- and long-term objectives and goals. A well-crafted plan means nothing should fall through the cracks. Are there any gaps in yours?

Have you updated your goals?

Goals should be updated annually.

It's an excellent practice to review each one and identify successes as well as areas you've fallen short. Write down what added to your success and what held you back. Be careful not to use generalizations here, such as "the market was good", or "my employees fell short." Even in the most robust economy businesses still fail, so there was something deeper that you did well to contribute to your achievements. What was it? Conversely, poor employee performance can be indicative of a larger issue, such as lack of training or unrealistic targets. Be careful where you lay the blame for any failures. Build on strengths, learn from mistakes.

Do you have a succession plan?

What happens if one of your key staff leaves the company? Are you prepared? Grooming employees for increased responsibilities means you should never be caught in a compromising position.

What back-up measures do you have in place should your systems fail?

How will you handle a disaster or crisis? Important, but often overlooked, is the need for a contingency plan. This addresses emergency situations and is created from a risk analysis of all systems, procedures and practices.

Next month: Marketing

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE GROUP
INSURANCE PLAN

Information supplied by R. F. MacKillop CFP.

Think Global ... Buy Local
Support Those Who Support You
Small Businesses Make Small Towns Work!
Consider this when you're buying ...
As business operators, our actions shape our communities.

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Welcome to the Chamber!

Businesses who have joined the chamber since the last newsletter.

Grand Pine B&B
Kluke's Korner
Mickey Creek Golf

Check the chamber web site for links to all Chamber businesses.

Support your local businesses!

If you received this newsletter via regular mail and would like to receive it via email, please let us know a valid email address. We do not share our lists.

Avant que ça ne devienne trop gros,
consultez votre avocate.

Kim Beaudoin, avocate

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Dr. Isabelle Gagnon,
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Your hosts: Ross & Linda Vowles
924 Route 148, Shawville, QC J0X 2Y0
www.shawvillevillageinn.ca

Would Like to Join the Chamber?

Membership fee of \$100 entitles you to all chamber benefits. Membership valid from April 1st to March 31st.

Contact info:
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384 7th Concession
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Exposure for your Business

Support the Chamber through an enhanced membership and receive benefits for your business.

If you are interested in taking advantage of these enhanced memberships, contact the Chamber for more information.

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