Small Business Conference Preview:

Working and Collaborating with Creatives

by Kristen Hampshire

Being different is often not celebrated—and innovators tend to be different from most people. They often think in abstract terms. They process many ideas at once, and they possess a fierce energy. And yes, they tend to not look like, talk or dress like everyone else.

Innovator-visionaries are often misinterpreted in life, and particularly in the workplace. Marlou Myrick works to turn that around through her practice, Hug An Eccentric, a concept she trademarked several years ago and has developed into a consulting practice and a book-in-progress.

“It’s important that innovative entrepreneurs try to understand themselves, and it’s extremely important for the people who work with them to understand these business owners,” says Myrick, who has worked in the human capital business for 20 years, operating an HR management firm for much of that time. The recipient of two Weatherhead 100 awards and regional Entrepreneur of the Year finalist will speak at the COSE Small Business Conference October 19-20 at the I-X Center.

Myrick’s Hug An Eccentric interactive workshop will focus on creative/visionary innovators and entrepreneurs and the people who need to communicate with them. She’ll profile the three primary behavioral traits of visionary innovators—strengths that can actually derail these driven business owners from success. She’ll also share how common misunderstandings among employees and their “eccentric” bosses result in disappointment, “misdies and brushfires.”

Meanwhile, as artist-entrepreneurs develop creative collaborations with other business owners in and outside of the arts field, Todd Masuda of Schneider, Smelz, Ranney and LaFond encourages them to do some “issue spotting” and address potential stressors to the relationship before signing a contract.

The attorney, who serves on the board of Zygoate Press and was a visual artist before shifting into law, spends a great deal of time drafting agreements of all kinds. The problem, he says, is despite parties’ sincere interest in collaboration, the details of a relationship are often not explored in advance.

Down the road, this can result in disappointment—and legal disputes. “I see a lot of business relationships that have broken down,” he says.

Many times, the collapse of a collaboration could have been prevented.

The good news: Masuda says more business owners are seeking out collaborative opportunities today.

“Non-profits especially are increasingly stressed to create efficiencies amongst them for their business models and grantors that are requiring non-profits to team up and use grant dollars more efficiently,” Masuda says. “And, small business owners have always collaborated—they bring on their friends, they meet other business owners and want to collaborate.”

The key is to learn to identify the issues that need to be addressed while planning and carrying out creative, goal-directed business relationships. “For small business owners to grow, they need more resources to take on new opportunities, and they have to find others to work with,” Masuda says.

Events

10.18.11
Small Business Conference / Creative Collaborations—Guidelines for Successful Business Relationships
Time: 4:15-5:15 pm

10.20.11
Small Business Conference / “Hug An Eccentric”
Time: 10:15-11:15 am

11.1.11
COSE Arts Network Social Event
Time: 6-8 p.m.
Location: The Happy Dog
Cost: $5 Members, $10 Nonmembers

cosearts.org or 216.592.2222