



Contest gets students excited about St. Marys River during World Water Day

The Water team at the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre introduced students at Anna McCrea public school to water quality issues in the St. Marys River last week during International World Water Day.

Corrina Barrett, Remedial Action Plan Coordinator, and Marcus Scornaienchi, Water Sustainability

Research Intern, taught students about keeping the St. Marys River clean and healthy and introduced them to the Sault Ste. Marie Water Portal at www.sustainablewater.org, a resource on water quality for all ages.

Students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 participated in the challenge to draw, write a poem or an essay on the St. Marys River. The students followed the criteria below before submitting entries.

JK to Grade 2: "Why I love the St. Marys River"

Grades 3 to 6: Poetry contest on



Above: A winning entry from Kieyra B., Senior Kindergarten student at Anna McCrea Public School, for the JK to Grade 2 level category.

"The St. Marys River contest brought attention to a local problem that affects more than just our community" said Corrina Barrett, Remedial Action Plan Coordinator. "We tied the contest to International World Water Day as it advocates for the sustainable management of freshwater resource while bringing together young members of our community."

For more information, visit www.ssmic.com.

"Our St. Marys River"

Grades 7 to 8: "Keeping the St. Marys River Clean and Healthy"

Submissions were due on March 31st and the winners for each category will receive a pizza party for their class.

Winners for each category are:

JK to Grade 2: Kieyra B

Grades 3 to 6: Colton Oliverio

Grades 7 to 8: Connor Brechin

Pizzas will be distributed to the Anna McCrea winning classes on Thursday, April 5th.

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Contact us: info@ssmic.com

SSMIC announces newest incubator client

The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre recently announced Tonal Group Incorporated as a recent addition to the organization's business incubator.

Tonal Group Incorporated, a firm specializing in marketing and communications, brings a well measured combination of strategy, technology and creative expertise with background experience in sales and marketing, business development and strategic planning, alongside web development and programming for both private, not-for-profit and government sectors. applications, corporate identity and brand development. The group offers services including creative concept development, campaign

design and management, web and database applications, corporate identity and brand development. "With a sharp increase in project activity and a growing team, the

art conference area. We look forward to taking advantage of more of the many great services offered by SSMIC," said Marco Pierucci, technical lead, Tonal Group Incorporated



"Tonal offers a great package of services which aligns with current demand for web-based marketing and communications for small businesses," said Tom Vair, executive director, SSMIC. "We look forward to supporting Tonal as they grow and develop-

ment as an organization." need for an expanded office space came up sooner than expected. The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre was the obvious choice from the day of our first tour. The centre provides our developers with everything we require from IT infrastructure and support, to a fully furnished office and state of

For more information on Tonal Group Incorporated, please visit www.tonalgroup.com.

Want to accomplish more? WIP yourself into shape.

By Gerry Kirk



WIP is an acronym for "work-in-progress." It's the proverbial "stuff on your plate," the "balls you are juggling." It's the work you've begun and currently have in process.

Now consider those things in your life that can and will at some point constitute your WIP: deliverables you have at the office, improvement projects piling up at home, monthly bills that need tending to, doctors appointments that need scheduling, phone calls that need returning. Now take into account the things you enjoy doing (but that often get put on the back burner), like taking a photography class or working on your yoga practice. Things you both need and want to accomplish can add up to a huge

number of tasks you have to hold in your head simultaneously. Brain overload! We want to limit the number of active tasks we juggle because we have a "capacity" – a maximum amount of work we can process at a given time. **We simply cannot do more work than we can handle.**

What Happens When We Don't Limit WIP

When we exceed the amount of work we can handle, it heightens our distraction and decreases our concentration. Our attention to detail suffers, we leave things unfinished, or compromise the quality of our finished product. All of these outcomes create *more* work for us in the future. Multitasking is the biggest time waster I see in every organization I consult with.

What Happens When We Do Limit WIP

We'd like to say that limiting WIP will solve all these problems, but it won't. Nothing makes these things go away entirely.

When we limit our WIP, we have less distractions. We are able to focus on correct decisions, completion, and quality.

Even though prioritizing some tasks over others means some tasks have to wait, those tasks will still be completed sooner than they would have if we started them all right away. **Since we are no longer paying the penalties for forgetting, in-completion, or poor quality, the work we finish is done faster** and does not cause additional work.

Do you want to work more effectively by managing WIP (Work-in-progress)?

Attend Gerry Kirk's workshop on Personal Kanban: Managing Work, Navigating Life, held on April 30, available at a special introductory price. Use discount code SSMIC by Monday, April 9 to get an additional 20% off.

Visit <http://learn.personalkanban.com/worksh>

Social media secrets from *A Morning with Marketing Gurus*

During a session hosted by the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre and funded through the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), speaker Nathan Smith, Director of Zynali Marketing Solutions, shared tips with over seventy attendees during *A Morning with Marketing Gurus*.

Nathan says that social media represents the largest culture shift in the last 100 years.

“These platforms have completely altered the way in which we interact with each other, and how we communicate with businesses and brands. The companies and organizations that realize the potential of this platform, and implement sound ‘pull’ strategies, will greatly improve the connection between their brand and their customers” says Smith.

Here are a few of his tips:

3 ways businesses can acquire new followers for free:

1. Include the full URL of your page on receipts and any printed or promotional materials
2. If you run traditional radio or television spots, carry the conversation onto your social streams



Nathan Smith, Director of Zynali Marketing Solutions, spoke to attendees at *A Morning with Marketing Gurus* on March 28th

3. Integrate your website and blog to send traffic to your profiles

6 Tips for Facebook Timeline:

1. Upload a cover photo
2. Use a clearly branded profile picture. Your profile picture follows your business or organization on Fa-

each week. Posts can stay pinned for up to seven days.

4. Arrange your views and apps. Choose the other three views and apps you want to appear by default on your page. You can include up to 12 views and apps.
5. Continue to post daily to engage your audience.
6. Manage your page through the admin panel. Use the admin panel to view page insights, keep track of new activity and respond to personal messages.

6 Common Mistakes:

1. Posting frequency (post to a maximum of 1-2 times a day)
2. Linking Twitter to Facebook
3. Text-only posts
4. Inconsistencies
5. Using personal profiles for business use
6. Focusing on the number of “fans” you have

“90% of Twitter users do not know this: if you begin a tweet with @username, the only people who will see it are the person you mentioned and your mutual followers.”

-Nathan Smith, director, Zynali Marketing Solutions

cebook as a thumbnail image in news feed stories, ads and featured stories.

3. Pin a post each week. Pin an important story to the top of you page

For more information on Nathan’s presentation, contact (705) 206-6742 or follow @coffeenate on Twitter.

NYTimes: Why Small Businesses Fail to Grow

By Jay Goltz

I have written previously about why small businesses fail. Informed by my own failures as well as those I've witnessed, that post is a gut-wrenching list of the causes of death for too many companies.

But there's more than one way for companies to fail. They can stay in business but fail to reach their potential, or fail to get beyond mediocrity, or just fail to grow. Failing to grow is not necessarily a problem — if the owner is happy with where the company is. In fact, my company was featured in Bo Burlingham's book "Small Giants: Companies That Choose to Be Great Instead of Big," so I am no advocate of growth at any cost. But there is an uncomfortable place between big and very small, where the owner is still doing a lot of the work and still not making much of a living.

There are many reasons some small companies grow and others hit a wall. There are external factors like market size, competition and demand. But there are also internal factors that have to do with operations and leadership. In every industry, there are companies that grow and dominate, while others stagnate or shrink and ultimately fail. Here are what I believe to be the 10 factors that separate the two:

- 1. Complacency.** An important aspect of corporate culture, a popular topic these days, is how driven the company is. A small company is usually a reflection of the owner's needs, desires and personality. Some owners want to take over the world, and some are happy making a living. Still others just want to golf as much as possible. There's nothing wrong with that — unless you work there and want to grow with the company.

- 2. The right people.** You cannot build a company without the right people. This requires both a great hiring protocol and the stomach to make the changes that become necessary as the company

grows. This is easier said than done — especially when it turns out that people who were "right" at the beginning are no longer "right" in their roles as the company grows. The ability to manage these issues might be something of a gift, although it's also nice to have some luck. But it mostly takes dedication to the process.

- 3. Lack of standards and controls.** This covers a lot of territory, including quality, service and problem resolution. Whether a company enjoys a 97 percent customer satisfaction rate or a 93 percent rate will have a significant impact on the size of a company over the long run. It's not enough to have high standards without implementing the control systems that assure those standards are met. Without the controls, you will have good intentions accompanied by bad results.

- 4. The customer attitude.** Not the customers' attitude but the company's attitude toward its customers. I can think of few things that are more destructive than employees who regularly dismiss difficult customers as "crazy" and conclude that there is no way to make them happy. The problem is that most crazy customers have sane friends, and word of mouth travels fast these days. Aretha Franklin has the answer: R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

- 5. Technology.** It can be both a blessing and a curse for small businesses. New technologies can do many wonderful things but can also be overwhelming and expensive. Occasionally, they can be nightmares. This might be one of the biggest differences between running a large company and small one. Amassing the financial, technical and staff resources necessary to solve a technology problem can be very difficult for a small company. But there's not much choice; the market does not stand still.

- 6. Marketing.** This includes everything from branding to advertising to market analysis. How a company executes may be the major driver of its success, but how it is perceived is also crucial — perception, as they say, is reality. The other reality is that

small companies can have a difficult time finding resources to help them with this critical part of their business. That means that the success or failure of a small company's marketing frequently comes down to the abilities of the entrepreneur. Few people are good at everything.

- 7. Stale products or services.** Whether you are talking about products or customers, the market is always changing, and your products and services have to change with it. If you are lucky, the changes are slow and subtle; sometimes, they are dramatic.

- 8. Lack of investment.** Whether it is for more inventory, new technology, a bigger facility, more employees or more equipment, growing companies suck up more cash than non-growing companies. Getting this cash may require borrowing money, finding more investors or using up whatever cash is on hand. It never stops, much to my chagrin. Some entrepreneurs tire of the demands and decide to slow down the investments — and that slows down growth.
- 9. Stubbornness.** It is stubbornness that helped the entrepreneur get the business off the ground, get through the learning curve, survive the recession and cope with every problem along the way. At some point, though, dogmatic adherence to what you know can limit a company's ability to adapt to change and get to that much-romanticized next level. Policies and strategies that might have worked when you had 20 employees can be a detriment when you have 50 — for example, when you start to hire higher-priced managers who have different expectations than a \$12-an-hour employee.

- 10. Leadership.** This includes vision, courage, fortitude, attitude and of course the ever-important corporate culture — all of which should create an inspired staff. And of course there's the over-used word that is sometimes called the secret to it all, passion. Here is the real secret: passion is critical, but it can't make up for deficiencies in the other categories. I have seen many people fail in business, and they were all passionate. It is not enough.

April

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29	30					

The Five Personalities of Innovators: Which One Are You?

Forbes Insights' recent study isolates and identifies five major personalities crucial to fostering a healthy atmosphere of innovation within an organization. For more, visit www.forbes.com/sites/brennasniderman

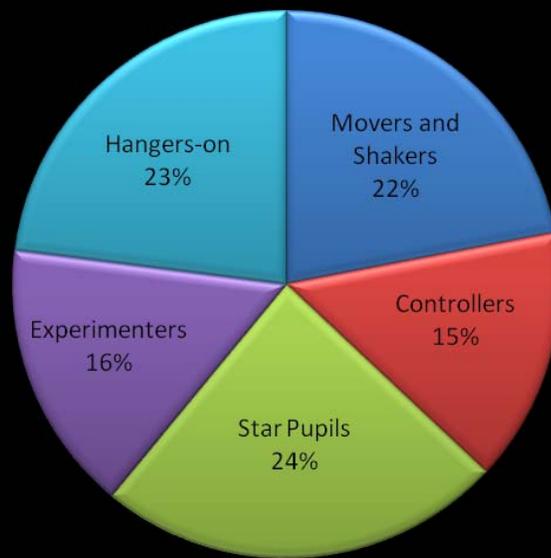
April 27

TAG Luncheon on

"Challenges with a Multi-Vendor Software Migration"

with **Gerry Belanger**

For information on events, please contact Diana Medaglia, Marketing and Communications Manager at 942.7927 x. 3138 or dmedaglia@ssmic.com



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