

July 2012

# Monthly Connection

Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) &  
International Trade Center (ITC)

At

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville  
Silvia Torres Bowman - Director of the ITC –  
[international-trade-center@siue.edu](mailto:international-trade-center@siue.edu)



## Would you like to be a part of the SBDC's MGMT475 program this fall?

Management (MGMT) 475 is an undergraduate course on entrepreneurship and small business offered by the SIUE School of Business. The course is a half-semester long project (8 weeks) and is offered to our in-business clients. The class runs during the fall and spring semesters. As one of the graded class projects, the students work in 4-5 person groups to get hands-on experience with small business management by working with owners of small businesses.

The students will cover a specific business topic when working with you. Below are the possible areas where the students can help you and learn more about managing a small business. Please read over the options and let your SBDC counselor know if you are interested in being a part of the program.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Industry Analysis                       | 6. Competitor analysis                                     |
| 2. Social Media Analysis                   | 7. Operational analysis and recommendations                |
| 3. How to market to a certain demographic  | 8. How to motivate your employees without paying them more |
| 4. How to hire your next employee          | 9. Evaluation of market expansion                          |
| 5. Working within Madison/St. Clair County |  |

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## Workshop Information

### Starting a Business in Illinois Workshops

This workshop is highly recommended for any prospective business owner and encouraged for any existing business. It covers the following topics: an orientation to Illinois SBDC services, financing options, business plan development, organizations in our area that assist with taxing and licensing, and overview of other requirements for starting a business in Illinois. After you attend the Starting a Business in Illinois Workshop, you may continue your relationship with the Illinois SBDC at SIUE by setting up an appointment with a counselor. For more information or further assistance, please call 618-650-2929 or 618-482-8330, or visit: <http://www.siue.edu/business/sbdc>

## QuickBooks

The SBDC has received numerous requests recently for information on QuickBooks and assistance with how to operate the program. Below is a link to their website that offers a 30-day free trial of five QuickBooks products. You will have 30 days to work with the QuickBooks product that you choose and hopefully familiarize yourself with the program to get a better understanding of how it works. From there, you can purchase the program at a discounted rate if you so choose.

<http://quickbooksonline.intuit.com/>



Scan the QR code with your smart phone to register for the Starting a Business in Illinois workshop

## 2012 IRS Tax Practitioner Symposium Information

**Who:** Professional Tax Practitioners

**When:** Wednesday, July 18 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Registration begins at 7:30)

**Where:** SIUE Morris University Center in the Meridian Ballroom

**Registration:** You can sign up online at <https://commerce.cashnet.com/siuebus>

**Cost:** \$75 for pre-registration before July 1 or \$100 after July 1

**Itinerary:** 7:30a.m. Check-in starts 8:00a.m. Program Promptly Begins

- Director Illinois SBDC @ SIUE
  - IRS SBSE Stakeholder Liaison Field Central Area Manager, Tom Sheaffer
  - Director, IRS SBSE Communication and Stakeholder Outreach, Rob Wilkerson
  - IRS Local Taxpayer Advocate
  - Illinois Department of Revenue
  - Tax Law & Updates with Tom O'Saben, EA
  - SBSE Examination & Collection Territory Managers
  - Other IRS Tax Law & Tax Updates Presentations by IRS employees
- 4:45p.m. Symposium Ends

## Workshop Dates

"Starting a Business in Illinois" in East St. Louis  
Wednesday, July 25<sup>th</sup> (3:00 pm – 5:00 pm)

Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> (3:00 pm – 5:00 pm)

"Starting a Business in Illinois" in Edwardsville  
Wednesday, July 11th (3:00 pm – 5:00 pm)

Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> (3:00 pm – 5:00 pm)

## Success Story: Owens Community & Development Group

Owens Community & Development Group has been buying and renovating homes in the East St. Louis area for the last five years and has helped the growing need for adequate homes for the less fortunate. Business owner Walter Owens decided to change his vision and expand to buying and renovating dilapidated apartment complexes in East St. Louis as well.

To execute his new plan, Walter realized that he would need a business loan to help him renovate an eight-unit apartment complex which he purchased last year. So in December of 2011, Walter became an SBDC client and began working with the SBDC to draft his business plan to help him obtain a loan. Walter worked extremely hard on his business plan and made contact with SBDC counselors weekly to help him with his progress.

In May of 2012, Walter was rewarded with the months of hard work that he put in to his business plan. Owens Community & Development Group was approved for a loan to complete the renovations on his eight-unit apartment complex. As a result of this, Owens will now be able to have the complex fully occupied with tenants, which will help his business as a whole moving forward. Not only did writing the business plan help him obtain a loan, it also helped him realize his goals for the future of his company and how he could maximize his success.

Renting an apartment or house from Owens Community & Development Group has many benefits. Walter makes great efforts to provide the less fortunate with affordable and quality places to live in the East St. Louis area. His rental prices are very competitive, and as an added bonus, the company pays for its tenants' water, sewer, and trash bills. Walter strongly believes that you should not have to pay an arm and a leg to live in quality housing.

If you would like to contact Walter Owens, you can E-mail him at [walt\\_1911@yahoo.com](mailto:walt_1911@yahoo.com).

Before picture of an apartment kitchen



Picture of kitchen after renovation



## Social Media for Small Businesses: 10 Things You Must Do

*By Randall Davidson via [www.fastgush.com](http://www.fastgush.com)*

If you're a small business owner, you've likely heard countless people talk about how small businesses need to have a social media presence. I couldn't agree more; however, so many of the people who talk about social media for small businesses never provide actionable, "here's what you can do right now" advice. In an attempt to allow small business owners to easily get started with social media, here are 10 things your small business must do.

### Your business must...

1. **Have a Facebook Page.** Though it seems quite obvious, many businesses still do not have a Facebook presence. For those who are unfamiliar with Facebook, individual people develop their profiles while companies and other organizations develop pages. Profiles and pages are very similar. All you need to know about pages at this point is that they are free and allow you to communicate easily with people who choose to follow your page.
2. **Get on Foursquare.** The value of Foursquare might be hard to wrap your head around at first. Foursquare allows your customers to "check-in" at your business via their mobile devices. Not only does this help generate exposure for your business because, as people check in, their friends are notified, but the exposure it generates helps serve as social proof that your business has something valuable to offer customers. Additionally, you can integrate your Foursquare social media plan with your marketing plan by offering incentives to your customers to check-in more frequently (e.g. 10% off if you check-in).
3. **Have a Twitter account.** This suggestion, like the Facebook pages suggestion, is probably quite obvious. What you might not have realized, however, is how absolutely simple it is to get started on Twitter. Before you launch your Twitter account, however, make sure you have a plan for tweeting. What will you tweet? How often?
4. **Make sure your business is listed on Google Maps.** This too is easy. All you have to do is go to Google Places for Business and register your business. You should also do this for Yahoo and Bing, while you're at it.
5. **Get accounts on all of the big social bookmarking sites:** Digg, Reddit, StumbleUpon, Delicious, etc. It's important to bookmark your best blog posts on these sites so that other people who see the value of your work can help you promote it.

6. **Create relevant Youtube videos.** Video is nearly synonymous with social media. It's crucial to give people compelling video content that they can easily embed on their websites, in their social networking profiles, etc. While people can technically do this with text, text is not absorbed in the same way as video — in fact, I would argue that video and text appeal to two largely non-overlapping groups. There are people who prefer to read blog posts and people who prefer to watch videos and you need to serve content up to people at both extremes of the spectrum. If you do choose to embed your Youtube videos on your website, you should consider hiring a video transcription service so that you can post text transcripts of your videos on your website as well. That will allow the content of your videos to be indexed by search engines.
7. **Get a Flickr account.** Many business owners already have a lot of photos. Why wouldn't you put them up on Flickr, a photo hosting and sharing website, so that people can get to "know" your staff and your products?
8. **Add relevant events to Meetup.com.** Network on- and offline with people who might be relevant (either as customers, vendors or partners) to your business. You can find relevant groups and events quite easily via Meetup.com or you can create your own.
9. **Start a business blog.** Blogs are built so that content can easily be shared. If your business isn't blogging, you're missing out on a major method of interacting with your current and potential clients. Additionally, search engines love to index blog content and that alone should be enough of a reason for you to start blogging. It's a common misunderstanding that you have to post something to your blog nearly every day; you can post valuable content as infrequently as every month.
10. **Come up with a plan.** Now that you have a Twitter account (that you can link to your Facebook account), what kind of information are you going to send out to your followers? The same goes for your Foursquare, Flickr and other social media accounts.

**About the author:** *Randall Davidson is a co-founder of Audio Transcription, a transcription services company. With over 2,500 Twitter followers and many mentions in mainstream press including USA Today.com, IndiaTimes.com, Guardian.co.uk, etc., Audio Transcription relies on social media to drive relevant traffic to its website. Audio Transcription offers a range of transcription services, including voice transcription and interview transcription services.*

# Could America's Central Port Meet Your Business Needs?

## Learn about "Starting your business at the Port"

Visit and find out!

### Come to a "Preview the Port" Session

- Each month, America's Central Port hosts a tour and an informational session on its services and many business assistance programs.
- Our target audience includes start-ups, small and medium sized manufacturing, office and warehousing businesses.
- The one hour session will include a business plan review and available space options for your business.
- Attending a Preview the Port Session is the main way for current and prospective business owners to learn how to start a business at America's Central Port.



**AMERICA'S  
CENTRAL PORT**

#### **America's Central Port**

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## Contact Information

#### **Frank Miles & Kristine Jarden**

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Granite City, IL 618-452-4463  
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- Sessions will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month.
- Noon until 1 pm.
- No appointment is necessary.

## About America's Central Port

- Located in Granite City, Madison and Venice, IL at the center of regional infrastructure
- Committed to economic development since 1959
- Provides small business incubator for as little as \$5 per day
- Opportunity for warehouse and office space
- Access to harbors and all modes of transportation
- Support for business owners with economic development assistance programs
- Offer services to help businesses increase trade opportunities

Visit our website at [www.americascentralport.com](http://www.americascentralport.com)



## Contact Information

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[www.facebook.com/il.sbdc](http://www.facebook.com/il.sbdc)

SBDC Website

<http://www.siue.edu/business/sbdc/>

ITC Website

<http://www.siue.edu/business/itc/itcnocpointsofcontact.shtml>