

Use available tools to bolster business in King

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Being an entrepreneur takes a lot of qualities ? intestinal fortitude, passion, ideas, concepts, great products and services, and a willingness to take risks. Few business owners leap into their operation believing they will get rich, fast.

Like raising a child, it takes time, patience and money, often lots of it.

People set up shop in King Township for many reasons. Yes, we have an affluent population with money to spend. We are in a decent location with access to several commuter and transportation routes. We are still growing and retail business is booming. If you build it ...

Again, launching a business takes risk, and speculation that future developments and increases to the local workforce will pay dividends. In fact, many of the establishments in the King's Ridge Marketplace are banking on local growth and business generated by Magna and its employees. Hopes are high.

One King City business owner put it well, at last week's business forum hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and Township. She said business owners have to be willing to change and evolve. You can't stay static and you have to ask yourself every day "what am I going to do to stay in the game?"

A very good message.

As the third business forum wrapped up, the series has been a resounding success. Drawing upwards of 45 people in each locale (Nobleton, Schomberg, King City), these brainstorming sessions seemed quite valuable. Networking with peers and picking their brains is a great way to stay current.

Certain issues seem predominant in all areas of King. Traffic, parking and making the villages more pedestrian-friendly are all important. Marketing and promoting local business is paramount, and there have been some mixed thoughts on how this should be done.

Both the Township and Chamber of Commerce are conduits for local businesses. They are both pro-business and try to not only encourage a healthy climate to carry out business but advocate on owners' behalf.

There are rules and regulations at every level of government that both help and hinder local businesses. King has a fairly recent, but strict, sign bylaw to preserve community aesthetics.

In the last couple of years, there has been a consensus at the Township that more promotion and marketing is needed. Jamie Smyth's economic development office has been given more funds and has created some very good marketing tools for the benefit of everyone. Community profiles have been rewritten; a series of "Experience King" videos are attracting interest from far and wide. The CIP is offering funds to help local shops spruce up their storefronts.

Township can offer many "tools" and programs to assist local entrepreneurs. It can help with physical expansions and permits. Working with the Chamber to petition York Region has allowed King businesses to open on statutory holidays. Streetscaping and sidewalk work is progressing, albeit slowly.

And yet, the businesses ask for more. "What are you doing for me?" is a common question. How can the Chamber and Township bring business to everyone's doorstep?

Well, Mayor Steve Pellegrini has put it rather bluntly. It's a team effort. It's the responsibility of business owners to do their own marketing and leverage every tool available to them. The Township can't hold everyone's hand, nor can they favor one village over another. They work to promote King as a whole and govern according to everyone's best interests.

At last week's annual Mayor's Luncheon, he unveiled a new promotional video ? "Prospering Together" (economic development strategy video update). Check it out via this link:

YouTube Video: [YouTube.com/watch?v=IEDv2Y5AnVM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEDv2Y5AnVM)

This should be part of everyone's tool kit to market King.

The mayor himself is likely our biggest cheerleader. At every function, luncheon or public event, he reminds residents to shop locally, be engaged and volunteer. People should listen to him.

Some business owners seem unaware of the role of the Chamber, local village associations and the Township itself when it comes to business promotion. Many aren't even aware of the attractions, facilities, and host of events and festivals that take place every weekend across this great municipality. This takes a bit of effort. Business promotion is highly important when it comes to new businesses as well as current businesses, they need to grab the attention of new customers to make sure that they keep thriving in today's climate, to do this they could look at designs for their business, and even be hands-on and do it themselves by going onto [vinylcuttingmachineguide](#) and seeing how this could help their business and connect them with the public.

Being engaged means being aware of local issues, being involved in your local community and pitching in where needed. It means finding out who you need to talk to and the mechanisms in place. Talk to your local village association or councilor. Take part in events and celebrations. Take in a council meeting, or visit king.ca ??there's a ton of information available at your fingertips.

Unfortunately, some won't get this message because they don't read the local newspaper. I am biased, but I believe the local newspaper is the key source of information for every resident and business owner in King. Council discussions, budgets, new programs and initiatives, community programs, local fundraisers, volunteer efforts, new developments are all explained in these pages every week.

No one needs to be in the dark.

Make your voice heard. Be part of the solution. Advocate and lead the pack, not follow it.

Let's row this boat in unison.