



Incredible Ely Small Business Conference
Session Topics and Speakers
Draft: Feb. 29, 2016

| Session | Description | Speakers and Panelists |
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| Dinner and Keynote Address | An opening to establish the vision and motivation for the conference. | Introduction by video: U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar Keynote speaker: Don Ness, strategic communications consultant and former mayor of Duluth |
| Introduction to QuickBooks and Other Financial Software | We will look at desktop and cloud-based QuickBooks as well as two other accounting software platforms to track your business financials. A description of the software, costs, and how to set them up will be discussed. | Curt Walczak Professional Business Consultant UMD Center for Economic Development |
| Planning and Starting a Business | Learn how to clarify your business goals, identify what makes your business unique, develop a strategic start-up plan, expand your networks and skills, and access the resources you need to build a successful business. | Beth Peterson Adult Education, Virginia Office Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, Inc. |
| Strategic Business Growth | Has your business grown...out of control? Are you being reactive rather than proactive? Have you heard the expression, work “on” your business rather than “in” your business? Learn how to thinking strategically about your business and develop a plan to grow manageably and intentionally. | Jennifer Pontinen Business Advisor, Hibbing Office Entrepreneur Fund |

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| Getting Started in Export Markets | This session will provide an overview of tools and resources to help you succeed in export markets, whether you're new to exporting or want to expand your global presence. It also covers SBA export finance programs, which help banks make loans on terms and conditions that would otherwise be unavailable. | <p>Ed Dieter Deputy Director Minnesota Trade Office Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development</p> <p>Carlos Sosa Regional Trade Finance Manager Office of International Trade U.S. Small Business Administration</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg Benson, Loll Designs • Lynn Wisneski, Aerostich |
| Lunchtime Entrepreneur Panel | Share lunch with entrepreneurs who will enlighten you on ALL of their experiences of starting and running their businesses. | <p>Moderator: Elaine Hansen Director UMD Center for Economic Development</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Swanson, Puredriven • Jason Amundsen, Locally Laid Egg Company • John Ott, Alley A Realty • Eric Faust, Duluth Coffee Company |
| Using Social Media | Social Media 101 and beyond. From figuring out the right platform for your business to creating killer content. Local experts in this field of marketing will give you tips and strategies based | <p>Molly Solberg President MAS Marketing</p> |

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| | on real life experiences. Be prepared to learn which social media platform is right for you, how to create content, and how to schedule, monitor and analyze. | Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerritt Johnston, True North • Jaimie Niska, W.A. Fisher |
| Roundtable on Issues and Programs for Women-Owned Businesses | Women business owners bring a valuable perspective to entrepreneurship but also face a number of unique challenges. In this panel discussion, we will hear about these women's different business experiences, how they responded to them, and what resources they use to help them along the way. | Moderator: Jennifer Pontinen Business Advisor, Hibbing Office Entrepreneur Fund Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patti Steger, Steger Mukluks • Melissa Kjolsing, U of M Center for Entrepreneurship • Tamara Lowney, APEX |
| DIY Website Development and Search Engine Placement | We will look at some great online software programs you can use to publish your own website including weebly.com, wix.com, and squarespace.com. We will also discuss the important search engine optimization techniques to make sure your new site is indexed well by Google. | Curt Walczak Professional Business Consultant UMD Center for Economic Development |
| Crowdfunding | We will discuss how to successfully combine storytelling with social media and a crowdfunding campaign. Panelists will share their experiences with crowdfunding in a variety of ventures. | Tom Livingston Producer, StoryFront; and Executive Director, Destination Duluth Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrea Strom, Crapola • Carol Carlson, Comet Theater • Don Ness, Hillside Ventures |