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Happy reading!

Philipp Grysls
President

---

2012 COMING EVENTS

April 18:  AGM @ Le Meridien King Edward
May 8:  Swiss Night @ Marché Restaurant
June 6:  Joint Golf Tournament with the German Chamber @
Carrying Place Golf & Country Club
November 17:  Gala Dinner Dance @ Le Meridien King Edward

Further Information can be found on www.swissbiz.ca/upcoming_events

Dates above are subject to change

Dear Members,
The new year started on a high note with our latest Swiss Night. We once again had a great turn out at the Marché with many new faces in the crowd and many happy attendants. Two of our scholarship recipients attended as well. We are already planning the next Swiss Night, to take place on May 8th, so if you have not yet had the chance to attend one of these networking events I encourage you to join us at the next one. However, before we think about this social event we still have to deal with our Annual General Meeting first! The AGM this year will once again be held at the King Edward Hotel, Ambassador Lehner will be our guest speaker.

Preparations for our joint golf event with the Canadian German Chamber of Commerce and Industry are now well underway. There were initially some timing conflicts due to Germany’s soccer team playing at the EuroCup in Ukraine on our date of choice, but June 6th has now been confirmed as the date for our event.

In this issue of info suisse we are starting a series of articles that we hope will be valuable to many of our members. It is undeniable that social media, in its various forms, have become an important tool for large and small businesses alike. Judging by the recent excitement that the Kony2012 campaign caused – sparked almost entirely through social media – it is simply impossible to disregard the power that this new vehicle wields. For many of us, though, it is still somewhat nebulous how we can use the various platforms to our advantage and really make them work for our own purposes. We are therefore focusing this issue on the topic and will continue to publish social media related articles through the year.

Happy reading!

Philipp Grysls
President
Chères membres, chers membres,

Le présent numéro aborde un sujet dont nous commençons à peine à connaître la puissance, les médias sociaux. Ce n’est pas simplement une mode, une tendance, c’est le début d’une toute autre façon de communiquer tant pour les individus que pour les entreprises. Nous avons tenté de susciter votre curiosité afin que vous alliez, par la suite, voir comment cette nouvelle révolution informationnelle viendra vous affecter dans votre quotidien à la maison ou au travail.

J‘espère que ces articles vous intéresseront.

Ce nouveau numéro d’INFO SUISSE arrive aussi dans une période très active pour la Chambre de commerce canado-suisse du Québec; en effet, deux activités importantes ont eu lieu durant les derniers mois : la traditionnelle raclette et un petit-déjeuner conférence du Jacques Demont de Nespresso. Ces deux événements ont été de francs succès et sont décrits plus loin dans ces pages.

Nous constatons aussi une augmentation de nouveaux membres et nous sommes très heureux d’accueillir avec nous ces personnes qui viendront participer à nos activités et qui enrichiront nos échanges.

We want to welcome the new members joining our Chamber, we are happy to see we will be more people to promote business activities between Canada and Switzerland.

Dans les prochaines semaines, se déroulera notre assemblée générale annuelle qui sera suivie par notre tournoi de golf au début de juin. Je vous invite à participer en grand nombre à ces deux événements. Au sujet du tournoi de golf, j’aimerais remercier notre collègue Jean-Jacques Laurans, président du Groupe Alfi, qui sera le président de notre tournoi cette année.

Enfin, nous aimerions partager avec tous nos membres les bonnes nouvelles des entreprises membres de la Chambre; je vous demande donc de nous envoyer vos communiqués ou de nous faire connaître des réalisations dont vous êtes fiers, nous nous ferons un plaisir de partager ces informations sur le site de notre chambre.

Bonne lecture et à bientôt,

Jean Serge Grisé
Président du conseil d’administration
Chambre de commerce canado-suisse du Québec.

---

EVÉNEMENTS / UPCOMING EVENTS 2012

17 mai / May 17th  
Assemblée générale / Annual assembly

4 Juin / June 4th  
Tournoi de Golf Mémorial Jacques Thévenoz / Golf Tournament Jacques Thevenoz Memorial

Dates sujet à changements / Dates subject to change

INFORMATION et détails/and details : www.cccsqc.ca ou/or (514) 937-5822
SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEB 2.0 IN ENTERPRISE

By: Rejean Bourgault, P. Eng.

Abstract: This article covers two main aspects of Social Media and Web 2.0, how to attract and retain talent within your enterprise and how to better serve your customers.

Facebook now has over 800 Million users, Twitter has over 300 Million users and LinkedIn is now close to 150 Million users. YouTube is no longer just an entertainment platform, but has become a rapidly growing marketing tool to showcase your solutions, product and advertise your company.

In Canada, many companies are still blocking their employees’ access to social media. This is an outdated policy and counterproductive policy. Private and public companies as well as governments doing so are are failing to understand the growing importance of Social Media, especially to the Y Generation (30 and younger), which now represents 25% of the work force and more than 25% of customers. Blocking access to these communications tools in the 21st century is analogous to taking away the calculator or phone of an employee 50 years ago.

Last year, sitting with a government executive over lunch, he told me that there were many videos about his organization on YouTube but that he had no way of watching them at work as YouTube was blocked on all of the hundreds of computers at his office location. A 28 year old lawyer once told me, that if his company was to block his access Facebook, he would quit immediately. Like many others of his generations (and many of older generations too), he managed many of his relations through his Facebook account. At the Gartner Forum in San Francisco a few years ago, a participant told of another similar example, that of a brilliant graduate who refused to work for a top financial institution because it was not offering Instant Messaging as a communication tool. These are just a few examples, I could give you many more examples of how refusing to understand the importance of social media to their core businesses has hurt organizations.

Successful companies today must embrace change and innovations at a rapid
pace, both for their customers and employees. Companies should allow employees at the very minimum access to social media, offer them Wi-Fi connectivity everywhere on their premises (and to their customers), offer Instant Messaging and Presence (a key component of instant messaging efficiency), and VPN connectivity from anywhere (home, coffee shop, etc...). This is the bare minimum. Smart companies will do more. They will allow their employees greater freedom to choose their smart phone (Blackberry, IPhone, Android, etc...), to use their tablet of choice (ex: Ipad, PlayBook, Galaxy) and to customize their PC (or Mac...). This type of approach is called Bring Your Own Device or BYOD. To explain its worth, think of it like a tennis’ player’s choice of racquet, if you force a player to use a racquet he does not like or is not used too, he will not play as well. It is the same today with digital devices, a typical 25 year old can do things with his smart phone or tablet that will amaze you, but force him to certain devices not only will he be less happy, he will be less efficient. No doubt this creates some challenges to the IT organization, but they can be overcome and might very well reduce costs in the long while increasing employee satisfaction.

At Avaya, employees get access, in addition to all of the above, to a Virtual World environment, where official weekly Executive review and staff meeting are conducted in an environment called Web Alive. Inside that environment, which looks very much like many online gaming environments that the under 30s are very familiar with. Employees wear gamer headsets and conduct a normal meeting with their Avatar. Avaya Canada’s President has done his weekly revenue meeting in this way every week for over 12 months, the quality of sound is crystal clear and the online visual is similar to any real boardroom.

For customers, social media is also important. Customers expect to be able to communicate with your company through multiple channels, phone calls, emails, Facebook, Twitter, Instant Messaging, SMS, video calls and Web chats. Many companies now have their own fans on Facebook and watch their number grow with pride. This is a good start, but how do you serve them in an adequate and integrated way? If you have a Facebook page, be prepared to respond to posts and messages to it. This becomes a complex problem when you have thousands of fans to monitor. Avaya offers a clever solution, called Social Media Manager, a very powerful tool that allows you to monitor in real time what the world is saying about your company and lets you
react quickly. It also permits you to monitor your competition!

Every company with a large customer relations department must also quickly consider moving to a Multi-Media Contact approach to permit your customers to communicate with you in the media they prefer, be it e-mail, instant messaging or chat or telephone. Of course, this entails the need for training for your customer agents in a wider range of tools.

We are living in a very exciting time, the dawning of the pure mobile workplace. A great example of this beautiful new world is how I wrote this article. I did it this morning as I was taking the shuttle from Denver Airport to Vail Colorado Mountain. The first thing the driver told us as we boarded was the password for the free Wi-Fi inside the shuttle. I had my iPad and Laptop connected the entire ride, working with no stress, with a beautiful view of the valley. That is mobility. Oh and when my 17 year old daughter called me on Facetime, I forgot to mention, I had a free video call with her on my iPad. She was at home in Montreal and I was in an airport shuttle, but we talked as if we were at the coffee table together. The Future is exciting!

(*) An Avatar, is a representation of a human in a virtual environment, could be your Avatar in Web. Alive from Avaya, or any online game, or on your Wii at home, etc...

For more information on Avaya, visit www.Avaya.com

LES MÉDIAS SOCIAUX ET LE WEB 2.0 EN ENTREPRISE
Par : Réjean Bourgault, ing.

À propos de l’auteur : Réjean Bourgault est vice-président d’Avaya Canada, cofondateur de 5Deka et père de trois enfants de la cybergénération. Passionné par les tendances lourdes des technologies de l’avenir, il est souvent invité à agir comme conférencier principal. Il est membre de la Chambre de commerce canado-suisse (Québec) inc.

Résumé : Cet article traite de deux aspects clés des médias sociaux et du Web 2.0, soit des moyens d’attirer et de retenir les meilleurs candidats au sein de son entreprise et de mieux servir ses clients.

Facebook compte déjà 800 millions d’utilisateurs, Twitter en compte plus de 300 millions et LinkedIn en compte près de 150 millions. YouTube n’est plus uniquement une plateforme de divertissement, mais est devenu un outil de marketing qui connaît une croissance rapide pour annoncer sa compagnie et présenter ses solutions et ses produits.

Au Canada, un nombre encore trop élevé d’entreprises empêchent leurs employés d’avoir accès aux médias sociaux. Cette politique est dépassée. Les sociétés privées et publiques et les gouvernements qui appliquent une telle politique ne suivent pas le rythme des changements rapides et ne sont pas conscients de toute l’importance qu’ont les médias sociaux dans la vie des membres de la génération Y (les 30 ans et moins), qui représentent déjà 25 % de la population active. Empêcher l’accès à ces outils de communication, c’est comme interdire à un employé de venir au travail avec sa calculatrice, son crayon ou son téléphone intelligent (Android, iPhone, BlackBerry, etc.).

L’an dernier, alors que je dinais avec un haut fonctionnaire du gouvernement, celui-ci m’a confié que son organisation avait fait l’objet d’une vidéo sur YouTube, mais qu’il n’avait malheureusement pas pu la visionner, car l’accès à YouTube de chacun des 1000 ordinateurs de son lieu de travail est bloqué. Un avocat de 28 ans m’a déjà tenu un discours similaire, que si son entreprise l’empêchait un jour d’accéder à Facebook pendant ses heures de travail, il resterait sa démission puisqu’un grand nombre de ses clients et de ses contacts sont reliés à son compte Facebook. Il y a quelques années, lors du Gartner Forum à San Francisco, une femme a expliqué qu’un jeune brillant diplômé avait refusé un poste au sein de l’une des plus grandes institutions financières américaines, car celle-ci n’offrait pas la messagerie instantanée comme outil de communication, mais uniquement le courriel. Ce ne sont là que quelques exemples pour illustrer mes propos.

De nos jours, les entreprises prospères doivent accueillir rapidement le changement et les innovations, à la fois pour leurs clients et pour leurs employés. Les entreprises doivent permettre à leurs employés d’avoir

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accès, au minimum, aux médias sociaux et leur offrir (de même qu’à leurs clients) une connectivité Wi-Fi partout dans leurs installations, la messagerie et la présence instantanées (la présence étant une composante clé de la messagerie instantanée) ainsi qu’un accès à un réseau privé virtuel (VPN), où qu’ils se trouvent (à la maison, au café du coin, etc.). Ce sont des conditions de base. Mais cela ne suffit pas. Dans notre monde d’aujourd’hui, les entreprises devraient aussi permettre à leurs employés d’utiliser leurs propres appareils, que ce soit leur téléphone intelligent préféré (Blackberry, IPhone, Android, etc…), la tablette de leur choix (ex. : iPad, Playbook, Galaxy) et leur PC (ou Mac…). C’est ce qu’on appelle « Bring Your Own Device » ou « BYOD » (en français : « apportez votre propre appareil »). Il est indéniable que cette tendance pose certains défis sur le plan de l’organisation des TI, mais tout cela est gérable et permet souvent des réductions de coûts tout en augmentant la satisfaction des employés. Pour illustrer cette nouvelle tendance, imaginez un joueur de tennis qui utilise la raquette qu’il a choisie, si vous l’obligez à utiliser une raquette qu’il n’aime pas où avec laquelle il n’est pas habitué de jouer, il est fort probable que son jeu sera affecté. C’est la même chose avec les nouveaux outils technologiques, un jeune de 25 ans peut faire des choses avec son téléphone intelligent ou sa tablette qui vous étonneront; mais, forcez le à utiliser certains outils et il devient moins efficace. Bien sûr ceci cause des changements, mais la satisfaction de l’employé aura comme conséquences une plus grande efficacité et des réductions de coûts à long terme.

À Avaya, les employés ont accès, en plus de tout ce qui précède, à un monde virtuel dans lequel les réunions hebdomadaires de la direction et les réunions avec les employés se déroulent au sein d’un environnement appelé web.alive. Dans cet environnement, qui ressemble beaucoup aux jeux en ligne auxquels vos enfants jouent avec leurs amis, les employés portent un casque d’écoute et, avec leur avatar (*), participent à une réunion normale. Par exemple, tous les lundis matin depuis maintenant plus de douze mois, le président d’Avaya Canada tient sa réunion hebdomadaire d’examen des résultats dans l’environnement web.alive, où le son est cristallin et où l’aspect visuel de la salle de conférence est semblable à celui de n’importe quelle salle de conférence du monde réel.

Les médias sociaux sont également importants pour les clients. Ceux-ci s’attendent à pouvoir communiquer avec votre entreprise par l’entremise de canaux de communication multiples, comme le téléphone, les courriels, Facebook, Twitter, la messagerie instantanée, les textos, les appels vidéo et le clavardage. De nombreuses compagnies ont maintenant leurs fans sur Facebook et sont très fiers d’en indiquer le nombre. Tout cela est bien beau, mais comment s’y prendre pour bien servir ces clients, et ce, de manière intégrée? Si vous affichez un logo Facebook sur votre site Web, vous devez être prêt à y donner suite. De plus, si votre entreprise compte des milliers de fans sur Facebook, comment faire pour surveiller ce qu’ils disent à son

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Les médias sociaux

sujet? Avaya offre une solution ingénieuse, nommée Social Media Manager, un outil très puissant vous permettant de surveiller en temps réel tout ce qui se dit dans le monde à propos de votre entreprise et de réagir rapidement à différentes situations. Vous pouvez même surveiller vos concurrents!

Un autre élément clé à envisager est de passer rapidement à un centre de contacts multimédia afin d’interfacer avec tous les différents canaux de communication décrits plus haut que vos clients auront choisi d’adopter. Bien entendu, les représentants de votre centre d’appels auront besoin de s’adapter pour pouvoir répondre à ces clients ainsi qu’à leurs attentes.

Nous vivons à une époque très exaltante et nous évoluons dans un environnement de travail entièrement mobile. Voici un autre signe que les temps changent et un autre exemple de stratégie pour satisfaire ses clients. J’ai écrit cet article à bord d’une navette qui m’aménait de l’aéropost de Denver à Vail, Colorado et la première information que le chauffeur nous a communiquée, c’est le mot de passe d’accès au réseau Wi-Fi offert gratuitement à bord de la navette pendant les 2 heures et demie de route. Mon iPad et mon ordinateur portable étant restés connectés pendant toute la durée du trajet, j’ai pu travailler sans stresser tout en ayant une vue magnifique sur la vallée. La mobilité à l’état pur! Il n’y avait pas non plus de restrictions à la navigation sur le Web. Oh… et j’oubliais de mentionner que j’ai reçu un appel vidéo gratuit de ma fille de 17 ans sur mon iPad grâce à FaceTime, alors que ma fille se trouvait à la maison à Montréal et moi, dans la navette!

L’avenir s’annonce passionnant!

(*) Un avatar est la représentation graphique d’un être humain dans un environnement virtuel. Il peut s’agir de votre avatar dans web.alive d’Avaya, dans tout jeu en ligne, sur votre Wii à la maison, etc.


LES MÉDIAS SOCIAUX, UNE MODE PASSAGÈRE OU UN NOUVEL OUTIL DE GESTION?
Par Jean Serge Grisé

Directeur des communications et des affaires publiques, Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon et président de la Chambre de commerce canado-suisse du Québec.

Depuis quelques mois j’entends parler des médias sociaux et l’on me conseille de doter notre organisation de ces nouveaux outils de communication. Comme il ne faut pas prendre de décisions à la légère, j’ai donc lu des ouvrages sur le sujet, examiné...
des études, assisté à des conférences et des colloques et discuté avec des experts. Tout ça dans le but de me familiariser sur ce phénomène dont on parle partout, mais qui est encore relativement mal compris des gestionnaires; je voulais comprendre ce qu’il était possible de faire et voir à quel moment il fallait le faire.

C’EST QUOI?
On trouve une foule de définition des médias sociaux, mais celle que l’on retrouve sur Wikipedia est une des plus simples :

Les médias sociaux sont des média qui utilisent des techniques de communication hautement accessibles pour faciliter les interactions sociales.

Cette expression recouvre les différentes activités qui intègrent la technologie, l’interaction sociale, et la création de contenu. Andreas Kaplan et Michael Haenlein définissent les médias sociaux comme « un groupe d’applications en ligne qui se fondent sur l’idéologie et la technologie du Web 2.0 et permettent la création et l’échange du contenu généré par les utilisateurs »1. Les médias sociaux utilisent l’intelligence collective dans un esprit de collaboration en ligne. Par le biais de ces moyens de communication sociale, des individus ou des groupes d’individus qui collaborent créent ensemble du contenu Web, organisent le contenu, l’indexent, le modifient ou font des commentaires, le combinent avec des créations personnelles. Les médias sociaux utilisent beaucoup de techniques, telles que les flux RSS et autres flux de syndication Web, les blogs, les wikis, le partage de photos (Flickr), le vidéo-partage (YouTube), des podcasts, les réseaux sociaux (Facebook), le bookmarking collaboratif, les mashups, les mondes virtuels, les microblogs (Twitter), et plus encore.

LES TENDANCES DES UTILISATEURS
L’utilisation des médias sociaux s’est développée dans la vie personnelle des gens; face à la popularité croissante de ces moyens de communication, les entreprises s’en sont emparées rapidement.

En 2011 au Québec, presque tous les jeunes québécois de 18 à 24 ans (92%) utilisaient les médias au moins une fois par mois. Cette proportion est de 85,7% chez les 25 à 34 ans et de 68,5% chez les 35 à 44. Elle passe en suite à 62,8% chez les 45 à 54 et décroît à 40,4% chez les 55 à 64 ans pour atteindre 17,25% chez les plus de 65 ans (source: CÉRIFO). De telles statistiques expliquent bien l’intérêt des entreprises pour ces utilisateurs ou consommateurs de leurs services et de leurs produits.

LE CHANGEMENT
L’entreprise qui décide d’inclure les médias sociaux dans ses communications, doit s’attendre à vivre un changement radical. Elle doit accepter que cette décision modifiera profondément la vie professionnelle de ses employés.

Ce bouleversement peut s’illustrer de plusieurs façons. Par exemple, les barrières temporelles habituelles sont modifiées. La vie professionnelle et la vie personnelle se chevauchent; les employées répondent à leurs courriels à tout moment, même...
en vacances. Ils s’attendront à ce que l’employeur leur laisse consulter Facebook au bureau.

L’utilisation des médias sociaux rend la protection de l’information presqu’impossible alors que l’on demande aux entreprises de protéger cette information. Quel contrôle doit-on exercer? On estime que 3% des portables et 10% des clés USB qui appartiennent aux entreprises se baladent dans la nature.

Les solutions dans l’entreprise devront être apprivoisées par les employés, mais ça ne veut pas dire la même chose pour un aîné qui devra faire preuve d’ouverture et pour un plus jeune à qui on devra imposer certaines limites. L’ouverture de l’entreprise aux médias sociaux est synonyme de confiance, car elle donne de grands pouvoirs aux employés. L’implication des jeunes de la génération Y est essentielle si on espère un succès.

La mise en place des médias sociaux en entreprise veut dire une grande collaboration entre les différents services (ressources humaines, contentieux, technologie de l’information, communications, etc.).

EN TERMINANT
Si l’entreprise décide de faire le virage des médias sociaux, elle devra faire le bon choix et analyser lesquels la serviront mieux, est-ce que ce sera Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, Flickr ou autres? Elle devra aussi bien analyser les conséquences sur son fonctionnement, les obligations de transparence et la relation avec son personnel.

L’entreprise devra accepter d’investir pour assurer le bon fonctionnement de ces outils de communication; les employés devront être très bien formés pour répondre adéquatement aux nombreuses demandes du public. C’est un changement profond des façons de faire traditionnelles qui s’impose. C’est une décision qui doit se prendre après une analyse éclairée et une bonne préparation.

En guise de conclusion, je propose ce tableau qui décrit bien les étapes que les entreprises, qui ont décidé d’être présentes dans les médias, devront prévoir suivre. (Tableau tiré de Marketing des médias sociaux, Éditions Mediaventilo).

LES 5 NIVEAUX DE PRÉSENCE SUR LES MÉDIAS SOCIAUX
Il y a plusieurs façons d’approcher les médias sociaux pour les marques et les entreprises. À la manière de la hiérarchie des besoins (ou pyramide de Maslow) nous pouvons découper la façon d’être présent sur ces médias en 5 postures de la moins impliquée
(bas de la pyramide) à la plus intégrée (sommet de la pyramide).

Niveau 1 : Être présent malgré soi
Toutes les marques et les entreprises finiront par être présentes sur les médias sociaux qu'elles le veuillent ou non. Ce premier niveau traduit cette présence non contrôlée par des porte-paroles autoproclamés, des avis, des commentaires...
Inutile de préciser que ce type de présence n’est bien sûr pas idéal.

Niveau 2 : Être présent et contrôler sa communication
Ouvrir soi-même ses espaces au sein des sites communautaires permet de contrôler sa présence à minima, l’important étant d’arriver tôt.

Niveau 3 : Fédérer sa communauté
À partir d’une présence stratégique, il s’agit ici de mettre œuvre de réelles actions pour recruter des membres de sa communauté et ainsi faire en sorte que des internautes créent des liens entre leurs univers et ceux de la marque.

Niveau 4 : Alimenter sa communauté
Il s’agit ici de produire des contenus pour sa communauté. Il s’agit de contenus orientés utilisateurs qui ont des qualités intrinsèques virales.

Niveau 5 : Impliquer sa communauté
C’est l’étape ultime, le niveau du crowd-sourcing ou les membres de la communauté vont non seulement relayer les messages, mais également produire du contenu pour le compte de la communauté.

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WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE SWISS?

By: Beat J. Guldimann, LL.D

Switzerland and its financial services sector have been going through a difficult period of readjustment and reinvention over the past few years. Never before have the Swiss been under more political and economic pressure from foreign sources than what we have seen transpire over the four year period between 2008 and now.

An identity crisis is going on in Switzerland that started with the Holocaust accusations in the mid 1990s, worsened with the 2001 grounding of Swissair, widely recognized as a kind of national treasure, continued after the near-collapse of UBS in the subprime crisis, and culminated with revelations of how deeply the Swiss private banking market is exposed to the domestic tax issues of many of its foreign clients.

Walking a delicately fine line between the defense of national sovereignty and being a valued member of the international community, the Swiss government has lent its hand in redefining domestic tax laws to make them more compatible with international standards. The resulting dilution of the famed Swiss bank secrecy was a well-calculated risk and accepted as unavoidable collateral damage.

Over the past years, Switzerland has found it increasingly difficult to define a red line in its international relations, particularly with the European Union and the United States. Accommodation became the predominant foreign policy imperative to deal with mounting pressure from the Potomac. This did not go unnoticed in Berlin or Brussels and now, the Swiss find themselves exposed to a never-ending flurry of demands for which they have no policy to lean on.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in the most recent parliamentary discussion about the ratification of a new tax treaty with the U.S. that aims to allow “group inquiries” about suspected tax schemes. These types of proceedings were formerly known as “fishing expeditions” and nobody wanted to ever approve those. But these are different times and the thing now has a much nicer name, so why not lend a hand to the suffering American treasury.

As troubling as these developments are from a perspective of legal sovereignty and the nation’s right of self-determination, we are now witnessing how Switzerland is slowly getting into a process of self-destruction as well. Nowhere is this more visible than in the case of the former President of the Swiss National Bank, Philippe Hildebrand.

Hildebrand resigned on January 9, 2012, after a short but intense episode of character assassination lobbed against him by the political right wing and parts of the Swiss media controlled by their “eminence grise”, former Federal Councillor Christoph Blocher. Whatever the motives beyond pure enjoyment of power, this is a truly unprecedented affair where radical right wing politicians, lawyers and journalists...
have resorted to conspiracy in committing a breach of bank confidentiality, forgery of documents obtained from bank screenshots, and alleging criminal activity where there was no crime to begin with.

The events of January 2012 caused significant damage to the institutional strength of the National Bank seeing how easily a political charade could be used to create a leadership vacuum, forcing the Swiss federal government to scramble for a suitable replacement of one of the country’s most respected central bankers since Fritz Leutwiler who steered the Central Bank through a difficult decade between 1974 and 1984.

It can hardly surprise that aggressive foreign entities such as the American IRS or the Department of Justice are taking full advantage of the collective weakness displayed by the Swiss government, its major institutions and the confusion that currently dominates the agenda in Parliament and within the banking sector.

The IRS’ hard-nosed pressure tactics have paid off, as Swiss banks are dropping U.S. clients for their toxicity to the system without regard for the bank secrecy rules that once brought these very clients to Zurich and Geneva.

We have also witnessed the demise of Bank Wegelin & Co., Switzerland’s oldest independent private bank as a direct consequence of nobody in Switzerland having any desire to go to bat for the country’s once eminent banking institutions. Wegelin may just have been a pawn’s sacrifice in a bigger game of political chess. However, several other banks, including a couple of Cantonal Banks, continue to be in U.S. crosshairs and nobody dares to predict what their fate may be as things unfold in the process of the IRS and DOJ proceedings pending against some of their bankers.

The Swiss banking sector is clearly in crisis mode. The good old days of high margins in the traditional offshore business are over. Banks now have to find a competitive edge that goes beyond the perceived advantage of client confidentiality and bank secrecy. Only time will tell how successful the Swiss banking industry will be in repositioning itself in an environment of global transparency and integration. What we can expect in the immediate future is a flurry of consolidation and small bank closures, paired with an unprecedented shrinkage of jobs, as the industry starts dealing with new realities.

Switzerland was once revered for its bland politics and the stability that was derived from a consensus-driven political process. The Swiss did not change, ever, and they were known to defend their political and legal values. None of these former constants apply anymore. Internationally, the Swiss have all but become pushovers.

For a country that derives a significant portion of its economic output from the expectation of political stability and the safe haven status portrayed by its banking sector, these developments have to be cause for concern. So does the apparent absence of political leadership to correct the course the country is currently on.

**QU’EST-CE QUI NE VA PAS AVEC LES SUISSES?**
Par : Beat J. Guldimann, LL.D.

La Suisse et son secteur des services financiers traversent depuis quelques années une période difficile de rajustements et de réinvention. Les Suisses n’avaient jamais été soumis à autant de pressions politiques et économiques de la part de sources étrangères qu’ils ne le sont depuis 2008.

La Suisse est aux prises avec une crise identitaire qui a commencé avec les accusations relatives à l’Holocauste au milieu des années 1990, qui s’est aggravée en 2001 avec la déconfiture de Swissair – jusqu’alors considérée comme une sorte de trésor national –, qui s’est poursuivie à la suite du quasi-effondrement d’UBS durant la crise des prêts à risque élevé et qui a atteint son paroxysme quand l’ampleur de l’exposition du marché bancaire privé suisse aux démêlés fiscaux intérieurs d’un grand nombre de ses clients étrangers a été mise au jour.
Forcé de trouver un juste équilibre entre la défense de la souveraineté nationale de la Suisse et la conservation de son statut de membre respecté de la communauté internationale, le gouvernement suisse a apporté son aide en redéfinissant les lois fiscales nationales afin de les rendre plus compatibles avec les normes internationales. La dilution du célèbre secret bancaire suisse qui en a résulté était un risque bien calculé qui a été accepté comme faisant partie des dommages collatéraux inévitables.

Au cours des dernières années, il est devenu de plus en plus difficile pour la Suisse de définir les limites à ne pas dépasser dans ses relations internationales, particulièrement avec l’Union européenne et les États-Unis. L’accommodement est devenu l’impératif prépondérant de la politique étrangère afin de faire face aux pressions croissantes de Washington. Cette situation n’étant pas passée inaperçue à Berlin ou à Bruxelles, les Suisses s’exposent maintenant à une avalanche de demandes sans fin contre lesquelles ils n’ont aucune politique sur laquelle s’appuyer.

C’est au cours des récents débats parlementaires concernant la ratification d’un nouveau traité fiscal avec les États-Unis, qui a pour but de permettre les « demandes groupées » visant des stratagèmes fiscaux présumés, que cette problématique s’est manifestée avec le plus d’acuité. Ce genre de procédure était autrefois qualifié « d’expédition de pêche » à laquelle personne ne voulait jamais consentir. Cependant, les temps ont changé et la procédure porte maintenant un nom beaucoup plus joli, alors pourquoi ne pas donner un coup de main au Trésor américain durement éprouvé.

Non seulement ces changements sont troublants sur le plan de la souveraineté juridique de la Suisse et de son droit à l’autodétermination, mais la Suisse s’engage maintenant lentement dans un processus d’auto-destruction. L’affaire de l’ancien président de la Banque nationale suisse en est un parfait exemple.

Hildebrand a remis sa démission le 9 janvier 2012 à la suite d’une courte mais vigoureuse campagne de diffamation lancée contre lui par la droite politique et certains médias suisses contrôlés par leur éminence grise, l’ancien conseiller fédéral Christoph Blocher. Quels qu’aient été les motifs de cette campagne, outre la pure jouissance du pouvoir, il s’agit d’une affaire véritablement sans précédent où des politiciens, avocats et journalistes d’extrême droite ont comploté pour violer le secret bancaire, falsifier des documents bancaires obtenus à partir de captures d’écran et soulever des allégations d’activité criminelle alors qu’aucun crime n’avait été commis dès le départ.

Les événements de janvier 2012 ont gravement porté atteinte à la solidité de...
la Banque nationale en tant qu’institution au vu de la facilité déconcertante avec laquelle une mascarade politique peut être utilisée pour créer une vacance à la tête de la Banque, forçant le gouvernement fédéral suisse à faire des pieds et des mains pour trouver un successeur adéquat à l’un des banquiers centraux les plus respectés du pays depuis Fritz Leutwiler, qui a permis à la Banque centrale de garder le cap pendant une décennie difficile, de 1974 à 1984.

On ne peut guère s’étonner que des entités étrangères agressives comme l’IRS ou le ministère américain de la Justice tirent pleinement parti de la faiblesse collective affichée par le gouvernement suisse et ses grandes institutions et de la confusion qui règne actuellement au Parlement et dans le secteur bancaire.

Les moyens de pression exercés avec intransigeance par l’IRS ont porté leurs fruits puisque les banques suisses laissent tomber des clients américains en raison de leur toxicité pour le système, et ce, en faisant fi des règles sur le secret bancaire qui ont initialement amené ces mêmes clients à Zurich ou à Genève.

Nous avons également assisté à la disparition de la banque Wegelin & Co., la plus ancienne banque privée indépendante de la Suisse, qui est une conséquence directe du fait que personne n’envie d’intervenir en faveur des établissements bancaires jadis prestigieux du pays. Wegelin pourrait n’avoir été qu’un pion sacrifié au cœur d’une partie d’échecs plus importante sur l’échiquier politique. Cependant, plusieurs autres banques, dont quelques banques cantonales, demeurent dans la ligne de mire des États-Unis et personne n’ose prédire leur sort en attendant l’évolution des procédures en cours de l’IRS et du ministère américain de la Justice contre certains de leurs dirigeants.

Le secteur bancaire suisse est manifestement en état de crise. Les beaux jours des activités offshore traditionnelles et leurs marges élevées sont terminés. Les banques doivent maintenant trouver un avantage concurrentiel qui va au-delà des avantages offerts par la confidentialité des données des clients et le secret bancaire. Seul l’avenir nous dira si le secteur bancaire suisse réussira à se repositionner avantageusement dans un contexte de transparence et d’intégration mondiales. Ce à quoi on peut s’attendre dans un avenir immédiat, c’est à une série de consolidations et de fermetures de petites banques, conjuguées à des suppressions d’emplois sans précédent, pendant que le secteur commence à s’adapter à de nouvelles réalités.

La Suisse a déjà été vénérée pour ses orientations politiques sans saveur ni odeur et pour sa stabilité découlant d’un processus politique axé sur la recherche d’un consensus. Jusqu’à récemment, les Suisses n’avaient jamais changé et nul n’ignorait qu’ils défendaient leurs valeurs politiques et juridiques. Aucune de ces anciennes constantes n’est encore valable. Sur la scène internationale, les Suisses sont pratiquement devenus des béní-oui-oui.

Pour un pays qui doit une part importante de sa production économique à sa stabilité politique historique et à son statut de pays refuge incarné par son secteur bancaire, ces changements sont préoccupants. Tout comme l’est l’absence apparente de leadership politique pour rectifier la trajectoire que suit actuellement le pays.

Beat Guldimann, owner of Tribeca Consulting Group, holds a Doctorate in Law from the University of Basel; he was legal counsel at the former SBC (86-96), President and CEO of UBS Canada (97-01), Head of Global Private Banking at CIBC (01-04) and Vice-Chairman at Hampton Securities (05-07).

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HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF AGAINST A TAX AUDIT

By Paul Girolametto of Cunningham LLP

Years ago I had a client who insisted on handling a Canada Revenue Agency (“CRA”) audit of one of his companies himself. Although the monthly bookkeeping was somewhat messy, it was generally cleaned up at year-end and the tax audit should have gone smoothly. However, due to this client’s cavalier attitude, the CRA auditor became concerned that there may be unreported revenues within the corporate group and decided to expand the scope of the audit to include all of his companies. What should have been a two week experience lasted over six months and one of the related companies ended up with a large tax assessment due to insufficient documentation.

Now imagine you have just received a letter from the CRA informing you that you’ve been selected for an audit. What should you do next? Of course, you should call your accountant. Your accountant has likely walked many clients through CRA audits, and this experience in dealing with the CRA will make your accountant invaluable as you prepare for the taxman.

It is difficult to determine exactly why you may be chosen for an audit, but the CRA has made it clear that from time to time they will target a particular industry. According to the CRA website, audits are directed at “sectors where taxpayers or industry segments are at risk of misunderstanding their tax obligations or wilfully avoiding paying their taxes.” The CRA starts investigating a particular industry segment by conducting ‘reviews’ of businesses in this area: “The CRA reviews groups of taxpayers to determine how many of them are paying their taxes in full and on time. If the review shows that there are many who are not compliant, the CRA may audit taxpayers within this segment.”

Many corporations are audited simply because their business operates in an industry segment the CRA has targeted for audits. Other reasons corporations are selected for audits include a complaint filed with the CRA and financial statement ratios and fluctuations that are outside the CRA’s expectations. In any case, once you have been selected for an audit, it is important that you are prepared.

CRA and Ministry of Finance auditors do not approach tax audits looking for adjustments that fall in the taxpayers’ favour. They are looking for adjustments that will increase the government coffers. So what can be done to protect yourself and your business once a government auditor starts his or her tax audit?

An auditor is entitled to examine the books and records of the corporation, as well as any working papers prepared for or by the accounting firm in the course of their annual engagement. However, every now and then an auditor talks to an employee or opens a door, file or box and confidential information is uncovered. This information, which the auditor ordinarily would not be privy to, may lead to a tax issue or an adjustment. The key to avoiding such a situation is to ensure a proper audit protocol is set out at the onset of a government tax audit.

The audit protocol can be discussed verbally or can even be written in the form of an informal agreement. Whichever form it takes, at a minimum it should require all questions and queries to be directed to an agreed upon corporate representative and limit the auditor’s physical access to a desk or office with a telephone. The auditor should not be permitted to walk around the office, warehouse or any other part of the building without accompaniment and no access to restricted areas should be granted unless specifically requested. If possible, the audit protocol should also lay out the scope of the tax audit and the audit should be limited to certain years or issues.

Cunningham LLP is an accounting firm focused on serving mid-market entrepreneurial business clients. For more information visit www.cunninghamca.com or contact Paul at paul@cunninghamca.com

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Für weitere Fragen stehe ich gerne zur Verfügung.
MINISTER OF LABOUR INTRODUCES JOB-PROTECTED FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE

By David Chondon of Crawford Chondon & Partners LLP

On December 8, 2011 the Minister of Labour introduced legislation that, if passed, will grant employees in Ontario with up to eight (8) weeks of unpaid leave to care for family members and relatives suffering from a serious medical condition.

This new job-protected leave, the sixth type of leave of absence to be passed by the Ontario government in the last seven years, would provide employees with up to eight (8) weeks of leave annually to care for the following who suffer from a “serious medical condition”: spouses, children and parents (including step and foster relationships of either the employee or the employee’s spouse), grandparents (including step relationships of the employee or the employee’s spouse), siblings and relatives who are dependent on the employee for care. In its current draft, Bill 30, Family Caregiver Leave Act places few limits on who may claim this job-protected leave and does not define a “serious medical condition” – a critical factor in determining an employee’s entitlement to this unpaid leave.

While most are sympathetic to employees who face the daunting task of trying to care for seriously ill family members while continuing to work, we are concerned with what has become a “patchwork” approach to dealing with the issue through over-regulation and ad hoc amendments to the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (the “ESA”). In addition to personal emergency leave, declared emergency leave, family medical leave, reservist leave and organ donor leave, the government now proposes yet another kind of job-protected leave to address what it believes is a gap in the current legislation. The proposed legislation also provides that the new caregiver leave can be taken in addition to any other leave provided for in the ESA. The result is a confusing maze of leave provisions that employers must navigate and, with the exception of personal emergency leave which applies only in workplaces with more than fifty (50) employees, there is no recognition of the significant burden these various leaves place on smaller employers who cannot absorb employee absences in the same way that larger employers can. In addition, with onerous reinstatement obligations and significant liability in the event of a breach of these “protected” leaves of absences, employers are left to manage complicated legal obligations regardless of size and available resources.

In anticipation of this legislation becoming law in the near future, employers are encouraged to start reviewing all of their internal leave policies to ensure they will not have unnecessary overlapping obligations in the event that an employee is required to take a leave of absence unexpectedly. In addition, strategies to address such potential longer term absences such as staff cross-training or outsourcing solutions should be considered in advance.

For more information on above topics contact Dave Chondon at dchondon@ccpartners.ca or visit their website at www.ccpartners.ca.
ACHIEVING GREAT RESULTS
By Heidi Garcia

Have you ever heard anyone say: “Today I’m going to work to do nothing”? Hopefully not, because regardless of what role we play in an organization, we all have work that needs to be done. A good question to consider is: how many people are just putting in time trying to survive the day?

The sad truth is that for many, work is simply a means to an end. How productive can a frustrated employee be? What impact do negative employees have on their coworkers? What’s the connection between employee engagement, motivation, productivity and the bottom line? As a leader, what role do you play in engaging your workforce?

In his research on motivation, William James at Harvard University found that hourly employees could maintain their jobs (that is, not be fired) by working at approximately 20 to 30 percent of their ability. His study also showed that highly motivated employees work at close to 80 to 90 percent of their abilities. Taking your own company into account, what would the research say about your employees? Are you willing to do what it takes to improve your numbers?

It may be that your company is doing well. You may be achieving your targets. The numbers may be on track. And you may be thinking that despite the economic downturn, overall business is good. That’s great – but could it be better? Of course, there’s always room for improvement. However, knowing it could be better is one thing, actually doing something about it is quite another.

One of the greatest opportunities for management to engage their employees is to tap into their mindset. Ask yourself the following questions:
• What strengths do my employees have?
• What value do they bring to the organization?
• What motivates them to do a good job?
• Do I encourage their input?
• How can I help them to reach their full potential?
• How easy do I make it for them to do great work?

Unwittingly, some companies actually prevent their employees from doing great work due to policies and procedures that are focused on preventing losses, rather than achieving gains.

Often, it is not so much about what we need to do, but rather what we need to stop doing that can have the greatest positive impact. Take performance reviews as an example. For most people, this is probably one of the most unpleasant work experiences regardless of whether you are giving feedback or receiving it. That’s not to say that performance reviews shouldn’t be done; rather, we should stop making it such a negative experience. An employee should never be surprised by unexpected comments during a performance review because continuous improvement discussions should be taking place throughout the year. When I conducted performance reviews, my goal was to always make sure that the person left feeling better than when they walked in. As a boss, have you ever started a performance review discussion by saying, “I think that I could have provided you with better management”? or, “I know that I could have helped you to achieve more”?

One of the best ways for you to achieve outstanding results is to empower your employees to do the right thing. This means that you trust them to make responsible decisions. The majority of employees care about the work they do. They care a lot. They want to do a good job and want to do their part to help the company to grow and succeed. Invite them to share with you their continuous improvement ideas and then get them involved in implementing their suggestions. Let them know that you value them and appreciate the work they do.
have often seen the happy expressions and sense of pride employees feel when they are told that they are an important member of the team or when they receive genuine recognition and praise.

Some time ago, I read an article entitled: “The Seven Manufacturing Wastes”, a concept that was originally developed by Toyota’s Chief Engineer Taiichi Ohno as the core of the Toyota Production System, also known as Lean Manufacturing. In the latest edition of the Lean Manufacturing classic “Lean Thinking”, Underutilization of Employees has been added as the eighth waste and for good reason. Too many employees come to work on auto pilot because they were hired only for their dexterity or physical strength, not for their brain power. Reflecting on the research that I shared at the beginning of this article, just imagine what your company could achieve if everyone worked to 80-90 percent of their abilities. Without a doubt, it would be a game-changer.

Develop an action plan to achieve greater results in your organization. A key element to your success will be to effectively utilize and fully engage every employee. Keep in mind that at the end of each day, one of the most valuable assets of your organization goes home. The question is whether or not they will return the next day.

Be the best you can be!
Heidi Garcia is a Human Performance Specialist, working for and with KARICO Performance Solutions, located in Richmond Hill, Ontario. Karin Lindner is the founder and owner of KARICO and her mission is to “help organizations and individuals in manufacturing environments to become the best they can be by positively impacting their ROI (Relationships, Outcomes and Improvements)”. Karin can be reached at 1-647-401-5274 or by e-mail at karin@karicosolutions.com; you may also visit her website at www.karicosolutions.com
SEARCH MARKETING FOR YOUR PRODUCTS & SERVICES
By Alan K’necht

Sadly, the days of “build it, list it, and they will come” are over in search marketing. In the good old days, it used to be enough to create a website promoting your product and then get it listed in an appropriate category on a few good quality web directory listing sites like Yahoo’s directory, DMOZ or Tucows.com to start appearing in search results.

The days when search engine optimization (Search Marketing) was in its infancy and all it took was a few simple key mentions combined with good targeted writing to dominate search is no more. While it is still critical to post your creations in topic/industry specific directories, you also need to put a lot of thought into using search engines and social media to inform people where to find your products or services. Search engine optimization (SEO) and social media participation remain the two most effective methods of marketing your goods and services online.

Often, large and small software companies leave the development of their website (the most important marketing asset) to the same developers that create their programs or manage their in-house technology. When it comes to large organizations they frequently leave the web development to the advertising agency that is managing their campaigns (they might be good at advertising but that doesn’t mean they know anything about developing search friendly websites). While some firms get lucky, most end up with a site that fails from an optimal search marketing perspective.

Why do so many web development projects fail to move past the technical brilliance of their in-house technical team or the team that developed an award winning TV commercial, to embrace the marketing brilliance of SEO? Usually, for the same reasons others fail at SEO. Simply put, programmers have to keep up on the latest tools and methods for programming and not on the latest algorithm changes by the search engines. Similarly ad agencies are keeping up on the hottest trends and visuals to attract and get eye balls to respond. Other small business owners are too busy running their businesses to keep up with the estimated 500 or more changes to search algorithms in any given year. In many cases, developers, marketers and business owners assume that what they heard 10 years ago, (ie: keyword meta tags or multiple landing pages) is still a useful search engine optimization tactic.

The world of search marketing has changed dramatically over the past 5 years. The advent of technologies allowing video, mobile devices, social media and file sharing have all had extraordinary impacts on how search engines determine and display results sets. As seen by changes in search engine results pages over the past 18 months, the two biggest search engines Google and Bing have overhauled their search results page creating a variety of ways to get your listing in front of your audience, if you can do the SEO the optimal way.

Here are a few of the most often overlooked items which now are important aspects of most SEO projects. These items are best made part of the initial development of the website instead of retrofitted in at a later date.

PICTURES
Yes pictures! Of course your site has pictures, but have they been properly optimized? Has the image “alt” tag been completed and, if so, is the tag keyword optimized? Are the pictures indexable by the search engines and, are they being indexed? Both major search engines frequently include image search results in among the general search results. As we all know, a picture is worth a 1,000 words, pictures attract eyeballs, and pictures are more likely to be clicked on. This is where not only the importance of how the code was used to place image on the website is critical but even the choice of image comes into play. If images from your site appear in search results, they will tend to generate more clicks and it will take the searcher to the right page on your website.
VIDEO
Video, just like pictures, is now frequently included in search results. What most people are unaware of is that YouTube (owned by Google) is the second most popular search engine. A well crafted video uploaded to YouTube can generate numerous page views and can drive traffic to your website while serving to stimulate sales. Your video not only has to be effective but the choice of whose voice is used becomes a factor as YouTube/Google conducts voice recognition on the video looking for keywords to determine what the video is about. If the script doesn’t emphasize your target phrases or if the person speaking on the video isn’t clear, your message will be lost and the chance of your video appearing in search results will be severely handicapped. There are several other video optimization tips to consider from titling to writing effective content descriptions. These are items every good SEO should know and be able to help you with.

SOCIAL
While the term “social media” may be the hot phrase of the moment, the true concept is simply “social marketing”. Think, for a moment, about the word of mouth marketing that our grandparents and great-grandparents used by listening to their friends and trusting their colleagues for product recommendations. Today much of social marketing has moved to the online and mobile worlds and is referred to as “social media marketing”. When approaching the social side of product marketing keep the phrase “social media is marketing” in mind.

To support this effort, you need to integrate social sharing applications in to the design of the appropriate pages within your website in such a way that will encourage site visitors to respond (Like, +1, Share, etc). Over the past year both Google and Bing have included social signals as part of the ranking algorithms and it’s critical ensure that no social stone be left unturned if you want your products and services to be discovered by people searching for a solution for a need/problem they have.

While these (pictures, video and social) factors are a frequently forgotten part of an effective search engine optimization marketing strategy, if the supporting website isn’t constructed in a search engine friendly way all the effort put into working on these three factors will be wasted. Ultimately, it’s smartest to involve a good SEO in project planning before a website is created and that not one line of HTML generated before a quality SEO professional has been engaged to ensure the build meets all the requirements. It is always easier to build it right the first time than try and retrofit SEO into an existing site.

Alan K’necht (@aknecht) is the award winning author of “The Last Original Idea – A Cynics View of Internet Marketing” (http://www.thelastoriginalidea.com) and is a partner at Toronto, Canada based Digital Always Media Inc. (http://www.DigitalAlwaysMedia.com). He’s been actively involved in search engine optimization, digital/web analytics and online marketing (including social media marketing) since the mid 1990’s.

SOCIAL MEDIA CASE STUDY: MILEZ.BIZ
Any business, especially if it is an online venture, must nowadays include a social media strategy. Being able to attract significant numbers of users to a website and knowing what to do with those users once they are on the site is crucial to the success of most online projects. Tapping into the social media universe is critical for building steady and high quality traffic to a website.

Milez.biz is a project that we launched recently (in December 2011) that relies heavily on generating steady and considerable traffic to the website. Milez.biz is a comparison tool that allows users to calculate the mile cost of free award flights across the various frequent flyer programs. All frequent flyer programs offer free flights as a reward to their loyal customers; these flights can be paid for with the miles (or points) collected by the program members. Although miles from different programs cannot be compared 1:1 most programs nonetheless utilize very similar free flight reward schemes. We decided to develop this tool because no such comparison tool exists and in some cases it is quite complicated for members to even figure out how many miles are required for a free flight in their own program (sometimes knowledge of distance between airports is needed).

So Milez.biz not only allows users to figure out how many miles are required for a free flight from destination A to destination B it also compares the rates of the various programs. Approximately 50 programs are currently being compared. All big alliances (Star Alliance, SkyTeam, oneWorld) are included and currently about 2,000 destinations worldwide can be called up, all calculations are automated.

The tool as such is kept as simple as possible: users type in two destinations and submit those to see how many miles will be needed for a free flight between the given cities. The only extra feature is the ability to filter the results by frequent flyer program, as not everyone may be interested in the rates for all programs.

The business objectives with Milez.biz are equally simple: drive as much traffic as possible to the site and make money through
advertising. Ads are being sold through Google’s AdSense program and through affiliate marketing programs. AdSense dynamically displays ads on a website based on the website’s content and the user’s location; this ensures that ads are relatively well targeted. Milez.biz earns some money anytime a user clicks on an ad. Affiliate marketing programs work somewhat differently: Milez.biz only gets paid if a user clicks on an ad and then makes a purchase after clicking on an ad. Milez can pick the ads to display on the site itself.

Our short- to mid-term objective is to attract a few thousand daily visitors per day to the site and at the same time improve the service that we offer travelers who are trying to figure out how to best use their hard-earned points on free flights.

For the purposes of our project our understanding of “social media” is any online community that we can tap into in order to direct traffic to our site. So from the get-go we looked beyond the standard social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google +. We have create profiles in those platforms but the most important sources of traffic have been the online frequent flyer forums.

Early experiences with Milez.biz show that it is difficult to get indexed properly in the search engines (i.e. Google) with a site that is primarily an online tool and is not very text heavy. Even though Milez.biz can display results for millions of different routes the search engines simply do not have much to sink their teeth into. After two months of being online we still only get about 1-2% traffic from search engines, this is very low. Most of the traffic comes from referring websites, blogs, articles, and forums or is direct (e.g. people bookmarking the site). Our initial thought was actually to have as little text as possible on the site and make the site language agnostic but after the first couple of months we realized that we need to add text just so that we get noticed by the search engines. Strangely the one search engine that has picked up the site quickly is naver.com a large Korean search engine. The website consistently gets a good number of visitors from Korea, even though there is no Korean content on the site whatsoever. The two major Korean frequent flyer programs are included in the tool, Asiana and Korean Air, but it is nonetheless interesting that Korea provides the most visitors to the site right after the USA.

As there is very little budget for this project and because we think we know what we’re doing, we have not (yet) sought help from professional SEO firms. Professional SEO firms would do a very thorough job of blanketing the web with articles (be they well written or not) where Milez.biz was duly mentioned. They may also create more accounts on services like Stumbleupon. They may even create a little video about the site and post it on youtube; anything that will direct traffic to the site. The important thing to remember is that all these efforts are undertaken so that search engines take notice of your site, hence search engine optimization (SEO).

In conclusion, it is very important to define goals of one’s online activities as clearly as possible. How are you going to find the visitors important to your business online? Be as creative as possible and research as many avenues as you can; this will help you connect the dots and maybe find users where you had never thought of initially. It is equally critical to know what to do with users once they end up on your website. It is one thing to get people to visit your site but in the end what really counts is what they do there and how you can get them to interact with your business the way you want them to.

An important thing to remember is that social media and search optimization are an ongoing effort. It is critical to continue producing new content for a website and to continue publishing about these efforts on all your available platforms. In Milez’ case we see very clearly that traffic spikes as soon as we announce new data or code changes to engine in the frequent flyer boards. We actually even get quite a few people responding to our posts with both positive and critical feedback.

Philipp Gysling is currently the President of the SCCC and a Director at Mesh Innovations, a web development company in Toronto.
LA SOIRÉE RACLETTE, TOUJOURS UN FRANC SUCCÈS
par Olivier Rodriguez

Le 23 février dernier s’est tenue comme à l’accoutumée la traditionnelle raclette de notre Chambre.

Dans le cadre de la chaleureuse et conviviale Auberge Saint-Gabriel, une centaine de participant se sont retrouvés pour se régaler de fromages, raclés à cette occasion par Marc Bolay, Olivier Schlegel et Alex Volery. Nous tenons à remercier vivement nos racleurs pour leur engagement car, pendant plus de deux heures, c’est sans relâche qu’ils ont raclé plusieurs centaines de raclettes afin de rassasier tous les amateurs de ce plat traditionnel suisse.

Cette soirée a donné l’occasion à notre président, Jean Serge Grisé, de remercier les convives présents et aux nouveaux membres de se présenter.

La traditionnelle tombola, orchestrée avec humour par Bruno Setz, comportait de nombreux prix très alléchants, dont la convoitée paire de billets d’avion pour la Suisse offert par Swiss qui, cette année, a été gagnée par notre nouveau membre M. Martin Nyffenegger de l’entreprise Thalyex et de son épouse Madame Julie Aubry – Golaz.

Nous profitons de cette occasion pour remercier encore une fois vivement nos commanditaires qui nous permettent chaque année d’enrichir cette tombola de lots variés et toujours très appréciés.

Un plus, nous tenons également à remercier Andreas Kraeuchi et sa fille, Sophie, qui ont tous deux contribué par leurs efforts à faire de cette soirée un moment très agréable.

En conclusion, la soirée raclette est toujours un franc succès et rendez-vous est déjà pris pour février 2013 !

Nos sincères remerciements à nos précieux commanditaires :
- Auberge Saint-Gabriel, Busch Vacuum, Chocolats Suisses Zucatti, Consulat Général de Suisse, Guerlain, Marketing de Fromages Suisses, Nespresso Canada, Rodania, Swiss International Air Lines, Vins VIP.

UN BON DÉPART AVEC NESPRESSO
Par Jean Serge Grisé

Le 7 mars dernier, la Chambre de commerce canado-suisse du Québec avait le plaisir d’accueillir le directeur général de Nespresso pour le Canada, Jacques Demont, qui, lors d’un petit-déjeuner-conférence, nous a entretenus du succès de la marque Nespresso au Canada.

Intitulée « Nespresso : un concept unique », la conférence de Jacques a bien cerné comment on construit et développe une marque dans un pays. Pour les membres de la Chambre, c’était une occasion unique de voir la création d’un succès et la façon dont une marque de prestige assure sa croissance dans un nouveau marché. La qualité suisse était à l’honneur.

Les membres ont grandement apprécié la présentation et la période des questions démontrait que le sujet les avait passionnés. La rencontre se déroulait au Café Ferreira et, bien sûr, les membres de l’équipe de Jacques Demont s’assurèrent que le café Nespresso coulait à flot.

DURANT ce déjeuner, nous avons aussi eu la joie de rencontrer un représentant de la Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain, monsieur Eric Prud’Homme et une responsable de la Chambre canadienne allemande de l’industrie et du commerce, madame Anna-Lena Gruenagel. Ceci fait partie d’un effort de notre chambre d’établir des liens avec les autres chambres de commerce importantes au Québec.
CENTRAL SWITZERLAND: REOPENING OF HOTEL FRUTT LODGE & SPA

Hotel Frutt Lodge & Spa on Melchsee-Frutt has just opened its doors. The hotel is located at 1,920 meters on the sunny high plateau of Melchsee-Frutt – in the midst of an intact alpine mountain world. The high alpine design of this classic lodge is unique and makes it an ideal hideaway offering rest, time, and space in the center of Switzerland, surrounded by a mystical landscape. The 4-star hotel has 58 rooms and three suites. Two restaurants and a bar, stylishly designed as well, complement the hotel operation at Fruit Lodge & Spa.

CRANS-MONTANA: GOLD RUSH OFFERS FOR 33 CARAT

A «real gold nugget» for visitors to Crans-Montana: Turning Crans-Montana into a holiday destination with just as much appeal as its European neighbours despite the weak euro is what the Valais resort is proposing this winter thanks to its «33 CARAT» offer.

Many of the partners taking part in this campaign to entice visitors have joined forces to create a solid gold offer, offering a reduction of -33% off list prices (33% off on accommodation, ski pass, ski hire and skiing lessons. Valid from 4 nights and 3 days skiing during that period: 19.11 to 24.12 / 07.01 to 11.02 / 10.03 to 06.04.

This unprecedented move gives visitors 50% more purchasing power! This should be a major incentive for Swiss and foreign tourists to come and have a great value stay in the Valais resort. All the more so because, on top of reductions on overnight stays, ski passes, ski hire and skiing lessons (from 4 nights, 3 days skipass in middle season), many of the resort’s retailers will also be making customers special offers on a daily basis. These include fixed-price menus in restaurants, sports accessories, leisure activities etc.; in short, offers which are easily visible when visiting the resort.

www.gold-fever.ch

Source: Switzerland Tourism
Groupe VGdR is a marketing company which organizes events that entertain and educate, inform and inspire.

Some examples are the annual Beaujolais Festival and other wine tasting soirées showcasing the wine regions of France, Switzerland, Italy and Spain; dinner parties featuring cuisine from various countries; gourmet cooking classes conducted by renowned chefs; dinner concerts presenting jazz or chamber music and sometimes a creative fusion of the two; salons featuring French and English authors; and many other extraordinary experiences.

These events are designed to provide experiential education on taste – specifically, in developing good taste, not just in food and wine, but also in books, art and music. These gatherings appeal to the well-educated, well-travelled, well-bred « bons vivants », the lifelong learners whose thirst for knowledge and zest for life make them enjoy the experience of constantly discovering something new and interesting, such as dishes from diverse cultures or wines and spirits that they have never tried before, particular food and beverage pairings that enhance the flavor of certain dishes, creative ways of expanding knowledge of the French language or learning about the effects of music on brain development.

The attendees of these events include an international mix of distinguished diplomats, business leaders, captains of industry, thought leaders, authors, cultural mavens and members of the media. As such, these events are fertile ground for making new business connections and collaborations.

Groupe VGdR assists individuals, companies and organizations who would like to reach and engage this desired demographic by hosting events that are far from the ordinary. Aside from organizing these events for them, Groupe VGdR also creates accompanying marketing communication materials in English, French, Spanish and German, delivered with substance and style that is clear, concise, creative and compelling.

If you would like to receive invitations to Groupe VGdR’s events or if you would like to discuss ideas on how Groupe VGdR can assist you in making your next event extraordinary, please e-mail Virginia Kuypers at virginia@groupevgdr.com.

The President of Groupe VGdR is Gaï de Ropraz who has over 35 years of international experience in fine wine and spirits. He used to be the Export Manager of Mumm’s Champagne covering 144 countries in 5 continents. His first novel, « La Mémoire des Vagues » was published in August 2009 and he has just completed another thriller entitled « Entre le Soleil et la Mort ». Here are his coordinates:

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E: gderopraz@sympatico.ca / gdr@groupevgdr.com

Quote of the Month
“A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is – it is what consumers tell each other it is.”
Scott Cook, co-founder Intuit

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INFO SUISSE
WIKIFAMILIES TO BUILD NEW DEVELOPMENT TEAM IN SWITZERLAND

Wikifamilies, Inc. (otcqb:WFAM) today announced that it is putting together a new software development center in Switzerland to complement and support its existing team in the United States. The need to expand resources is in response to demand and the company investigated several locations before deciding on Switzerland.

Commenting on the decision, CEO Malcolm Hutchinson said: “Switzerland offers many advantages for the company with a nine hour time difference with the West coast of the US, effectively giving us almost 24 hour continuous software development ability and customer support. In addition, with the concentration of private banking in Switzerland, many Swiss software developers are experts in digital security and confidentiality which is vital for Wikifamilies. Software development graduates from EPFL are amongst the best in the world.”

TIMBERCREEK ASSET MANAGEMENT OPENS EUROPEAN OFFICE

Timbercreek Asset Management (“Timbercreek” or “the Company”), is pleased to announce that it has expanded outside Canada and opened a new office in Zurich, Switzerland to support its growing global real estate investment platform. The Toronto-based Company, which manages approximately $2 billion in assets through its private and publicly-traded real estate-focused funds, already has a comprehensive network of offices across Canada.

“Our expansion into Europe is part of our commitment to building out a global investment platform with local resources who will source, underwrite and actively manage our real estate investments around the world,” explained Blair Tamblyn, Chief Executive Officer of Timbercreek. “We see the potential to open other offices in major global centres in the future.”

ACER GROUP BUILDS ITS NEW EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS IN TICINO

The Taiwanese Acer Group – second worldwide in the personal computer market – officially laid the foundation stone for its new European headquarters in September last year. The site, at Bioggio, near Lugano, is expected to open in early 2012.

Acer, which already employs around 140 people in Ticino, has decided to host all executive functions, finance and logistics in the canton. Around 100 new jobs are expected as a result.

“Canton Ticino in particular has been selected for its geographical strategic position that allows the optimum in communication and business exchanges between the European head offices; it guarantees a clear and precise legal system in matters of work law which is rigorous and strict.”

Source: Switzerland Trade & Investment Promotion

“We had to move this 700 ton component more than 400 miles. Scores of risks, but Zurich made us feel confident we were well covered.”

Herbert Peters, Managing Director, Sasol-Huntsman, Moers, Germany

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To learn more about this case, visit www.zurichcanada.com/risks

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Si je savoure si souvent ces si purs suisses-ci de la Suisse, c’est parce que ces si purs suisses-ci de la Suisse sont si savoureux. Pourquoi ces si purs suisses-ci de la Suisse sont-ils si savoureux déjà? Ces si purs suisses-ci de la Suisse sont si savoureux parce qu’ils sont faits comme seule la Suisse sait les faire. Si vrai, si pur, si Suisse. Si, si.

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