

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII **VOICE OF BUSINESS**

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VIRTUALIZE YOUR BUSINESS AND JOIN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

We who live in the most remote land mass on earth now have an unprecedented capability to instantly collaborate, transact, and communicate with nearly

any modern individual on the planet. Think globally when you buy, sell, or seek services. Capitalizes on these newfound capabilities, they are the wave of the future.

**MAKE YOUR OFFICE MOBILE
AND RUN YOUR BUSINESS
FROM VIRTUALLY ANYWHERE**





Peter Kay, Vice – Chair of the Chamber' Small Business Committee, and President of CyberCom, Inc. helps Hawaii companies globalize their operations. He is pictured here with Burt Lum, Sr. Products Manager at Hawaiian Telcom and moderator of bytemarks.org. Peter addressed how to virtualize office space at home during the Virtual Office Tool Kit training held by the Chamber, The City & County of Honolulu, the Affiliated Chamber and Business Organization Committee and the Chamber's Small Business Committee. The training featured tools a business could use to help improve work productivity in the digital era.



VIRTUALIZE YOUR BUSINESS AND JOIN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Peter Kay, President, CyberCom Inc.
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The continued convergence of high speed Internet connectivity, massive computing power on the desktop, and a highly skilled global workforce are providing extraordinary opportunities for Hawaii businesses. I believe we are at the earliest stage of a transformation that over the long term will have a far greater impact on our business community than the jet aircraft did on our visitor industry. We who live in the most remote land mass on earth have an unprecedented capability to instantly collaborate, transact, and communicate with nearly any modern individual on the planet. The degree to which your organization capitalizes on these newfound capabilities will have a profound influence on your future growth and capabilities.

THE BIG "AH HA" MOMENT WAITING FOR YOU

Hawaii's remote isolation has been a constant underlying fact since, well, the beginning of time. In the past ten

years, however, Internet-based technologies have all but eliminated the effects of isolation certainly as far as business communications is concerned. Our challenge is to rethink how we run a business that is not hampered by a 2,000 mile ocean radius and that means changing a cultural mindset that has been around for a millennium. The fundamental sea change (no pun intended) we all need to make is that today, your suppliers, customers, and employees can be located anywhere around the globe; it nearly makes no difference whether one is located in Maui, Montana, or Mumbai. Once you make the all-important shift in perspective to truly think globally when you buy, sell, or seek services, your business outlook will be forever changed and you too will join the globalized economy. In this article is a sampling of tools used to run a virtualized business that operates in a digital world not limited by time, space, or distance.

INTERNET-BASED TEXT, VOICE AND VIDEO COMMUNICATIONS

If phone, fax, and email are your primary means of communication, you're missing out on significant productivity gains. Instant messaging (IM) tools from companies like MSN and AOL allow virtual workgroups to send quick messages to each other's desktops and are a great way to communicate throughout the business day. Voice/video applications like Skype and Windows Live Messenger let you talk and video conference for free to anyone with an Internet connection. If you have hefty phone bills due to international or long-distance calls, find out if your contacts use these tools and drop your costs to zero.

IM makes it easy to pull together a geographically dispersed workforce into a cohesive team. Everyone's current status (active, away, busy, etc) is shared with the whole group. Asking a question or getting feedback is just a click away and



Also speaking at the Virtual Office Tool Kit training was Evan Leong, Manager, New Distinction Corp. dba Greater Good Radio/TV pictured here with Joan Bennet, President and CEO of the Bennet Group Strategic Communications.

communication is instant. Imagine having all your vendors, customer contacts, contractors, and employees instantly available and you will get an idea of what IM can do for you.

WEB-BASED PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND SALES MANAGEMENT TOOLS

One of the keys to running a virtualized business is to push all the management systems online. For many, this is a radical departure from the status quo but once the transition is made, an organization might find an order of magnitude productivity leap. Imagine a shared todo list that is available on a secured Web page that staff, vendors, and management can access for an instant status update. How much will customer service improve when anyone in the company, regardless of their current physical location (including on the road) can pull up all customer emails, proposals, and projects across your entire organization? Check out tools like Microsoft CRM, 37signals.com, salesforce.com, sugarcrm.com, and sproutit.com for starters.

ONLINE WORKFORCE AUGMENTATION


Where do you go when you need more people to work on a project and you just can't find the right resources



locally? Open your eyes to a whole new world and search for the right people around the globe. There are several sites that give you easy access to both freelance individuals and larger contracting firms. Just like the real world, you can hire someone online for just about anything. Elance.com is a like an ebay for professional services: you post your work specification and bidders compete for your business. You have ready access to their portfolio and comments from previous customers. Odesk.com is another service that is perfectly suited to hiring people on an hourly basis and automatically handles billing via credit card.

LOOKING FORWARD

Today's agile businesses have

virtualized their core operations such that critical information can be securely accessed online anytime, anywhere, from anyone using anything from a cell phone to desktop computer. Physical location is utterly irrelevant to getting the job done. Communication is instant as is access to key data that allows sales to close, products to ship, and ultimately, customers to be satisfied. It's not the world of the future. It's the world of today. Now, think what might happen when the world's most isolated business community fully realizes the potential of these tools? I predict the Jet Age will be seen as the calm before the storm of our true global potential. 



www.GreaterGoodRadio.com



www.GreaterGoodTelevision.com

EVAN LEONG, CEO AND KARI LEONG, PRESIDENT, NEW DISTINCTION CORP. DBA GREATER GOOD RADIO

When we started Greater Good Radio we knew we would have to be “virtual” in order to keep our costs reasonable. We couldn’t afford a big office and lots of staff so we improvised. We have a radio show, television show, written articles in 3 publications (weekly, monthly and bi-monthly), three internet websites and a book series all in the first two years of business. This is a complex myriad of tasks that need to get done in order to function and deliver on time. To pull this off we needed resources and we needed to be creative.

We determined that all non core functions will be outsourced, partnered or contracted. The incorporation, legal and accounting is all done by outside companies. We use Damon Key Leong Kupchak & Hastert for legal and Kobayashi Doi & Lum CPA’s for accounting. Our answering service is handled by C&J Telecommunications. Printing publications is not our specialty so we partner with companies such as Star Bulletin, PacificNews.net, Oceanic

and Watermark Publishing. Television is through KGMB9 and radio is through KKEA 1420 AM. Companies such as ProService Hawaii can take HR and payroll of your hands so you can focus on your core business.

If outsourcing doesn’t work or isn’t enough, try offshoring with a partner. Most small companies don’t have the resources or expertise to open an offshore branch office in India, China or the Philippines. We decided to go with a local company that provides offshore employees for our company in a turnkey solution. One company we hired is Lyon Tech Solutions www.lyontechsolutions.com here in Honolulu who has run a Philippines branch office for over 30 years. We tell them what kind of employee we need and they do the rest. They recruit the prospects, screen the resumes, conduct initial interviews, negotiate the salary, provide the office space, computer, direct phone line, handle payroll and admin and provide a professional and pleasant work environment. The

employee is then managed by our company and we pay Lyon once a month for their services.

Make your office mobile. I can run my business from virtually anywhere with an internet connection and fairly fast computer. Local company Blackbird www.blackbirdnest.com offers a comprehensive virtual office suite that allows you to use Microsoft Office and Exchange from any computer with a broadband internet connection. Other web programs like www.gotomypc.com allow us to remotely access our desktop computers. I use the Sony SZ series laptop to do presentations along with a Sprint EVDO card to get mobile broadband internet. With my Sony laptop and Sprint card I can run my business anywhere. Through free web services like www.skype.com I once did an internet call on my laptop while driving between meetings. It was the same as talking on a speaker phone, however the call was to the Philippines and was free.

Knowledge is power...and can save hours of research. There is always someone better, smarter and more advanced in technology that can save you countless hours and headache. His name is Ryan Ozawa and can be found on Burt Lum’s Bytemarks newsgroup. <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/Bytemarks/>

Utilize the resources at The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii and if you’re not a member, join now. We joined the Chamber right after we started the company and have no regrets. The Chamber can help your business grow and prosper. How? They host numerous events, trainings and conferences that allow business owners and managers opportunities to learn, network and grow. If you’re not a member yet, call the Chamber today at 545-4300 or go to www.cochawaii.org to find out more. 