

Transitioning from employee to employer

by Stella Shepard

Daisy a Day Flowers & Gifts has been a landmark in Souris since 1978. It's changed ownership over the years but it has stood the test of time, and the business is still going strong.

Louise MacKinnon is a former employee and the current owner. She is still providing the same level of professional services 40 years later.

"People know the name and the shop, especially people who grew up in Souris and have remained loyal customers," says Louise. "I grew up in Souris and the community knows me, which made it easier transferring to ownership."

Over a span of eight years, Louise worked under four different owners as a floral designer and clerk. In May 2018, she was approached by the owner with an offer to buy the business.

"It was an offer I couldn't refuse, and I took the risk of taking ownership of the business. The owner was relocating to another province and left sooner than expected. I went from employee to employer almost overnight. It's worth the financial investment because I love what I do and the service I provide."

Transferable skills

Louise had taken a two-year business program years ago, but she has been learning on the job since she started working with this business. "I learned from a professional florist, and that led to attending floral design courses off-Island," says Louise.

"The transferable skills I obtained over the years as a manager, marketer and florist helped with the transition to ownership."

Steps to self-employment

1. Louise developed a business plan. "The business plan was time consuming but well worth it," says Louise. "It is an important step in becoming self-employed because it determines if your business will be viable. The business plan allows you to take a calculated risk and gives you confidence."
2. She contacted Innovation PEI based in Souris.
3. Innovation PEI connected Louise to SkillsPEI in Montague.
4. Louise applied for the Self-Employ PEI program offered through SkillsPEI. This program provides financial support and business counselling to new entrepreneurs during their first year of operation.

Staffing needs

"I hire part-time help during the busier times of the year," says Louise.

"I am planning this to be a long-term business to pass down to another generation. My youngest daughter, Renee, has a love for flowers. She enjoys helping in the shop after school and is learning the names of the flowers and plants. I am hoping to pass the business down to our children if any of them have interest in becoming a florist."

Business advice

"Hire a bookkeeper, which is a life saver because they will keep your paperwork on track. Allowing a professional to do the book work could be vital to the success of your business and it's definitely worth the investment."



Louise MacKinnon is the new owner of Daisy a Day Flowers & Gifts, located at 147 Main Street, Souris.

Entrepreneurial advice

"Age does not matter when it comes to starting a business," says Louise. "If you have a good idea, research it. Check out the competition in your area. If your product is unique in the area, it will be a bonus. And seek a visible location if it's a store front."

For more information, contact **Louise MacKinnon** at 902-687-3328 or visit www.facebook.com/daisyadayflorist

For more information about the **Self Employ PEI program**, visit www.skillspei.ca



Meet the staff at the Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC) in Montague

by Stella Shepard

CBDC East is a not-for-profit organization managed by a volunteer Board of Directors, dedicated to helping businesses start up and expand in the Eastern PEI region.

The resources at CBDC provide a stepping stone to becoming self-employed by helping entrepreneurs turn a skill and a passion into a viable business or expand an existing business.

"We provide business loans, counselling, advice, entrepreneurship development, and business training," says **Martina MacDonald**, Executive Director.

"When considering the approval of business loans, our eight-member Board of Directors puts more emphasis on the vision, passion, skill, and background of the clients."

Martina says small businesses are rapidly growing in rural PEI, and are one of the most important drivers of the local economy. "Small businesses are a huge tax contributor to the Island economy. They provide employment, and as well, their tax dollars fund services such as schools and hospitals."



Martina MacDonald



Helen Antle



Terri Taylor

"One of the greatest success stories for CBDC East is our Successful Business Basics program. Since conception, more than 100 small businesses have participated in the program. We called it a 15-hour investment in your business."

Helen Antle, Business Development Loans Officer, has many transferable skills from her former employment as a financial service officer at the Souris Credit Union.

"We have had great success with people who had a dream, skills, and a passion, but also had challenges," says Helen.

"We were able to put them through our training program and provide them with funding, and they are now happily self-employed."

Terri Taylor, Account Manager, handles the account files from the first to the last loan payment. She is a point of contact for anyone having a challenge making a payment.

"I work closely with each and every client to develop a customized repayment plan and I offer solutions to any issues that may come up," says Terri.

Three CBDC locations on PEI serve rural clients in Montague, Summerside, and West Prince.

For more information, contact the **CBDC** location nearest you:

Montague: 902-838-4030 Summerside: 902-888-3793 Alberton: 902-853-3636 Visit www.cbdc.ca



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February 2019

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