

Local business organizations helped entrepreneur's early start

When Brent Schneider was told to make his mistakes young, he took the advice to heart. Catch is, the 20-something entrepreneur and owner of Schneider's Computing and Websites Ltd. in Mitchell hasn't made a really bad one yet. "I've been doing this for seven years now," Schneider says of his business, which offers web hosting and design, computer sales, repairs and consultation, graphic design, office supplies and printing, and Bell Solo Mobility and Internet sales, to name just a few services. "I started in Grade 9 with a Canadian government grant from the Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation that was offered through the Summer Company Program and the business just grew from there," he says. "In 2008 I was the regional finalist for Student Entrepreneur of the Year. Everybody told me to do it, to put myself out there - and I have." In Schneider's case, "everybody" included the Perth Community Futures Development Corporation and staff at the Stratford Perth Centre for Business. "I've consulted with them over the years," he said, explaining he's turned to both organizations for opinions on a wide variety of subjects including a venture into the world of newspaper publishing that was a success, just "not what I wanted to do." Schneider's also benefited from grant and loans flowed to other small businesses that invested their money in website development and hosting. Most recently, Schneider says Centre staff helped him arrange financing to open a second storefront operation in Stratford. But calculated risk-taking and expert advice are only two parts of Schneider's formula for success. A third, according to the veteran entrepreneur, is putting customers first. "We try and give our customers the very best value for their money possible," Schneider said, explaining that a significant number of his clients didn't grow up with computers and therefore aren't as familiar with them. There's a certain amount of loyalty that comes with simply being local, he admits - but in tough economic times, companies like Schneider's Computing still need to remain competitive to survive. "It means customer service, it means price matching the big box stores... sometimes it's tough to do, but it's the main difference between us and the other guys," he said. To find out more about Schneider's Computing & Websites Ltd., call 348-0042, visit one of the company's storefronts, or point your browser to scomputing.com where you can shop for laptops, cameras, GPS and office supplies online. You can also find Schneider's Computing on Facebook, follow the company on Twitter and watch testimonials about customer service on YouTube. Perth Community Futures Development Corporation and the Stratford Perth Centre for Business are dedicated to helping local businesses succeed; call them toll free at 1-877-595-7570 to find out how they can help you.