

Taking Business Online

The development of the internet has revolutionized the way Americans do business. Online commerce is booming, and even brick and mortar businesses have found that a good website can be a huge boon to the bottom line. Even so, many business owners find the ins and outs of digital marketing and sales daunting. For this reason, on July 27, BRCEDA partnered with the Crossroads Institute to host a seminar to address these issues, called “Making E-Commerce Work for Your Business”. A panel of local experts discussed ways in which a small business can use websites, social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and online advertising to improve profitability.

Panel moderator Sam Bartlett provided the opening remarks emphasizing the extraordinarily rapid growth of the internet and the effect of this growth on Digital Juice, his first e-commerce venture. Following these remarks he introduced the rest of the panel, who each took a moment to discuss their particular e-commerce specialties. The floor was then opened to questions from the audience.

Randall Hines, the owner of SouthWest Virginia Business Network, LLC, discussed the use of social media networks in building an interest base. As an example he mentioned one of his websites, theblueridgemountains.com, which is able to reach a network of 177,000 people through its associated Twitter account.

Terri Nichols discussed her work with Fox Creek Leather, a successful internet-based business in Independence, VA. Her work there has focused on their website, which she displayed and commented upon for the audience. She also provided valuable input on customer service and dealing with online purchasing systems.

Everett Sizemore, a respected expert in search engine optimization, explained the concept of SEO and introduced some of the principles and guidelines of optimizing one’s website. He also provided input on crowd-sourced marketing with Facebook, affiliated marketers, and online advertising.

The Blue Ridge Crossroads Region is Virginia’s “Entrepreneurial Region.”

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Carroll – Galax – Grayson VIRGINIA

The panel discussion was the second in a series of events at Crossroads focusing on particular aspects of creating and running a small business. The first event, a general look at entrepreneurship, was held in March.

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