

## Your People Are Your Best Investment



When it becomes increasingly difficult to stay ahead of your competition, one of the best investments you can make is to develop your staff. Not only can a well-trained and highly skilled team help differentiate your business from your competitors, offering training and certification options can also be a valuable means of retaining valuable personnel.

With BNL, finding the right development opportunity for each member of your team couldn't be easier. Our members offer a wide range of training and certification alternatives suitable for all industries and skill levels. And, because of the value it can bring to your business, training is a great use of your barter dollars.

Consider the fact that your staff are your business' face to the world, representing your company to both clients and prospects. That's why well-trained, enthusiastic people who know exactly what their job is and exactly how to do it are the key to earning your customers' trust and, in turn, growing your business. This applies to both technical and interpersonal skills.

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### Welcome back to the *Trading Post*

This issue of our newsletter, the BNL *Trading Post*, was designed to help you use barter to your best advantage.

As Canada's largest barter exchange, we want to communicate with you on a regular basis to ensure that you are aware of all of the exciting products and services that Barter Network offers.

The feature article in this issue ("Your People Are Your Best Investment"), discusses the many business benefits of offering job-related technical and interpersonal training to your staff. The second article ("Checklist for Choosing the Right Training Opportunities") provides tips on how to select the right training opportunities for your organization.

As always, Barter Network is a great resource for your business when it comes to training and development opportunities for all industries and skill levels. Please refer to the member listings at the back of the *Trading Post* for more information.

If you have any questions about the topics discussed in this issue of the *Trading Post*, or for more information about any of our members, please contact your BNL Trade Broker at (416) 485-9393 in Toronto or toll-free at 1 (866) DO-BARTER (1-866-362-2783).

### Barter Network Ltd.

181 Eglinton Ave. East Suite 303 Toronto Ontario M4P 1J4  
 email: [inquiries@barternetwork.ca](mailto:inquiries@barternetwork.ca) [sales@barternetwork.ca](mailto:sales@barternetwork.ca)

tel: (416) 485-9393 | (866) DO-BARTER  
 fax: (416) 485-0087 | (866) 362-2783

Providing technical training for your employees will not only improve your confidence in their abilities, but it will also improve their own confidence relative to their job, and give them the tools they need to make effective decisions and develop alternative solutions to help solve problems.

**The average cost of hiring and training a new employee in 2004 was US\$4,262.00, or approximately 14 to 29 percent of the employee's total salary.**

- 2004 Recruiting Metrics and Performance Benchmark Report

Interpersonal training can work wonders for your employees' happiness, energy and productivity, which has many positive implications for your business. Team building exercises can improve work relationships among your staff and boost morale.

While there is an investment involved in training staff, it costs significantly less to develop existing staff than to hire and train a new employee. In fact, according to the *2004 Recruiting Metrics and Performance Benchmark Report*, published by Staffing.org, Inc., the average cost of hiring and training a new employee in 2004 was US\$4,262.00, or approximately 14 to 29 percent of the employee's total salary. In addition, it takes an average of 8 months for a new employee to reach his or her required performance level. Your barter investment in training has a very real potential to bring you a *cash* return, many times over.

Most people who take their career seriously value the opportunity to learn. A 2004 report by Statistics Canada on its *Adult Education and Training Survey* indicates that one out of every three adult workers

participates in some formal type of job-related training. Interestingly, though, the same report indicates that, nationally, only one quarter of all adult workers take employer-sponsored training.

With employers sponsoring training for only 25 percent of adult workers, this leaves more than 8 percent of those furthering their job-related skills paying out-of-pocket, and two thirds of working adults receive no training at all. That's why company-paid training, to a motivated employee, is a serious job benefit. Providing training to your staff demonstrates commitment to your employees and can foster both employee loyalty and retention, so they don't feel the need to leave you for an employer who *does* offer training.

There are many business benefits to ensuring that your staff are adequately trained, but don't forget that as the owner/manager, your employees will follow *your* lead. You may have exceptional technical skills, but how do your managerial and leadership skills measure up? Many BNL members offer training and courses ideal for business owners and managers.

**1 out of 3 adult workers participates in some formal type of job-related training, but only 25 percent of this training is employer-sponsored.**

- Statistics Canada, 2004

So consider investing in your employees with training opportunities from BNL – we're confident that you will see the value and competitive advantages that come from maintaining a staff of trained professionals.

Contact your BNL Trade Broker to learn what specific training programs could benefit your company and its employees.

## Checklist for Choosing the Right Training Opportunities

When you make the decision to pursue training opportunities for yourself and your staff, the courses you choose should offer real business benefits for your company, benefit the learning and morale of employees, and offer a good return on investment.

- Assess business needs as compared to your staff's current skills.
- Ask for a detailed course synopsis to ensure that the content is both up-to-date and appropriate for your business.
- Determine whether the course will generate a measurable business advantage or contribute to employee satisfaction.
- Some courses offer certification, so consider whether this is of importance to you.

- Consider whether improved employee skills in the area of the course content will lead to the ability to "win" more business.
- If the training is offered in-class, consider whether the class times may conflict with work hours or project deadlines, or whether it will require you or your staff to train on personal time and how this will affect personal or family commitments.
- Consult with your employees to ensure that they actually want to complete additional training.

Our best advice is to involve your staff in the training process as they should have a good sense of current and future skills requirements. Contact your BNL trade broker for further assistance.

# BNL Member Profiles

## High Performing Teams

### Linda Somers

High Performing Teams provides consulting services to help businesses develop a sustainable competitive advantage. Services include productivity audits, strategic planning, leadership development and team building. Certified business coaching is also offered.

Founder Linda Somers received her Masters in Adult Education from the University of Toronto in 1977 and has provided organization effectiveness services for over twenty-five years. She works with all levels of staff seniority, offering customized solutions to manage organizational change and meet specific business needs.

For the past 16 years, High Performing Teams has delivered consulting and training services to clients in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. Linda works in partnership with her clients to understand their unique challenges and creates processes that will produce sustainable results.

Key consultation services to help your business develop **High Performing Teams** include:

1. **Organization Assessment**, to deliver optimum organizational structure and work flow systems as well as increased clarity of communication and higher team productivity.
2. **Strategic and Business Planning**, to ensure that an effective mission, objectives and operational plans are in place and employee efforts are directed towards shared goals.
3. **Performance Management Systems**, to provide clear expectations for management and staff and a process to evaluate productivity, identify performance gaps and develop action plans for improvement.
4. **Professional and Management Training**, for productivity improvements and more clearly defined standards of performance.

5. **Team Building**, to develop action plans that address team performance issues and foster teamwork that delivers results.

For more information, contact your BNL Trade Broker.

### Constellation Learning Inc.

[www.4trust.net](http://www.4trust.net)

### Timothy Barlow

Founded in 1998, Constellation Learning teaches people how to trust themselves. Skilled facilitators and human empowerment specialists offer workshops and experiential programs designed to dramatically and immediately increase your self-confidence, reduce stress, improve your communication and create sustainable results.

Constellation Learning's Leadership Dynamics class teaches the skills to enable and motivate others and help build strong teams. While the typical definition of leadership tends to focus on a position of authority and not the qualities inherent to being a great leader, and leaders are generally believed to be born to lead or are thought to be "naturally authoritative," Constellation Learning believes true leadership starts with a clear vision of self.

Leadership Dynamics teaches the skills to enable and motivate others to help build strong teams. Leadership is about making timely, confident decisions. It's about resolving conflict quickly and smoothly, and adapting to changing business conditions without losing sight of key goals and objectives. Constellation Learning believes that leaders are individuals who are fully accountable for the results they create.

To learn more, contact your BNL Trade Broker today.



# BNL Member Listing

## **Balance Coaching & Consulting** [www.balancecoaching.com](http://www.balancecoaching.com)

### **Michael Ehling**

Balance Coaching & Consulting specializes in coaching both executives and teams in business to improve their individual and organizational performance using several assessment tools and practical techniques based on a variety of different disciplines. Career coaching is also available.

## **Crossroads Management Group** [www.crossroadsmanagement.ca](http://www.crossroadsmanagement.ca)

### **Ken Hicks**

Crossroads Management Group provides sales training, customer service training, and consulting services with a proven process and support system that takes all the guesswork out of addressing customer needs.

## **The Dream Builders** [www.thedreambuildersinc.com](http://www.thedreambuildersinc.com)

### **Michael McGauley**

The Dream Builders delivers inspiring and motivational workshops and seminars in leadership and stress management throughout North America to help companies achieve their maximum potential.

## **Labow Enterprises**

### **Sharon Labow**

Labow Enterprises offers communication training and customer service seminars to allow people to get their message across effectively.

## **Peak Performers Network** [www.peakperformers.net](http://www.peakperformers.net)

### **Jonathan Weaver**

After 20 years in business, Peak Performers Network boasts "a proven program to increase your sales and productivity by 20 to 30 percent." Sales seminars feature top speakers in North America. Platinum, Gold and Silver annual memberships are available, as well as individual seminars.

## **Whole System Changes Inc.** [www.wholesystems.ca](http://www.wholesystems.ca)

### **April Boyington Wall**

Whole System Changes offers a range of services including business writing, mediation, strategic planning, management training, team building, group facilitation and more to help employees, managers and executives respond quickly and effectively to new priorities and challenges and achieve their business and personal goals.

## **Computer and IT Training**

### **Computer Help** [www.computer-help.ca](http://www.computer-help.ca)

#### **Michele Kennedy**

Computer Help has been offering computer training to Canadian businesses since 1986, and now offers courses at three Greater Toronto Area locations. Courses are offered in Excel, Access, Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, Internet, FrontPage, HTML, Project Publisher, Visio, Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and more.

### **Learn to Trade** [www.learn-to-trade.com](http://www.learn-to-trade.com)

#### **Brian Kerr**

Learn to Trade is a professional trading firm providing its members with the tools necessary to trade successfully in today's complex markets. Three-day courses are offered to enable attendees to master stock market trading techniques and trade the financial markets using market analysis.

### **LS Edutech** [www.lsedutech.com](http://www.lsedutech.com)

#### **Selwyn Edwards**

LS Edutech teaches computer skills for all ages, with students ranging from kindergarten to high school students as well as parents and retirees. Teacher Technology Skills training is also offered, as well as the design of academic and educational web spaces for learning institutions.

### **Servitor Training Services** [www.servtraining.com](http://www.servtraining.com)

#### **AJ Butler**

Servitor Training Services offers a wide variety of hands-on computer courses designed to improve the skills of professionals. These include courses on Microsoft Office, graphics and web design, Internet, programming, accounting, networking and more.

### **Townshend College of Business & Computers** [www.townshendcollege.com](http://www.townshendcollege.com)

#### **Jerry Townshend**

Townshend College of Business & Computers is a government-registered private career college, offering diploma and non-diploma courses on a variety of computer, technology and business-related topics to both corporations and individuals.