

SEB Enterprise Award Winner Profiles



Denny Allen Media Relations
Denny Allen
Centennial College -
Canadian Business Resources Centre

Denny Allen sees her layoff from a high-profile job at a major bank as one of the best things that ever happened to her. As a seasoned professional with over 20 years of communications expertise with the likes of Microsoft, American Express and Glaxo, she is one of the lucky few who have made the transition to self-employment quite easily. She has appeared as a media spokesperson on CBC National News, CTV and Global Television and has been quoted in major newspapers across the nation including the Globe and Mail, Toronto Star and National Post. Recent accomplishments include teaching the post-university media relations course at Toronto's Centennial College and becoming the media relations analyst for the new television station Toronto One. Denny credits the Canadian Business Resource Centre for teaching her that when your gut tells you you're good at something, you've got to follow your instincts and do it. For more information on Denny Allen Media Relations visit www.dennyallen.com.

"If you picture your dream and really see it... it will happen."



SailorJones Media
Barbara Jones
Centennial College -
Centre of Entrepreneurship

Barbara Jones' self-employment venture was a product of the workplace upheavals of the 1990s. Fed up with the industry's instability and her career's stuttering progress, she set off on her own and never looked back. Barbara brings over 20 years of media experience to SailorJones Media and has become a connoisseur of the future of interactive television in Canada. She started her career as a reporter and since then has worked primarily in television and new media, serving over 25 countries around the globe. Some of her proudest accomplishments include launching TV networks in Latin America and developing web sites for the Food Network, The Weather Channel and the Travel Channel, just to name a few. Since its launch in 2001, with the help of Centre of Entrepreneurship, her company has developed interactive products for clients such as CFMT/OMNI Television, CBC and the Biography Channel. For more information on SailorJones

"This has helped me expand my experience and become more well-rounded."



Concrete Builders of Canada
Jeff Mole
Community MicroSkills Development Canada

After working in the automotive finance industry for some 20 years, Jeff Mole decided he was ready for a change. So Jeff redirected his talents and energy to construction, his true passion and a line of work that's quite marketable. An entrepreneur at heart, he developed a business that specializes in building R-2000 certified homes made with insulated concrete, ICF forms, and radiant floor heating systems. The concept was so popular Jeff has franchised the operation, and in addition to building houses he also provides his franchisees with the support they need to help other builders and homebuyers achieve "the ultimate in durability, comfort and style." Thanks to MicroSkills, Jeff was able to hone his self-employment abilities and fill knowledge gaps, key factors in the success his business enjoys today. And, this business success has provided the opportunity to merge his career and lifestyle goals, specifically his lifelong wish to move to Northern Ontario. For more information on Concrete Builders of Canada visit www.concretebuilders.ca.

"It pays to work on your business, not just in your business."

eWings Canada Academy of Business and Technology
Claire (Jiyu) Lin
JVS Toronto



Even with impressive credentials in teaching, finance and management, it was difficult for Claire Lin to find a place in Canada's work force. Her first two years in the country involved 12-hour days working in telemarketing and customer service, and even a bout at a coffee house before she could finally break into her field of choice. Her own experience as an immigrant seeking skills training and employment inspired the vision to help other students, immigrants, and foreign trained professionals find their way. With a newly acquired Webmaster of Science diploma and the help of JVS, she made that vision a reality by launching her own learning academy specializing in short-term, hands-on training for sectors such as business administration, Internet development and health care. A big part of her company's mission is also to help people on social assistance return to work within five months. For more information on eWings Canada Academy of Business and Technology, visit www.ewingscanada.com.

"Starting a business is tough. Starting a business as an immigrant is tougher."

SEB Enterprise Award Winner Profiles



Xtine Promotions & Consulting
Christine Porter
Learning Enrichment Foundation

Christine Porter had her first taste of entrepreneurship at a very young age. Her beginnings included a lemonade stand, transforming her backyard into a fairground and creating a school savings bank. Her business bug would become a lifelong passion. After spending many adult years in an unfulfilling corporate environment, Christine is now a self-employed Strategic Merchandising Specialist - a marketing guru who develops and implements marketing initiatives for businesses. Thanks to her creative flair and 10 years of experience, along with guidance from the Learning Enrichment Foundation, Christine's company has produced successful marketing strategies for the likes of ADT Security, Carleton Productions, Cistel Technology Inc. and the Ontario Printing & Imaging Association. She is also helping to shape Canada's next generation of entrepreneurs by volunteering as a mentor for Youth Jobs Summer Company, a program that helps students start their own summer businesses. For more information on Xtine Promotions and Consulting visit www.xtinepc.com.

"My motto for success is: I believe I can fly."



RELEVATE
Avinash Singh
Toronto Business Development Centre

Avinash Singh is one of the rare individuals who has successfully launched a company in Internet technology, a field still challenged by years of instability. Although he already had a solid understanding of his business before he created RELEVATE, it's thanks to the SEB Program at the Toronto Business Development Centre that he became a true businessman. RELEVATE is an IT infrastructure services company specializing in developing, implementing, and maintaining growing computer networks for businesses. What's especially remarkable is that this small group of a dozen or so contractors competes against large corporations and more often than not, wins. Avinash has never lost sight of the fact that he's not only creating a job for himself, he's creating an organization. Through it all, Avinash lives and breathes his business. He sees everything in the world as a potential business opportunity. It's become who he is. For more information on RELEVATE visit

"The difference between an employee and an employer is not just know-how and ambition, it's also mindset."



Decollect
Wenda Thomson
YMCA Small Business Centre

With a wildly eclectic background as an advertising producer, English teacher, archaeologist, photographer, on-line film salesperson and 20th century antiques collector, Wenda Thomson dreamed of a way to merge all her assorted pursuits and build her own company. With help from the YMCA, she did exactly that. By corralling and cultivating her existing skills and expanding her knowledge of the nuts-and-bolts of business, Wenda launched Decollect, one of the largest on-line sources for original art deco and machine age artifacts, serving clients worldwide. The website's success generated coverage in Style at Home Magazine and The Globe and Mail, displays at Toronto's prestigious Carlu, cocktail events in partnership with the LCBO and an art gallery in Port Hope. When it comes to starting a business, Wenda is a firm believer that you get as much out of it as you put into it. For more information on Decollect (or to perchance pick up a tasty little cocktail shaker) visit www.decollect.com.

"If you build it (right), they will come."