

SMALL BUSINESS NET BEAT

Minister's Message

Invest in your own future

These trying economic times can be especially difficult for small businesses. With consumer spending down and many large companies scaling back their operations, this could be the time to regroup, cut back, and wait out the economic cycle.

Not true! Experience and history show us that there are many, many opportunities during economic downturns. What do Campbell's Soup, Hewlett-Packard, *Fortune* magazine, Revlon and Motorola all have in common? Each of these great companies was launched during a recession or depression. There are many more examples, but the important thing for those already in business today is to seize this opportunity. It's time to reinvent your company's relationships with customers and suppliers.

Learn more about your customers – discover what they want now and what they will want in the future. Their loyalty will be your reward. Instead of reducing your prices, offer your customers more value for their dollar, and ask the same of your suppliers. If you have plans for expansion, move them ahead. Now is the time to gain market share from competitors who are not leveraging their opportunities as you are.

If your business has slowed, you likely have some time to devote to these activities. Invest it now. When things pick up, as we all know they will, you will be positioned to take your company to greater successes than you ever imagined.

Harinder S. Takhar,

Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services

Did You Know?

- > Ontario's Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) generate **\$250 billion** in economic activity annually.
- > In Ontario, recent immigrants have a majority ownership in **1.3 per cent** of SMEs. Visible minorities are majority owners of **9.7 per cent** of SMEs.
- > The largest concentration of self-employed individuals in Ontario work in professional, scientific and technical services (**15.6 per cent**), followed by the construction industry (**13.9 per cent**) and wholesale and retail trade (**13.1 per cent**).

Small business wins at TRIEC's Immigrant Success Awards

A small consulting and venture technology firm in Mississauga was honoured recently at the Immigrant Success (IS) Awards of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). **Nytric Limited** won the RBC Best Immigrant Employer category. At Nytric, more than two-thirds of the employees are skilled immigrants. The team's knowledge of diverse languages and cultures helps them market products in India and negotiate with suppliers and manufacturers in China. The IS Awards recognize employers and individuals in the Toronto region that demonstrate leadership by recruiting, retaining and promoting skilled immigrants in the workplace. For more on the IS Awards, visit www.isawards.ca.



The winners at Nytric – back row, from left: **KK Chan** (senior design engineer), **Ted Chen** (director product development and manufacturing), **Av Utukuri** (president and chief technology officer) and **Fred Lee** (marketing assistant). Front row, from left: **Nick Molo** (industrial and mechanical engineer) and **Riddhesh Raval** (senior software engineer).



Get the skilled workers you need, fast

It's a familiar problem faced by many small business owners: you can't find the right person to fill that specialized position. Your research tells you that there is a shortage of workers with the training and skills you need. Where do you turn? The new Opportunities Ontario: Provincial Nominee Program may solve your problem. Opportunities Ontario helps you hire abroad, or hire a temporary foreign worker or an international student who has studied in Canada for a managerial, professional or highly skilled position. This program lets employers apply for the approval of permanent, full-time positions to be filled by foreign nationals, and recruit the foreign nationals they need to fill those crucial positions. For details, visit www.ontario.ca/immigration.



File and pay your Ontario taxes online

ONT-TAXS online is a new service from the Ontario Ministry of Revenue that makes filing and paying business taxes faster and easier than ever.

SMEs and their tax representatives can now eliminate a large part of their paper burden, needless travel time and waits in line by using the free online service at www.ontario.ca/revenue.

ONT-TAXS online uses secure government technology to protect your tax information, offering the same level of security you receive with Internet banking at North American financial institutions.

The benefits are many: speed, convenience, security, and no more paper littering your desk and filling up your shredder. Visit www.ontario.ca/revenue today and sign up online. Tax representatives filing for multiple clients can also sign up by calling 1 866 ONT-TAXS (1 866 668-8297).

The summer job hunt is closer than you think



If you have or know kids in school, it's that time again – time to find a summer job. There are traditional ways, and then there is Summer Company program, a unique program of the Ministry of Small Business and Consumer Services (MSBCS). Students aged 15–29 can start and run their own summer business, with up to \$3000 in funding and advice from volunteer mentors and MSBCS consultants. Remind the future entrepreneurs among your family and friends that the very popular program (99 per cent of participants would recommend it to a friend) is accepting applications until May 4, 2009 or earlier if the program is oversubscribed for this summer. Students can apply online at the [Summer Company](http://www.ontario.ca/summercompany) home page.

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Upcoming Events

- **Guelph Wellington Enterprise Centre**, *E-Biz Forum, Bring Your Business into the Technological 21st Century*, Guelph, March 9, 2009
- **London Small Business Centre**, *E-business 101, Get Your Business Online*, seminar, London, March 11, 2009
- **Business Access Canada**, *Helping Business Sell to the Government*, Toronto, March 4, 11, 18, 25, 2009
- **Summer Company** deadline is May 4, 2009 or earlier if the program is full.