

Boost your business? Head to the library

Written By **MEGAN RENKEMA**

Many small business owners often struggle with issues such as workforce retention, staff engagement and employee development. It can be difficult to find the time and money for training and professional development despite the fact that, according to the Financial Post, "higher spending on employee training and efforts to create strong corporate learning cultures actually reduce turnover, increase employee engagement, and improve productivity and customer satisfaction. Employees recognize and appreciate the investment, and reward employers with greater loyalty and productivity, which in turn, makes customers happy." (Munro, 2014)

Investing in your employees through career and succession planning and continuous learning is a proven way to retain your workers and your local library can help.

The Caledon Public Library offers many resources to support local small business owners. One resource offered is free, unlimited access to Gale Courses, an online service that offers interactive, instructor-led courses designed for personal as well as professional development. Business owners can turn to Gale Courses to create co-directed learning paths for their employees.

The beauty of Gale Courses is that you don't have to spend anything on the courses, as they are free if you have a valid library card. While Gale Courses are not the answer to all training needs, they can help your employees acquire basic or advanced knowledge of common Microsoft Office applications, learn how to use Windows 10, or even develop fundamental skills for supervision. Using Gale Courses can help to give employees goals and objectives that can potentially lead to a stronger sense of purpose within your organization. Completion of courses can even be tied to formal or informal performance appraisals.

Business owners and managers can also rely on these courses to develop their own skills and knowledge without paying hefty course fees.

Rather than signing up for an expensive and time-consuming classroom-based course, you can select a start date that works for you, and then progress through the course at your own pace over the following six week period, without paying a cent.

Of course, the Library has many other business-related resources in addition to Gale Courses. Our expert staff can assist you in finding the right book on leadership skills, direct you to the best government websites to source small business grants, help you find resources to get you started on your business plan, or simply assist you in connecting to our free wi-fi or to reserve a hotspot. Whatever your needs may be, Caledon Public Library is a great place to start.

You can find our business resources including Gale Courses listed on our "ADULT" page of the Library website, or contact us at 905-857-1400 or reference@caledon.library.on.ca.