

Attitude adjustment goes a long way

Campbell River Mirror - January 13, 2009 5:00 PM



I've had a lot of conversations over the last week about the pulse of the business community and how our members are managing in this economic climate.

Those conversations have happened both within and outside the community and it's been insightful to hear reflections that have been both positive and negative.

The discussions included the upcoming federal budget announcements in February, as response to this economic downturn, through to the uncertainty expounded in the media around a crumbling infrastructure.

These ongoing conversations seem to have created an unprecedented polarizing of opinions between positive and negative and threat and opportunity around the same issues. It sounds familiar, like the age old question around is the glass half empty or half full?

And from those conversations it's fair to say without sounding too simplistic, that having the right attitude – and a positive one at that – has gone a long way to differentiating those communities, businesses and individuals who appear to be coping much better with the current situation.

In our own community, I can share that in conversations with many of our members, they are reporting that business in 2008 was comparable to 2007 and in some cases both retailers and other small business operations had one of their best quarters earlier on in the year.

But financial measurement is only a part of the picture of a healthy business operation, albeit obviously an important one.

No community is without challenges but what separates communities is their willingness to come together and identify those challenges and the priority solutions that will lead to change.

We now know the challenges of the economic downturn are with us for the time being but we also are starting to recognize and believe that we have the opportunity to effect change with a positive attitude that focuses on solutions and advocacy. It's a powerful message.

Those conversations continued right into the weekend at our extremely productive Campbell River Chamber board retreat this past Saturday. The board discussed the critical role that the Campbell River Chamber has and will continue to play in analyzing those issues and solutions that resonate with the business community. It's an ongoing process with members that allows us to identify those key issues and priorities.

Although our focus is in support of our members and business, our advocacy, policies and positions have direct impact on the broader community and through successful recommendations to governments and non-governmental organizations at all levels.

Campbell River Chamber's successful policy on the role of child care in enabling British Columbians to re-enter or remain in the force is just one of those examples. And as the provincial economy faces significant new challenges, we welcome the opportunity to bring forward innovative solutions from a grass-roots advocacy level, through consultation with our local Chamber members.

This new reality requires us to embrace new thinking about our attitudes and the decisions we make and our sense of self in that process.

To comment on this article or for further information about the Chamber in Campbell River, please email colleen.evans@campbellriverchamber.ca