

The Business of Culture and Creativity

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It's apparent that in this time of economic transformation, many of the models we've long relied on to define competitive advantage have changed and quickly.

But as the economy has downsized, restructured and is moving through an economic downturn, the creative process and cultural innovation may become two of Campbell River businesses best differentiating factors. This new economic situation favors knowledge, communication and innovation as economic value and crucial to the flexibility and risk taking that will determine business competitive advantage. And as our own city's business environment changes, so too must our understanding of culture and creativity as economic drivers for the community. It's this link between culture, creativity and business that has become

increasingly recognized and included in business impact studies, regardless of the size of the community being analyzed.

This basic premise is focused around the fact that the creative and cultural industries are becoming a dynamic economic sector for business opportunities and growth as more traditional industries shrink or re-invent themselves. And while the concept of the creative economy is evolving, it reflects the idea that a city's creative assets can generate economic growth and job creation.

In Campbell River, we are increasingly seeing the potential of our existing community assets through the economic activities of our artists and art and design enterprises, cultural and tourism entrepreneurs and the businesses and organizations who are producers, distributors and consumers of for profit and not for profit culture and creativity. It's these activities that have potential to increase revenue, employment and quality of life generators for our city.

There are hundreds of Campbell River residents who make or contribute to their income through a broad range of cultural and creative-based business activities and enterprises. A significant number of our chamber members are represented in these business activities. They produce the goods and services that are an expression of our island life and they represent the sights, sounds, words and images of what makes us unique and a visit to Campbell River, an authentic cultural and creative experience.

If culture is an increasingly important part of the private economy, with considerable growth potential, then what could fostering creative innovation and productivity have as an effect for our local economy and businesses? What might happen if we were to focus attention on the creative and cultural experiences that are both unique and authentic to our community?

As the demographic makeup of our community continues to shift, it's these cultural experiences and creative activities that have potential to initially draw visitors and newcomers into our community. And as the demand for cultural and creative goods and services grow, these will have an even greater role to play in diversifying Campbell River's economy and supporting economic growth and prosperity.

We've all experienced how technology continues to open up new opportunities in the global marketplace for reaching new audiences and customers. To a greater extent it's been technology that's made it possible for individuals in those cultural and creative industries to create from wherever they geographically choose to live.

This increases the importance of quality of life issues and makes communities like Campbell River even more aware of how quality of life factors may influence the attraction and retention of residents, workforce and visitors. Each of those will make conscious choices on where they live and visit on the island and many will be drawn to those communities that put a high value on all forms of culture and creativity.

Our creative and cultural Chamber members would welcome an increased focus and support for their sectors, and recognition of creative entrepreneurs and their specialized knowledge and talents.