

# NEWSLETTER

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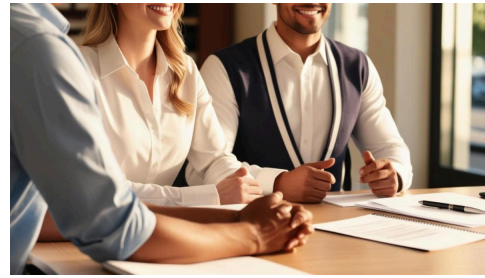
## Meet Dan King, owner of Spark House

Dan King is the owner of Spark House, the new co-working space that recently opened in Parksville.

As a successful businessman, Dan saw a need within the local community for an alternative work/meeting space for local professionals. He brought a solution that has flourished in larger communities to the Oceanside area. Inherent in their design, co-working spaces foster networking, collaboration, and a sense of community while allowing people to work independently in a professional setting.

Located on the former site of the WorkBC Career Centre, Spark House is a shared, flexible work environment where individuals and small teams can rent desks or offices on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. It offers an alternative to traditional office leases, providing access to amenities like Wi-Fi, meeting rooms, printing, and coffee stations. Meeting rooms are available as well and include a large TV that allow for seamless presentations. Catering can be brought in to keep your team motivated. In addition, if you choose to avail yourself of Spark House's Community Membership Program, you will gain access to the Partners and Perks Program. For a minimal fee, you will have access to printing services at ParksWest, podcasting studio space at Podio or business mentoring at Community Futures.

# The Benefits of Hiring Older Workers



In communities such as Parksville and Qualicum Beach, where a large portion of residents are 60 years and older, customer-facing businesses—from shops and cafés to healthcare services and local tourism—play a central role in daily life. Hiring older workers for these front-line roles offers unique advantages, both for employers and the community at large.

## Natural connection with customers

Older workers often share similar life stages and experiences with the majority of customers they serve. This common ground fosters easy rapport, greater trust, and more meaningful interactions. Whether in retail, hospitality, or service organizations, customers feel seen and understood when speaking with someone who “gets it.”

## Communication and patience

Life experience brings perspective. Older employees often excel in listening carefully, explaining clearly, and handling situations with calm professionalism. In communities where many residents value slower-paced, respectful service, this style of interaction sets businesses apart.

## Reliability and consistency

Employers in tourist-driven or seasonal economies often struggle with turnover. Older workers are frequently more stable and committed, reducing hiring costs and helping businesses maintain a consistent presence that customers recognize and appreciate.

## Strong ambassadors for the community

Older employees often have deep roots in local networks—whether service clubs, volunteer groups, or faith communities. Their word-of-mouth recommendations carry weight, and their credibility as “long-timers” or community-minded individuals reflects positively on the businesses they represent.

## Enhancing customer loyalty

In areas with a strong 60+ demographic, older workers often know customers personally, remembering names, preferences, or past conversations. This personal touch builds loyalty and transforms routine transactions into trusted relationships.

## Flexible scheduling

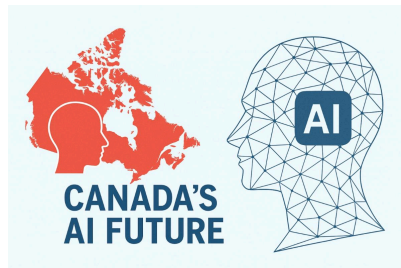
Many older workers seek part-time or flexible opportunities, which align well with local business needs—covering peak hours, tourist surges, or community events without the need for full-time staffing.

## Tips for Employers

- Highlight people skills in job postings. Frame roles around interpersonal strengths and customer care, not just technical tasks.
- Invest in simple tech training. A little extra onboarding with digital tools ensures comfort and confidence.
- Create welcoming roles. Position titles like Community Host or Customer Care Associate make the work feel valued.
- Recruit locally. Tap into community organizations, senior centers, and local newsletters to reach interested candidates.

**Bottom line:** In communities where the majority are 60+, older workers aren't just employees—they are peers, neighbors, and trusted connectors. Their life experience, steadiness, and community knowledge create a stronger bond between businesses and the customers they serve.

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## Canada's AI Future

As Canada stands on the cusp of a technological transformation, the recent Dell Technologies Forum brought together industry leaders, government officials and innovators to chart the country's next chapter in artificial intelligence. The event served as a vivid map of how Canada intends to leverage AI — not only to drive productivity and economic growth, but to shape a new competitive edge on the global stage. Amid bright promises and pressing questions, the forum surfaced one clear message: the future of Canada's economy may well hinge on how it adopts, regulates and scales AI technologies.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## Adventures in AI

In last month's newsletter I promised to provide further information and suggestions on what I have learned about writing requests for AI to create content. In an attempt to make sure I "got it right", I thought I would go to the horse's mouth - so I asked ChatGPT.

**Me:** Given your expertise, please provide a list of up to 5 suggestions for crafting effective requests for ChatGPT

**ChatGPT:** Here are five practical suggestions for making your ChatGPT requests more effective:

### Be specific and contextual

- Instead of asking “Help me with marketing,” try “Write a 200-word email introducing a free business continuity workshop for small retail shops in Cowichan.”
- Add background details so the answer is tailored.

### Define the format you want

- Say whether you want a **list, outline, draft email, script, table, or code**. This helps avoid vague results.
- Example: “Give me a bulleted list of five social media post ideas with captions and hashtags.”

### Set the tone, style, or audience

- Clarify whether you want **professional, conversational, persuasive, or playful**.
- Example: “Rewrite this text in a friendly, non-technical tone for small business owners with limited tech experience.”

### Give constraints or examples

- If you need something short, specify word count or time (e.g., “150 words” or “1-minute pitch”).
- Providing a sample (e.g., “Make it sound like HiBob’s ROI calculator copy”) also sharpens the output.

### Ask for iteration, not perfection

- Treat ChatGPT like a collaborator: request a **first draft** or **3 variations** you can refine.
- Example: “Draft three alternative headlines for a landing page that emphasize affordability.”

In my experience, approaching requests to AI as a collaborative process is the best practise for minimizing frustration. Expect that it will likely take several attempts to produce exactly what you are seeking and, sometimes, ChatGPT will surprise you with something even better than you had in mind.

Rate this article.



## Wellness

Congratulations on your success with the first month's activities of our wellness regime. In month 2 we will focus on building our energy.

Remember to continue with the mindful practises you started in month 1 and add one or two of the suggestions below.

## Month 2: Movement Microbreaks:

Energize through small bursts of activity

- Take a 2-3 minute movement break every hour: stretch, stand, walk or posture reset.
- Use a timer or phone reminder.
- Keep a simple "desk yoga" or "stretch card" handy.

**Goal:** Increase energy, reduce stiffness, and prevent fatigue from long hours at a desk.



Rate this article.



Startups, businesses, social enterprises and non-profits located in the service areas of 32 Community Futures offices in BC are eligible to receive workshops and webinars free of charge. Workshops and Webinars are otherwise fee-for-service.

All upcoming November webinars are held on Wednesdays from 10:00am to 11:00am. For more information on the webinars below, click [here](#)

- Nov 5 Inventing the Next Big Thing: Why Patents Matter
- Nov 12 Credit Counselling
- Nov 19 It's All In the Look: Why Industrial Design Matters
- Nov 26 CRA Information Session for Corporations

In addition, MyCommunityFutures offers a library of on-demand webinars covering all aspects for running a business. Click [here](#) for more information.

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# REMINDERS

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## How is Your Business Using AI?



The Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation wants to hear from you about your real-world experiences with artificial intelligence (AI), especially as it relates to your business or industry.

By sharing your story, the B.C. Government hopes to better understand your thoughts on what worked, what didn't, and what could help.

Your insights will support the development of future AI initiatives and direction so future government decisions will reflect the needs and realities of B.C. businesses. This experience-based engagement includes 16 questions and can take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

While you are able to return to previous questions, you are encouraged to complete the questionnaire in one session as the platform does not support saving and returning later.

To find out more and to take the survey, click [here](#)

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HELP OUR PROVINCE IMPROVE

How easy is it  
to do business  
in BC?

TAKE THE SURVEY!



### Have Your Say: Help Improve the Business Climate in B.C.

The Government of British Columbia is seeking feedback from business owners and stakeholders to better understand and improve the ease of doing business in our province.

Take the short EaseBiz BC survey today: [Click here.](#)

Your input will help shape future programs, policies, and services that support a stronger, more responsive business environment across all communities—including rural and remote regions.

Survey closes August 30, 2025. Don't miss this opportunity to be heard!

#CommunityFutures #BCBiz #HaveYourSay #EconomicDevelopment  
#PolicyMatters

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## Entrepreneur in Residence Program

- Are you looking to start a business and have questions that you need help with?

- Have you recently started a new business and now need some guidance or help with things that have you scratching your head?
- Are you already in business and wonder how to increase your sales or profit margins?
- Are you looking to expand or grow your business but are unsure if it is the right time?



If so, you are a perfect candidate for the Entrepreneur in Residence Program. The purpose of the Entrepreneur in Residence program is to allow prospective entrepreneurs and current business owners in the Central

Vancouver Island region access to invaluable advice from a successful entrepreneur. The Entrepreneur in Residence will provide counsel, offer advice and discuss business best practices. And, best of all, they will work with you on your schedule with mutually agreed upon appointments. Work on your business; get small business help. The perfect solution, now!

Community Futures is committed to the success of small and medium sized business and subsidizes this program so more can participate. The cost to participants is:

- \$175 for 6 sessions; or
- \$300 for 12 sessions

Sessions are 1 hour in length but can be combined into fewer meetings, are mutually set up between coach and applicant, and must be completed within a 6 month period.

For more information and to check out our line up of coaches, visit our [website](#).



## Looking for funding or grants?

The Provincial Government provides a one stop shop for information about programs and funding available to citizens and businesses that can save you money.

[The B.C. Benefits Connector](#) not only provides information on benefits available to assist small business owners, it also includes information on supports available for families with children, renters and homeowners, seniors, and for those struggling with other issues.





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