



Autumn 08



# Kingston Business Bulletin

## Kingston – the place to be for business!

**Recent data from the Building Commission has shown record levels of capital investment in developments in Kingston. Since January 2006 more than \$200 million has been spent on industrial and commercial construction activity in the area, with more than \$35 million being spent in July 2007 alone.**

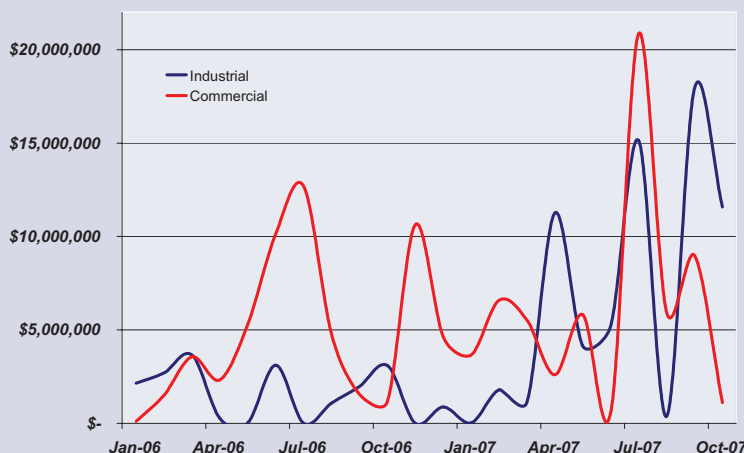
Significant new developments in the region include Clayton Business Park and Fairbank Business Park in Clayton South, Chifley Business Park in Moorabbin, and Parkview Estate in Heatherton. A number of other developments have added or improved existing sites as businesses have grown or moved.

Most new developments incorporate high architectural standards, including quality landscaping and striking visual features. Parking for staff and customers, as well as effective access for deliveries, are also well catered for. Environmentally sensitive features have also been incorporated at a number of sites.

With Kingston's industrial areas being almost fully developed, the challenge is now to encourage the redevelopment of some of the city's older precincts to ensure that the businesses operating in these areas remain competitive. Should you be considering redevelopment please talk to Council about your options.



**Value of construction activity in Kingston**



Source: Building Commission

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Great for business.**

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# Editorial

**As we enter 2008 it is clear that storm clouds are forming on the horizon. Wouldn't we all like a crystal ball to predict where the Australian and world economies will be at this time next year? The "experts" seem pretty much divided on what the real fall out from the credit problems in the US will be for Australia. Given that we have no control over those matters we will concentrate on the things that we can influence.**

You will notice in this newsletter a significant number of networking and business development opportunities scheduled for this first quarter. Some of these activities are focused externally on export markets, providing local businesses with access to expert advice and information on different world markets. If you are looking globally in 2008 please take advantage of these sessions.

In addition, there are a number of networking opportunities designed to help you build business relationships in your local area. The Speed Networking session in February should be great. I would also encourage you to consider the Kingston Business Women's Network.

As always we have a number of business development workshops to assist you improve your business operations. If there is any particular topic that you would like covered in future please let us know and we will endeavour to meet your needs.

Finally I would like to wish you a Happy New Year. I hope 2008 will be a prosperous and fulfilling year for you and your business.



Suzanne Ferguson

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY REVIEW

**Kingston companies who are in some way involved in the automotive manufacturing industry, are encouraged to register their interest with Council to have input into a local submission to an important Federal Government review.**

The new Federal Government has indicated that it will be bringing forward the planned review of the automotive industry because of the challenges currently being experienced by the industry.

Although the government is yet to finalise the terms of reference or personnel for the review, the Industry Minister has indicated that it will look at all the factors affecting the competitiveness of the industry. Consequently, the review is expected to look at tariff settings which are legislated to fall from 10% to 5% in 2010 and the Automotive Competitiveness and Investment Scheme (ACIS) as well as innovation, skills,

environmental challenges and changes to world trade arrangements.

There is no doubt that the big car companies will be strong participants in the process, as will the larger suppliers. But often those further down the chain are overlooked or their views are drowned out by the big end of town. It is important that the voice of small component manufacturers is heard by those undertaking the review.

For the City of Kingston to put a meaningful submission to this review it is imperative that the issues facing our small component manufacturers are clearly understood. If you are involved in this sector in any way please let us know so that we can include you in any discussions on this important issue once the terms of reference are known. To register your interest contact Suzanne Ferguson on 9581 4712.

## "RIDING THE ELEPHANT" - 21 Feb 2008

**For the fourth consecutive year, Austrade will be running the highly successful 'Riding the Elephant' seminar. This half-day seminar will provide fresh content for both new and existing exporters on business opportunities and developments in India.**

### WHY INDIA?

India is Australia's fastest-growing merchandise export market. Merchandise exports grew by an unprecedented 37 per cent to \$11 billion in 2006/07, making India Australia's fourth largest export market.

Keep up-to-date, discover key business tips and market-entry strategies, plus hear from Australian exporters experienced in this market.

### WHY ATTEND?

- Hear directly from Austrade's in-market specialists about export opportunities
- Learn from experienced practitioners and case study speakers
- Find out the do's and don'ts of doing business in India
- Network with others currently operating in or who are considering joining the market
- Discover practical ways of expanding your international marketing strategy
- Find out about potential government financial assistance

For further information telephone Austrade Direct on 13 28 78 or visit [www.austrade.gov.au](http://www.austrade.gov.au)

## Business Visitation Program

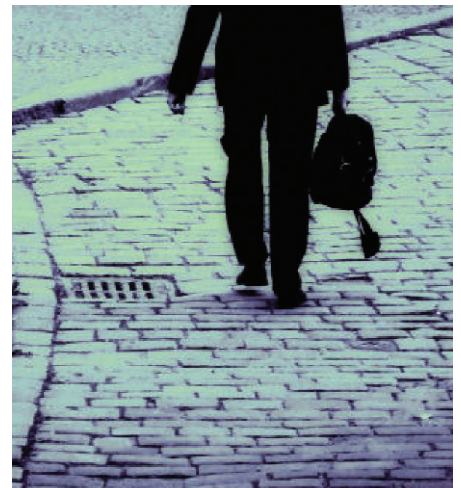
**Council staff are hitting the streets to hear directly from industry**

Industry Development Specialist, Steve Waugh, will be meeting with businesses across Kingston to discuss issues affecting local firms, and to showcase the range of services offered by the Economic Development Department.

This outreach program is vital to ensure that Council is able to effectively advocate at both State and Federal level and to deliver services appropriate to the needs of local

businesses. In addition, the issues raised will contribute towards the development of the "New Economy" program that will guide Council's business support services over the next few years.

If you run a business in Kingston and can spare a few minutes to speak about the challenges you face, Steve would love to hear from you. Contact him on [business@kingston.vic.gov.au](mailto:business@kingston.vic.gov.au) or phone 9581 4787 to arrange a time for him to come out and see you.



# Energise Business – Project Update

## GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT. GREAT FOR BUSINESS.

**The Energise Business energy efficiency project is now underway, with more than 20 local firms signing up to save money and reduce their environmental impact.**

Participants in Energise Business will have their energy use audited and will receive a customised report detailing fully-costed options to save money and reduce emissions. A limited number of places in this free program are still available, so if your business spends more than \$5000 per annum on energy, give us a call today!

Energy use audits will commence in February, and participants will then be presented with a tailored range of recommendations that they can choose to implement to suit their budget and strategic plans.

Energy efficiency is just one element of running a successful business, but it is increasingly important as energy costs continue to climb and awareness of climate change grows. Customers are demanding that firms operate in a sustainable manner. Governments around the world are beginning to formulate policies that will regulate the impact businesses have on the environment.

Get ahead of the curve and join this great program to reduce your energy use - all types of businesses can benefit. For more information contact Steve Waugh on 9581 4787 or email [business@kingston.vic.gov.au](mailto:business@kingston.vic.gov.au).



**Business that have committed to saving money and reducing emissions include:**

- Aser Labels
- Specialty Coatings
- Complete Colour Printing
- Universal Forme
- The Label Place
- Oasis Tension Structures
- Advantage Engineering
- Dryen Australia
- Rollspack
- Atlas Tooling
- Form2000 Sheetmetal
- Mordialloc Sporting Club
- KADAC
- Hydrochem
- Beckingham Wines
- Balcombe Serviced Apartments
- Dingley International Motel
- Therapeutic Pillows
- Fortress Systems
- Gigante Coffee
- Buckingham International Motel
- Dunbier Marine Products

# Save Water With South East Water's Rebate Program

**South East Water is offering local businesses the chance to save water by providing a rebate on a range of water-saving initiatives.**

Rebates are offered up to 50% of the total cost (product, delivery and installation) per product, up to a maximum of \$1,500 per site. This great offer runs from 3 December 2007 to 29 February 2008, or until funds are expended.

**Water-saving products that may be rebated include:**

- Water-efficient showerheads
- Variable flow controllers
- Industrial trigger nozzles
- Dual-flush toilets
- Waterless (or water-efficient) urinals
- Check meters
- Water conservation audit (rebate up to \$1000)

If you are a South East Water customer and use between 5 and 10 megalitres per year, contact South East Water on [non-residentialrebates@sewl.com.au](mailto:non-residentialrebates@sewl.com.au) to find out more about this great initiative.



## RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT

Now in their sixth year, the 2008 Premier's Sustainability Awards recognise and reward Victorian businesses, communities and individuals that demonstrate outstanding leadership and contribute to a more sustainable future for our State. Sustainable organisations do things better, smarter and more productively while reducing their everyday environmental impacts.

Awards will be presented in five categories: Large Business, Small Business, Outstanding Products or Services, Community and Public Sector. Entries close on **Wednesday 13th February**. Further information can be obtained at [www.sustainabilityawards.vic.gov.au](http://www.sustainabilityawards.vic.gov.au).

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## Don't Make Expensive Mistakes in China!!!

China's business culture and etiquette is very different from Western business practice. Unfortunately many promising business opportunities are snuffed out before they start because a small amount of time and effort was not invested up front to learn a few basic principles.



The City of Kingston will partner with The Confucius Institute in 2008 to provide China focussed training and events in the local area.

The Confucius Institute is supported by the Chinese Government, the Victorian Government and the University of Melbourne and offers key services such as Executive Business Chinese, Cross Cultural and Negotiation Skills training to Victorian companies as they face their push into China.

To date companies such as Amcor, Telstra, Patties Foods, Innovia Film, Taurean Wireless, Langham Hotel have undertaken training.

The first event will be held in April 2008 and will feature Dr Denis Siddon – a world renowned expert on innovation and technology in China. Additional cross cultural and product replacement seminars are being planned.

Before you travel to China for business purposes, it is essential that you and your staff learn some basic Chinese business culture. If you are interested in participating please contact Suzanne Ferguson at the City of Kingston on 9581 4712.

For more information about the Confucius Institute please feel free to contact the Director, Barbara Hilder on 9348 4234 or bhilder@unimelb.edu.au

## 2008 - YEAR OF THE NEW BUSINESS START-UP

Do you know someone who has made a resolution to start up their own business in 2008 but doesn't quite know where the start button is? Or maybe you, or someone you know, have recently started a small business and are in the first few scary months?



**WHEN:** Thursday 13th March 2008  
**TIME:** 6.00pm - 8.00pm  
**WHERE:** City of Kingston Offices  
1230 Nepean Highway,  
Cheltenham  
**COST:** \$20 (includes light refreshments)

For further information please call Marian Hamilton-Kerr 9581 4786.

It's crucial to have all the right ingredients to make your new business a success. Come along to our "Starting a Small Business" workshop to get the right recipe and bake the perfect business which everyone will want to taste! Places are limited.

## Are your P's in the Right Place? - Market for Success

Focus on your marketing plan to achieve new business and retain a loyal customer base. Unfortunately many people think marketing is solely about advertising. They spend large sums on advertisements and wonder why their turnover doesn't increase.

Do you have an effective marketing plan in place at the moment? Are you targeting the right market segment or do you merely use a scattergun approach and hope you hit the target? Is there a previously unidentified market you want to reach?

Learn Marketing Strategies that work. Find out how to develop your marketing plan to match your business needs and stop wasting money on things that don't work.

- What does market research really tell us?
- How do you incorporate a marketing strategy into the business plan and budget?

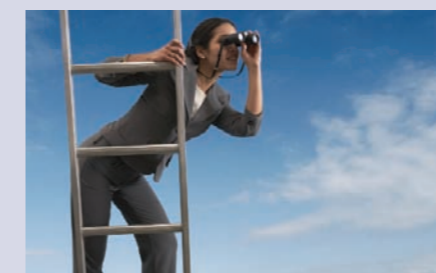
To find out the answers, register for our Marketing workshop. Places are limited. Bookings are essential. For further information phone Marian Hamilton-Kerr 9581 4786.

**WHEN:** Tuesday 22nd April 2008  
**TIME:** 6.00pm - 8.00pm  
**WHERE:** City of Kingston Offices  
1230 Nepean Highway  
Cheltenham  
**COST:** \$20 (includes light refreshments)

To register go to [www.business.vic.gov.au](http://www.business.vic.gov.au)

## What's on the horizon for your business? See your whole business future fit onto an A4 piece of paper!

Is your business part of a large master plan or do you simply plod along on a month to month basis? Do you know where your business is going to be in 3, 5 or 10 years? Why do you need to set a vision anyway?



Come along to our "Strategic Business Planning" workshop – you will be amazed at how simple it can be to develop and change your business.

- Understand how the values of your business can determine the culture, attitude and behaviour of you, your staff, and your clients.
- Learn how to conduct an external situational analysis to find out what opportunities you should be working on.

Places are limited. For further information call Marian Hamilton-Kerr 9581 4786.

**WHEN:** Wednesday 9th April 2008  
**TIME:** 6.00pm - 8.00pm  
**WHERE:** City of Kingston Offices  
1230 Nepean Highway,  
Cheltenham  
**COST:** \$20 (includes light refreshments)

To register go to [www.business.vic.gov.au](http://www.business.vic.gov.au)

## KINGSTON WOMEN IN BUSINESS A network for local business women

The Kingston Business Women's Network has been established to provide a forum for women in business to meet other like-minded business women and form new business alliances.

The Network recognises that it can be extremely difficult for women to access other network opportunities which are often conducted in the early morning or evening – just when you are engaged in your "second shift" duties. Consequently the network is designed to fit around school care commitments. It also offers a free child care place for pre-school aged children.

The Network will convene on a bi-monthly basis with a topical speaker at each event. However, the principle objective is to provide you with the opportunity to network and build new business alliances.

The next topic will be Work Life Balance and how to achieve success in both work and personal life.

The Network welcomes businesses from outside Kingston, so if you know any women in the neighbouring municipalities, please extend the invitation.

To find out more or request a registration flyer, please call Marian on 9581 4786 or email [business@kingston.vic.gov.au](mailto:business@kingston.vic.gov.au)

**WHEN:** Tuesday 5th February 2008  
**TIME:** 1.15pm - 2.45pm  
**WHERE:** City of Kingston offices  
1230 Nepean Highway,  
Cheltenham  
**COST:** \$20 (includes light refreshments)

## SPEED NETWORKING!

Business is about relationships: the more people you know, the more opportunities you have to do business with them, or people they know. But first you need to establish those relationships. So how good are your networking skills?



The best networkers focus on ways to help people, and don't just try to collect as many business cards as possible or push their latest sales pitch. It's all about giving. Join us at Woodlands Golf Club and learn how you can make the most of any networking opportunity in a fun, relaxed environment.

Hosted by networking guru Ben Angel, this two-hour event will show you how to avoid the classic networking blunders, and provide you with some powerful resources and strategies to aid you in building your business network.

In addition, an expert panel will share their networking experiences and highlight how important networking has been to their business success.

Reserve your place today – call 9581 4735 or email [business@kingston.vic.gov.au](mailto:business@kingston.vic.gov.au) to request a booking form.

**WHEN:** Tuesday 19th February 2008  
**TIME:** 6.00pm - 8.00pm,  
**WHERE:** Woodlands Golf Club,  
109 White Street Mordialloc  
**COST:** \$20 (includes light refreshments)  
(maximum two attendees per business)

**BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL**

# SUCCESSFUL TRADE EXHIBITIONS

**Always wanted to attend or exhibit at a trade show, but not sure exactly what's required?**

The Victorian Business Centre has arranged a free seminar with a range of specialists who will elaborate on topics such as:

- Selecting the right show
- Pre-event activities
- Costs to participate
- Post event follow-up

If you are considering this means of promotion and marketing, do yourself a favour and put aside a couple of hours to attend this informative session.

**WHEN: Wednesday 13th February 2008**

**TIME: 6.00pm - 8.00 pm**

**EMAIL: [susan.joy@iird.vic.gov.au](mailto:susan.joy@iird.vic.gov.au)**

**REGISTRATION: 9874 5733**

# SETTING UP A BUSINESS IN THE USA

**The USA is a huge market, attracts businesses from around the world and is home to very vigorous companies both big and small.**

Setting up an overseas office will generally involve substantial financial commitment, significant time and legal and contract considerations.

Hear from the experts on how to prepare and set-up your business in the USA at a seminar in mid-March (tbc). If you are even thinking about dipping your toe into the USA market, register your interest for this up-coming seminar on 9581 4735 and we will let you know when the details have been finalised.

# OUTSOURCING TO CHINA

**As the Australian dollar continues to climb, many businesses are considering sourcing materials from or indeed, manufacturing in China, or some other regional alternative. However there are some key lessons to consider.**



- **Make sure the benefits outweigh the costs.** As a rule of thumb, it is suggested you need to be looking at savings of at least 30% off the local unit purchase price.
- **Consider all costs.** Offshore production equals an extended supply chain. Lead times are longer and you will need to carry additional inventory, which demands additional working capital etc. Freight and logistic issues need careful costing and quality issues, which may take weeks to 'surface', can cause major interruption.
- **The costs and time of travel also need to be factored in to the equation.** You need face to face contact with your supplier on a regular basis at least in the initial stages, to ensure your specifications are understood and can be delivered.
- **While the manufacturing capability in China improves and quality becomes less**

**of a concern, other pressures are appearing.** Growing demand worldwide for product to be sourced from China affords them the luxury of being selective should they so feel inclined.

The Victorian Business Centre at Dandenong cites a case of one of their clients who signed orders for product, well in advance of the Australian peak selling season. The product simply failed to arrive and after weeks of chasing the supplier the company was advised, that there would be no product delivered as the manufacturer had received much larger orders from elsewhere. While this company has survived, it was touch and go for some months and has necessitated a restructure of the business, at least in the short term.

# EMDG - Helping Victorian Businesses Export

**The Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) scheme helped boost export success for over 3500 Australian businesses last year. Among the successful recipients were 896 Victorian businesses which received a total of \$36 million in grant payments.**

Applications for the 2007-08 grant year open on 1 July 2008. If you intend to apply for a grant this year, start preparing early by clarifying your eligibility and keeping good records of eligible export promotion expenses you incur during 2007-08.

EMDG seminars to help you get started will commence in March 2008. If you need help in the meantime, you may wish to visit the

Austrade website at [www.austrade.gov.au/exportgrants](http://www.austrade.gov.au/exportgrants) or contact the Melbourne EMDG office on 03 9648 3142.



# MENTOR PARTNERS PROGRAM

Applications are now being accepted for the first intake of 2008 for the Mentor Partners business mentoring program.

This highly successful program, a joint initiative between the City of Kingston and City of Glen Eira, will help your business achieve its full potential. Since the program's inception in 2002 more than 160 businesses have been matched with mentors.

For any business to be successful, it is imperative that effective processes are in place to help the management team make the right decisions. During the six months of the formal mentoring relationship, your mentor will assist you in implementing appropriate financial management systems and processes to manage critical activities and improve the viability of your business. In addition, specialist experts may be called in to assist you in coming to grips with specific elements of strategy, marketing or information technology that may be holding you back.

Remember that business mentors are not consultants or advisers; rather they provide guidance, opinions, a shoulder to lean on and act as a sounding board to help you improve your own business decision-making skills. Their opinions are unbiased and without preconception and are based on many years of successful business experience. By participating in the program, business mentors



seek continuing challenges by using their years of business experience to contribute to the economic and social fabric of their community.

If you are interested in being part of this **free** program, please contact Angela Stubbs on 9581 4735 or email [business@kingston.vic.gov.au](mailto:business@kingston.vic.gov.au).

## CONSIDERING BEING A MENTOR?

Our mentors are our most valuable asset and are the key to the success of this program. Mentors are successful business people, many of whom are retired and who volunteer their time, knowledge and practical expertise to help existing small businesses.

If you are in a position to use your skills and experience to help a small business with great potential achieve commercial success, we'd love to hear from you.

## FORMING AND MAINTAINING WINNING BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

A major study of Australian business leaders on behalf of the Victorian Small Business Commissioner has revealed that the most successful companies – big and small – believe that their relationships with other businesses is vital to their success.

The study highlighted seven characteristics for success in the business relationship jungle.

1. **ALIGNMENT** with businesses that share the same values.
2. **COMMITMENT** to treat each relationship as a long-term arrangement based on trust.
3. **MUTUAL INTERESTS** of each business to achieve the common goal of a profitable, sustainable and on-going relationship.
4. **COMMUNICATION** must be clear, transparent, frequent, in an agreed format and at the right level.
5. **ACCOUNTABLE AND RESPONSIBLE** means all parties need to agree to their obligations and responsibilities and immediately alert business partners of any problem or mistake.
6. **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT** in all interactions between businesses can be the difference between a successful relationship and another not getting off the ground.
7. **PRE-AGREED DISPUTE RESOLUTION** is essential so that any disputes can be dealt with quickly and the relationship can continue with minimum disruption.

Do your business relationships stack up?

## MELBOURNE BUSINESS AWARDS - REWARDING EXCELLENCE

Once again a diverse range of innovative local businesses were on show at the annual Melbourne Business Awards Grand Finale Breakfast held at the Brighton International on Friday 7th December 2007.

Congratulations to **Air Aroma International** who was judged the Business of the Year. Air Aroma designs and manufactures scent diffusion technology that combines the powerful sense of smell with aesthetic design to create the right indoor environment for some of the world's best known companies. It has also brought the little known concept of scent marketing into the mainstream.

Other awards winners were:

**Valley Produce Company** - Export Award  
**Farm by Nature** - Business Enterprise Award  
**Metaltec Precision International** – Manufacturing Excellence Award  
**Speedshield** – Innovation Award

The Melbourne Business Awards breakfast series kicks off 2008 on Friday 14th March with renowned personality **Rex Hunt** as the keynote speaker. Demand for seats is likely to be extremely high, so make sure you book early. For information and bookings contact Karren Clark on 9578 2253.



## WHAT'S ON IN AUTUMN

- **Kingston Farmers' Market** - 2nd February, 1st March, 5th April
- **Kingston Women in Business** - 5th February
- **Premier's Sustainability Awards Entries close** - 13th February
- **Successful Trade Exhibitions** - 13th February
- **Speed Networking** - 19th February
- **Riding the Elephant** - 21st February
- **Staring a Small Business Workshop** - 13th March
- **Melbourne Business Awards** - 14th March, 2nd May
- **Strategic Business Planning Workshop** - 9th April
- **Marketing Workshop** - 22nd April

# Where did all my customers go? The constantly changing business environment.

**The Federal Government is currently considering banning the ubiquitous supermarket shopping bag, in a move that will impact on consumers, retailers and plastic bag manufacturers across the country. This decision is being made in the context of increasing public awareness of climate change, and is just one example of the challenges that businesses face today.**

As a business owner, no matter what industry you are in, you must take into account the potential impact that changes in customer tastes, technology, regulatory and financial environments may have on your operations.

For instance, with the advent of mobile phones that play MP3 music files, Australia now sits between Korea, where almost all music is delivered direct to mobile phones, and America, where downloads to PCs outstrip mobile services and physical CD sales are still strong. For music stores in Australia, the challenge is to adapt to this emerging trend and still find a way to add value to the customer's experience so as to retain a viable business model.

For manufacturers the big issues now include:

- competition from low labour cost countries including China;

- possible regulatory changes such as the introduction of an emission trading scheme;
- increasing labour and skills shortages; and
- a tight financial market following the collapse of the US sub-prime mortgage market.

No matter what your industry, the one thing you can count on is that things will change, usually just when you've got it all figured out! With the start of the new year, now is a great time to step back and examine your own business environment and identify the trends or emerging issues that you will need to adapt to over the next twelve months or more.

One tool to help you do this systematically is the much maligned 'SWOT' analysis. There are also a variety of other methodologies available. No matter what

approach you take, the evidence is strong that putting things in writing, for instance in the form of a business plan, will help you to achieve your goals. So take some time to talk to your customers, staff, colleagues, suppliers and even competitors, and make 2008 a great year for your business.



### Kingston's Language Line

Arabic - عربي	9679 9881	Italian - Italiano	9679 9859	All Other Languages	9679 9887
Cambodian - ភ្នំ	9679 9882	Greek - Ελληνικά	9679 9885	Including:	
Cantonese - 粵語	9679 9883	Vietnamese - Việt-ngữ	9679 9886	Mandarin - 國語	Polish - Polski
Croatian - Hrvatski	9679 9884			Sinhalese - සිංහල	Somali - Soomaali
				Spanish - Español	Turkish - Türkçe

#### DISCLAIMER

The information in this publication is given in good faith and has been derived from sources believed to be reliable and accurate. However, the City of Kingston does not accept any liability whatsoever for its contents or the use of the information.