The Edge Connection is proud to announce its

1st Semi-Annual Business Plan Competition

The Edge Connection Business Plan Competition is an opportunity for Edge Connection Clients to win a cash infusion for the growth of the business. First prize will be awarded $1500. Second and third prize will win $1000 and $500, respectively.

The Edge Connection Business Plan Competition was created as a motivational program for current clients who have completed all four modules of our new Plan for Profit Business Plan Training Curricula. Alumni who graduated from Plan for Profit in 2012 are also eligible for the Competition. Those who graduated prior to 2012 must complete a business plan refinement course to be eligible to participate.

For more information, official rules, and for an entry form, please visit our website: www.theedgeconnection.com

Social Media Corner

A Current Customers’ Review Is Better for You

According to a report from Forrester Research, 70% of consumers trust brand recommendations from friends. Take advantage of this by asking your current customers to post a review about your company online. Make sure this customer is happy with your company, and will post a positive review!

Create Perfectly-Sized Images for All Your Social Profiles

Use Social Media Image Maker to create perfectly-sized images for all of your social profiles! The site also helps you size images for posts, backgrounds and logos. Give it a try today by visiting the site below:

www.autreplanete.com/ap-social-media-image-maker/

TalkBack Poll

What’s your biggest hurdle to using social media effectively?

☐ Time
☐ No hurdles– I’m doing it!
☐ Knowing what to do
☐ Knowing which site to use

Let us know by voting on The Edge Connection’s Facebook page. While you’re at it, please “like” The Edge Connection on Facebook! For every 25 new fans, we will give away a $25 gift card to one of our randomly chosen fans!

March’s Poll Results:
What’s the best way for a business to attract new clients?
Networking
SBA Announces National Small Business Week

Week-long, cross-country events to feature tools & ideas to start or grow your business;

**National Small Business Person of the Year at D.C. Event**

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration is proud to announce that its signature event, National Small Business Week, will be held June 17th through June 21st. This year’s events will take place all across the country and feature exciting and informative events designed to help small businesses start, grow and succeed.

This year’s activities will include forums discussing the small business landscape, business coaching services, matchmaking events as well as networking opportunities and award ceremonies. The week’s events culminate in Washington where the 2013 National Small Business Person of the Year will be announced. Candidates from all 50 states and territories will be competing for the award. And all small businesses that attend will interact with federal government officials, local elected leaders, representatives from national businesses and other small business experts.

The locations and dates for National Small Business Week are:

- Seattle - June 17
- Dallas - June 18
- St. Louis - June 19
- Pittsburgh - June 20
- Washington, D.C. - June 21

In addition to the in-person events, National Small Business Week will also feature daily online forums that will focus on subjects such as exporting and access to capital. All events will be live-streamed on SBA’s website, www.sba.gov.

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**5 Tips for Women Entrepreneurs**

1. **Get comfortable asking for money and ask with confidence.** Not always so easy for women. If you want to be an entrepreneur and you have an idea for a new [insert idea] that you are convinced will change the world, leave it’s mark in the market, etc., go ask 4 friends to give you $25 to start your company. Because if you can’t raise $100 from 4 friends then you will most likely not be able to raise the money you need to get your idea to happen.

2. **Learn how to ask for advice.** Finding a few male advisors helps. Why? Men do business differently than women. Hearing different points of view is invaluable in helping advance good decision-making.

3. **Don’t share everything but do share strategically and embellish wisely.** Avoid the habit to over share or remain silent. Never underestimate the power of a well-crafted story to inspire, sell, and build confidence. Just know the story's ending first.

4. **"Help a sista out" -- network with and support other women.** One of the most outstanding factors found among male CEOs is the power of their networks to move them ahead. In my experience, I find that women don’t always share the same ethos. Make it a point to keep connected to and support other women.

5. **Understand what sacrifices you can make and when you should walk away.** Sometimes the idea just won’t work or won’t work the way you see it. Being an entrepreneur is about seeing an idea come to life not about job-security. You can’t "fix" an idea whose time hasn’t come. As Kenny Rogers said: you have to know when to fold 'em.

Most of all **try.** This is the most important piece of advice I can impart. Try, learn, and grow. Put yourself and your idea first. You may be surprised at what happens!

*Excerpted from an article entitled "5Tips for Women Entrepreneurs I Learned From the School of Life" written by Dylan Kendall.*

Read the full article at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dylan-kendall/women-entrepreneurs_b_2853123.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dylan-kendall/women-entrepreneurs_b_2853123.html).

Follow Dylan Kendall on Twitter: www.twitter.com/@dylankendall

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**There is Such a Thing as a Free Lunch!**

Get to know your customers and market opportunities better without shelling out big bucks for a specialized research firm. Economy.com's FreeLunch.com site provides free data on current consumer and labor markets, as well as five-year forecasts for 387 metropolitan areas. Biz Stats lets you see benchmarks such as average annual sales and financial ratios for a wide variety of industries.
Success Story of the Month

Tish Spaulding
THE SPAULDING AGENCY

The Spaulding Agency is a full-service design consultancy specializing in branding development, interactive and visual design. The Spaulding Agency will celebrate 14 years in business this month. Spaulding was moved to create her own business while working in the corporate sector in marketing and public relations for a major healthcare company in Durham, North Carolina. She helped produce a bi-weekly newsletter for over 2,000 employees and found herself more drawn to the look and feel, more than interviewing and writing the content that went into the publication. She was able to produce a publication that employees enjoyed and relied on before being able to get information online. Success in that endeavor afforded her the opportunity to design a number of in-house materials for other departments and community organizations in the city. What was once a hobby was evolving into a rewarding career.

Upon moving to Atlanta, she found out about The Edge Connection. Spaulding shares, “It has been has been an invaluable resource and served me at a time when I needed it the most.” Spaulding participated in The Edge Connection’s 12-week business training program that covered everything from developing a business plan to marketing strategy. Spaulding notes, “It was a great refresher that enabled me to reposition my business model and formulate a plan to move my business from freelance graphic design to a full-service agency by providing resources and outstanding business professionals throughout metro Atlanta who were dedicated to help Edge clients succeed. I’m forever grateful to Patricia Harris and her team of thought leaders and community advocates for their unconditional support to this program.”

Spaulding offers this advice to aspiring entrepreneurs: “I would suggest starting with one idea and build a business around that one thing you do extremely well or passionate about. You can get burned out fairly quickly in this business by being all things to everyone. In time, I’ve learned to be selective and work at mastery of a given talent or service and let the business and the bottom line drive itself. It’s a phenomenal challenge that can reap infinite possibilities and rewards.”

Chat Us Up!
We want to hear from you! We invite all readers to post their questions on our Facebook page. Experts will respond and advise and we will select several questions each month to publish in the next month’s newsletter.

Alumni: ReENGAGE
The Edge Connections has SPECIAL ALUMNI RATES for 2013!
Contact Monique Wilson, Program Director for details: mwils101@kennesaw.edu

Be proactive, Stay Connected, Re-Engage!
Join Us On Saturday, May 18 At The Edge Kitchen from 10am to 2pm for Jamie Oliver’s Food Revolution!

The City of Kennesaw (Fit City Kennesaw), The Edge Kitchen and Exodus Health Center is taking part in a nation movement to change the way Americans eat—join us! Jaime Oliver’s Food Revolution is about saving lives by inspiring everyone to get back to basics and start cooking good food from scratch.

Join us for free cooking events and activities at The Edge Kitchen. Make a fun, family affair!

Referral Incentive! Do you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a member of the Edge Kitchen? Call the Kitchen Manager today to find out how you can earn $50 and 10 extra hours towards your next kitchen usage purchase!

What’s Cooking in the Kitchen?

Serves 4 | Total Time: 45m

• 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
• 4.
• 1 cup dry white wine
• 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

The Season’s Best
Enjoy seasonal fruits and vegetables for fresh flavors!

Recipes is from realsimple.com Submitted by Kate Merker May, 2007

Ingredients
• 5 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
• 2 tablespoons olive oil
• 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
• 1 large clove garlic, finely chopped
• 1 1/2 cups barley
• 1 cup dry white wine (such as Sauvignon Blanc)
• 1 pound asparagus, cut diagonally into 1-inch pieces
• 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
• 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Directions
1. Warm the broth in a small saucepan over low heat. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 7 minutes or until soft. Add the garlic and cook 1 minute more.
2. Add the barley and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Stir in the wine and cook until the liquid is absorbed, about 3 minutes. Add the broth, 1/2 cup at a time, stirring occasionally and waiting until it is absorbed before adding more.
3. Add the asparagus with the last 1/2 cup of broth and cook until tender. It should take 30 to 35 minutes for all the broth to be absorbed.
4. Remove from heat, season with the salt and pepper, and stir in the Parmesan. Spoon into individual bowls.

Now Trending

Allergy-Friendly Foods
A few years ago the CDC brought it to our attention that over 3 million children and teens in the U.S. are affected with various food allergies and those statistics just keep growing. According to Mayo Clinic, “eight foods (milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy, wheat) included in food allergy labeling account for an estimated 90% of allergic reactions.” Having a sensitive condition to live with, individuals with food allergies can certainly benefit from extra support in their efforts to refrain from eating potentially harmful foods.

The edge Kitchen
...a shared kitchen for food entrepreneurs

Here’s some hints to make your time in the kitchen easier, more productive, and more

If you place the pit of the avocado inside your guacamole, it will help retard the oxidation that makes the avocado brown.

Prolong the lifespan of greens by wrapping them loosely in a damp paper towel and placing in a resealable plastic bag. That local arugula will last about four days longer.

Caramelize onions very quickly by cooking them in a dry nonstick sauté pan over medium-high heat. They will caramelize beautifully in a lot less time than with traditional methods.

Keep flavored vinegars near the stove so you won’t always reach for the salt. Acid enhances flavor.

For better-tasting asparagus, cure the stalks: Peel them, roll in equal parts sugar and salt, and let them sit for 10 minutes, then rinse off and prepare as desired.

“If you really want to make a friend, go to someone’s house and eat with him... the people who give you their food give you their heart.”

– C. Chavez