

Special interest group seeks to help small businesses prosper

Contributed by Lamar Morgan
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HIDDEN VALLEY LAKE – It just seems like a logical progression of things to come. With more and more restaurants and coffee shops in Lake County offering FREE Wi-Fi, there should be a resource freely available to teach folks how to best take advantage of this growing (and cost-saving/energy efficient) technology. And, there is. That resource is a SIG (Special Interest Group) called "Clusters."

If you think a SIG is political, you are mistaken. There is no such thing as a PASIG (Political Action Special Interest Group). However, there is something called a PAC (Political Action Committee). Washington, DC is full of them.

As a SIG, Clusters functions as a unique educational forum – not a club with dues, officers, bylaws and articles of incorporation that need to be filed with a governmental agency. If your small business could benefit from some mutual collaboration with other businesses, if your business does not know how to use free online resources to its advantage – like Twitter, Jott, Squidoo, Skype and Yugma, among others – you need to come to meeting of Clusters. If you do not know what an Internet tablet is let alone how to use it, you really NEED to come to a meeting of Clusters. At a Clusters meeting, the message is always "win/win." For that reason, the bringing of business cards, fliers and brochures is always encouraged.

Clusters focuses on the power of small group communication and netweaving (looking out for Number 2) that results in a mutual uplift.

If saving money through creative mutual collaboration and growing your small business by becoming a "goto" person fits your lifestyle, you will enjoy being in a four-person cluster with a virtual mentor.

Thus far all Cluster meetings have been held on Sunday, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Greenview Restaurant. However, as the Cluster network grows, there could be meetings spread out all over the county. Best check the Squidoo site for the latest update at www.squidoo.com/Clusters. (Please note the special link for you to RSVP your intentions to attend a meeting. This helps with the planning of each weekly event. However, that does not mean you have to make any long-term commitments. The goal at Clusters is to make your life less expensive and less of a hassle.)

There is also a Ryze Business Network showcasing Clusters at <http://clusters-network.ryze.com>. This network is freely available and ideal for the asking of questions you may have about Clusters to a worldwide audience.

If you have questions about the local meetings here in Lake County regarding Clusters, especially the many ways it can benefit your small business, call 709-8605.

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