



Berks-Mont

By Lisa Mitchel | December 16, 2016

NINE O’CLOCK CLUB IN KUTZTOWN: NEW IDEAS, NEW ECONOMY



Maria Wirth from BOTA, center, talks about how businesses can use bartering during the Nine O’clock Club’s December 15 session at the Northeast Berks Chamber of Commerce office in Kutztown.

The NINE O’clock Club in Kutztown helps local business owners find new ideas for building success. A group of about 10 business owners recently learned about business bartering at the club’s Dec. 15 session.

“The series was started to get business owners and employees out of their business for 90 minutes to work on their business. We get so caught up in the day to day activities we forget that professional development is an important key to growth and success,” said The NINE O’clock Club creator and organizer Kim Davis, of KD Consulting LLC for Business Solutions & Professional Development.

“NINE actually stands for New Ideas, New Economy. The goal is for attendees to walk away with ideas they can implement immediately. In an ever changing economy, the way to stay ahead is with forward thinking ideas and by surrounding yourself with like-minded people. I believe we achieve this through the Nine O’clock Club,” said Davis.

Davis initially hosted the series monthly in 2014. She relaunched the club in July 2016.

“People were asking me to start the series again,” said Davis.

Held at the Northeast Berks Chamber of Commerce office in Kutztown, the Chamber affiliated club is open to anyone to attend.

“It’s a first come basis. That may change in the future but for now registration is open to anyone looking to learn from that month’s expert speaker,” said Davis, who is a chamber member.

Sherry Christman, owner of Elite Business Solutions in Hamburg, has been attending the series since it relaunched in July.

“It’s good to get out of my business and be able to focus on how to grow it. It’s been a lot of great ideas and almost like a schooling for me to keep me updated on things I need to know and keep growing my business,” said Christman, who looks forward to the 2017 sessions.

Penny Oulds, owner of PayDay Payroll Service in Bowers, attended for the first time. She bid on this session at the Chamber Holiday Luncheon and won.

“I think that I’m going to be back,” said Oulds.

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She found the session offered a lot of good information that is different and she met new people.

"It's a whole new networking opportunity. It's just another great opportunity offered by the chamber," said Oulds.

According to the club website, www.nineoclockclub.com, the NINE O'Clock Club is a "tool for business entrepreneurs. These monthly 90-minute sessions show you how to work smarter, not harder, by learning new strategies you can implement immediately. Leaders with proven track records will navigate each session."

Past 2016 speakers were Kate Elfatah of HOM Consulting talking about blogging. Heather Uczynski from Leading Edge Business Consulting talked about the importance and benefits of emotional intelligence in the workplace. Dawn Wivell from Dawn Wivell Writing Services talked about gathering relevant content for content marketing. Robin Costenbader-Jacobson from RC-J Consulting Associates, LLC helped attendees develop their potential and create real progress in their business and life. Davis also lead a session, talking about the power of local, building and empowering local economies.

At the Dec. 15 session, Maria Wirth from Business Owners Trade Alliance talked about how businesses can use bartering to help their business succeed. Wirth explained how the barter exchange helps businesses by cutting costs and exchanging products and professional services with other BOTA member businesses.

"Every business owner has struggles with trying to stretch their dollar and that's what we're here to help with in anyway we can," said Wirth. "We are a local exchange so we are focused on building businesses in this region so that they can work together."

Getting to know BOTA members on a more personal level, Wirth said, "There is something about each business that we work with that I feel is very special and unique."

A local business owner, Davis has been a member of BOTA for about five or six years.

"I've utilized barter for a number of things," said Davis, including the creation of the Club logo. "Barter can be used for a number of things but I'm excited to hear who you can really utilize it to build your business without having to spend money."

Valorie Meyer, vice president of J.A. Meyer Jewelry in Kutztown, has been a member of other trade exchange organizations in the past and is now a member of BOTA also. They have used barter for various needs. They like that BOTA is proactive to help members find the services they need or help them sell excess inventory.

Sheila Sacks, Mertztown, is a member of BOTA and attends the NINE O'Clock Club sessions. She is a website designer and owns Sheila Sacks Designs for which she makes handcrafted soaps. Sacks helps promote the Club, working with Davis through BOTA.

"It is a fantastic networking opportunity," Sacks said about the Club. "It's also a way to learn about different things that I can utilize for not only my business but also the fact that I work with other businesses and nonprofits."

She has been a BOTA member for a couple of years. The biggest benefit for her has been getting more customers; about 15 percent of her clients are through BOTA. Also, she said BOTA will sell excess inventory of her soaps. She was also able to get new siding installed on her house through BOTA without loans or interest.

"(BOTA) is a great way to network and promote other local businesses and get work with your own businesses," said Sacks. "(BOTA) is really excited about what they do. Maria is very motivated to work with businesses... and help them succeed."

The NINE O'Clock Club sessions are held monthly. There is a cost to attend. For more information visit www.nineoclockclub.com or call 610-683-0852.



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