

B u s i n e s s P l a n
The Dandelion
Community Investment
Cooperative
Limited

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Executive Summary

Thomas Krausse and his partner Jayn Kenny are prepared to make a significant commitment to their community. They seek to live on a very small ecological footprint while supporting a very diverse community in which to live. Elizabeth Charlton has worked closely with Thomas and Jayn to develop a socially and environmentally responsible idea. It has evolved into what is now known as The Dandelion Community Investment Cooperative.

The Dandelion Community Investment Cooperative Limited – (TDC) is a newly incorporated business serving the community of Wolfville and outlying area. It has been conceived as a vehicle for local innovative growth of our community. The Dandelion Community Investment Cooperative aims to facilitate the loan process for people exhibiting character to apply for a bank loan to pursue artistic, agricultural or a community based businesses. Utilizing our rich resource of experienced people we will be setting up a mentoring program to assist our clients with their business proposals.

Some of the needs and wants of the community were identified through public meetings held in the Fall of 2008. Many back and forth discussions have helped us outline the need for a more fulfilled community, one that is committed to improving the quality of peoples' lives.

The Dandelion Community Investment Cooperative is 100% community funded. Our commitment is to our community, essentially to buy, grow, enrich and live locally. We hope to raise money through the community. People investing in TDC will be nurturing the growth of their community.

Business Description

The Dandelion Community Investment Cooperative (TDC) is a service-based organization whose goal is to promote local growth in the community of Wolfville and surrounding area. We plan on achieving this goal by facilitating loans to our clients, with the assistance of the Credit Union, and providing a one-on-one mentoring program with the client in order to present a sound and viable project which will directly benefit our community.

TDC is an independent body, employing one part time staff governed by a six member Board of Directors. We will be a cooperative based in Wolfville with a start up date of February 10, 2009.

The Dandelion Community Investment Cooperative Limited is registered as a cooperative with the Registry of Joint Stocks Company, a Co-operatives Branch of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

Mission Statement

The Dandelion Community Investment Cooperative aims to be a democratic, ethical and innovative guarantor to assist with self-sustaining local practices for the well being of people in our community.

We will work with people helping them to thrive and prosper in community businesses or agricultural and creative artistic pursuits.

Market Description

TDC will service clients who may not be eligible to apply for loans in the conventional manner, to pursue artistic, agricultural or community based businesses. We have a commitment to stimulate and support innovative projects that promote environmental responsibility, which in turn will enhance our local environment. The client's business plan must demonstrate a realistic market potential for its products or services and provide an ability to repay the loan amount and meet the day-to-day operating needs of the business. They will be required to attend regular meetings with a mentor assisting them with their goals.

Anyone is eligible to apply, understanding our joint purpose is to encourage and promote community growth.

The proposed projects must meet certain criteria:

- Be locally based
- Directly benefit the community of Wolfville and surrounding area
- Use other local components in the project's design

The applicants must also meet certain criteria:

- Be unable to secure loans through conventional sources
- Commit to regular mentoring sessions
- Be willing to submit to a credit check by the Credit Union and allow the confidential findings of that check to be available to the administrator of TDC.

Competition

There are several government-funded businesses, which will provide mentoring services and loans/grants to individuals. One of the higher profile businesses is the Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC) established in August 1988, and funded by Service Canada and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. Their purpose is to create and maintain private sector employment by providing counseling, technical, and financial assistance to qualified business projects.

Acadia Centre for Social and Business Entrepreneurship, (ACSBE), was established 20 years ago and over the years has evolved into a full-service provider for entrepreneurial development. They facilitate the business plan procedure through planning sessions. They will also provide names of financial or granting sources.

The Dandelion Community Investment differs from our competition in that we are 100% community funded. Our commitment is to our community, essentially to buy, grow, enrich and live locally. The economic events of 2008 have shown us that today's economic foundations are at risk. Long distance shipping of produce and manufactured goods is unsustainable in today's uncertain market place. Part of the solution lies in the promotion and support of a wide range of local business initiatives. We plan to raise money through community investment. By investing in TDC people will be nurturing the growth of their community.

Marketing Plan

Some of the needs and wants of the community were identified through public meetings held in the fall of 2008. We have provided our community with examples of proposal presentations and we have had panel discussions with leaders in each of the areas. Agriculture, the arts and small business representatives illuminated the audience with their reasons for being and staying local. Many back and forth discussions have helped us outline the need for a more fulfilled community, one that is committed to improving the quality of peoples' lives.

TDC plans on working with the Town of Wolfville in our unified goal of community growth through local initiatives.

We will encourage people to invest in their community for the sake of the community, be it monetarily or as a volunteer. We will involve the shareholders in each and every project by enabling them to track the transparency of their investments through an interactive website. While not actually committing their money to a specific project they will, nonetheless, be able to see the changes that will be affected by the various projects and take pride in the knowledge that their community is flourishing due to their investment.

Marketing Objective:

The Dandelion Community Investment Cooperative will work towards having 10 projects at \$500, 10 projects at \$1,000 and another 2 at \$5,000 for a total of \$45,000 running by year's end. TDC will strive towards an investment target of \$50,000 for 2009.

Promotion:

Perhaps the most dynamic area of our promotion will occur via our website. We will be designing a very interactive, user friendly program which will enable people to track current projects; describing the venture and following its growth including the clients' loan repayment history. Users of the website will be able to apply and invest on line which will in turn keep our administrative costs down. We hope to address all the needs of our clients and shareholders in the comfort of their own homes at their leisure.

TDC plans on having a very visual profile by holding information sessions at Churches, Rotary Clubs, and Lion's Halls in and around Wolfville. Community meetings will be held every few months, which will stir up more interest in both the investment and project segments. Advertisement and articles will be submitted to the Grapevine, Kentville Advertiser, Gaspereau Gazette and the Black River News on a regular basis.

Postings on the Town's website, the Grapevine's Website, and other pertinent websites will occur on an ongoing basis. Posters and flyers will adorn the Towns' kiosks, post office and other community posting sites.

Working with the authority of the Town we plan on displaying a branding logo in interested shops and businesses in Wolfville and surrounding area. This will serve as a twofold promotion in that it gets our name out and encourages people to buy and support local trade.

Management:

The Dandelion Community Investment Cooperative has been incorporated as a For Profit Cooperative. A Board of Directors, which will be elected by the members, will govern TDC. A Manager/Administrator will affect the day-to-day proceedings of the cooperative and be the liaison between the clients, the mentoring committee and the Board. If needed, an administrative assistant will be engaged to ease the workload.

Risk Assessment:

The risk will be minimal since the plan is to have two distinct bank accounts. One account will be seed money for administrative costs and salaries. The second account will be the shareholders' monies, which will be invested into a GIC and serve as the guarantee for the clients' loans. If any profit is realized by the cooperative it will be paid to the shareholders in the form of dividends. The primary focus of the board in the first few years will be to develop a sustainable organization and make sure that the shareholders' monies are secure.

Financial Plan:

| Start Up Costs | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Incorporation | \$1,500 |
| Website | \$2,000 |
| Administrator | \$3,000 |
| Phone | \$100 |
| Advertising | \$800 |
| Hall Rentals | \$500 |
| Marketing | \$1,500 |
| Accountant | \$500 |
| Total | 9,900.00 |

| Revenue | | Operating Cost | Annual |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Membership Dues 200 @ \$30 | \$6,000.00 | Administrator \$200/week | \$10,000 |
| Website Ads | \$500.00 | Phone | \$600 |
| Community Events 2 per year | \$3,800.00 | Website | \$1,000 |
| Corporate Sponsors | \$2,000.00 | Advertising/Hall Rental | \$500 |
| | | Total | \$12,100 |
| Total | \$12,300.00 | | |

| Corporate Sponsors | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Valley Credit Union | \$1,000 |
| Just Us! | \$500 |
| Atlantic Coop Assoc. | \$500 |
| Total | \$2,000 |

| Community Events | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 2 per year | |
| 70 plates @ \$70/plate | \$4,900 |
| Food | -2000 |
| Facilitator | -1000 |
| Total | \$1,900 |

Summary:

Fundraising dinners will celebrate our community and highlight local food, farmers, chefs, and wineries, and will also serve as a venue to honour members for their voluntary commitment to our community.

The TDC's investment base will be derived from community shareholders. Together we are restructuring our community to improve our commitment to our Town and to each other. TDC's objective is to be a sustainable cooperative which will directly benefit our community as a whole and provide the least risk to our investors.