

IN THE SPOTLIGHT - OCTOBER 2018

Downtown Campbell River is bustling with shops featuring local artisans, cozy cafes, and unique retailers. In recent years, the downtown core has been undergoing a type of renaissance, supported by the City of Campbell River's [Refresh Downtown strategy](#). Fresh storefronts, new businesses and updated social spaces have helped to breathe new life into the streets that line the foreshore. Have you sat in one of the parklets installed by the City? You can find them outside Stonehouse Teas on 11th Ave. and Online Gourmet on Shoppers Row.

Read on to learn more about some of the fired-up new entrepreneurs throwing their hats into the Campbell River business community. Hear from a long-time business owner who has dedicated her time to promoting the downtown area, and is now witnessing the incredible results. And, get excited about some of the upcoming events happening this fall, geared towards entrepreneurs and business owners looking to grow their skills.



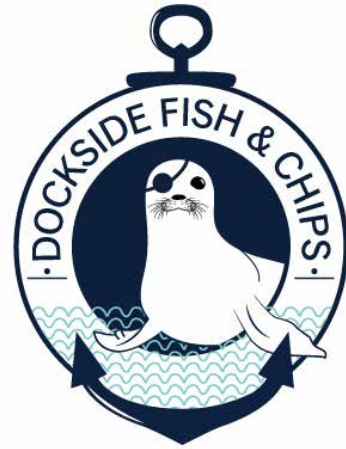
Rick Segal - Dockside Fish and Chips

DOWN BY THE DOCK, WHERE THE MERMAIDS PLAY...

Part-owner of Dockside Fish and Chips, Rick Segal, is not your typical restaurant owner. With a background in technology and investments, and consulting for companies like Samsung on a regular basis, Rick admits that he had no idea what to expect when he and his wife, Teresa, moved to Campbell River six years ago. He had never lived, nor run a business, in a smaller city before. "We used to come on sailing trips up to Desolation Sound, and we liked Campbell River, so when we decided to leave Toronto, we chose here," is his simple explanation for the move. Rick and Teresa began looking for business opportunities shortly after, wanting to put their collective business experience to use. When the floating restaurant in Campbell River's marina came up for sale, the Segals saw their opportunity. "We saw a way to enter into a very unique and supportive business community, and we took the chance. We haven't regretted a moment of it."

The property officially changed hands last December. Rick and Teresa spent the winter with daughter Michelle and her partner Darren Ramm - both of whom had worked two seasons at the restaurant under the previous owners - cleaning, renovating and replacing bits and pieces of the building. The doors opened this past spring, and Rick says they've had a very busy first season. "What's been great is that locals have actually made up the majority of our customers this summer, although we welcomed a steady stream of tourists as well. All around, the feedback has been very positive."

Rick attributes a lot of the success of this first season to the staff at Dockside, and to Michelle and Darren, who are also co-owners in the business. "As a chef, Darren sets quality as his highest ideal," he explains, "and his sense of responsibility to our customers is incredible. And



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Michelle just has this amazing personality! People who meet her just love her, so with these two running the show primarily, we expect the business to continue growing.”

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LESSONS LEARNED ON THE FLY

There are more than a few differences between Campbell River and Toronto, especially when it comes to running a business. When asked about some of the lessons he has learned about operating in a smaller city as opposed to a large, urban centre, Rick comes out with a number of them:

LESSON #1

Businesses aren’t anonymous

“In a place like Campbell River, businesses are associated with the people who run them, so locals end up supporting the people, not just the business. This goes for nearly everything, from a franchise to independently-owned operations. This makes it more personal and connected than somewhere like Vancouver or Toronto.”

LESSON #2

Local communities support local businesses

“This jumps off my previous point - supporting people means that shoppers go to the jewelry store, or a clothing store, as opposed to ordering online or going to a big-box. That kind of community support doesn’t happen everywhere, and it’s wonderful to see.”

LESSON #3

People can be reached easier and faster

“Everybody reads the Mirror, and people who aren’t reading the Mirror are generally on social media. Customers are easier to reach out to here than in a larger city, which contributes to the building of those relationships and support networks.”

LESSON #4

Everybody will try something once

“It’s amazing - any new business in town, almost everybody will try it or check it out at least once. This gives new businesses a leg-up, and if you can create a good experience for customers, they will keep coming back.”

Looking Ahead

In the next few years, the team at Dockside want to continue building relationships with customers and other local businesses. They will also hone the menu, adding new and exciting dishes that complement the traditional fish and chips offerings. “We believe there is a lot we can add without taking away from our roots,” explains Rick. “Soups and chowders, salads, maybe a lunch bar for local business people who need something quick and delicious...there are a ton of creative options!” He predicts that Campbell River is on track to see big, positive changes in the next five years, particularly within the business community.

“We will spend the winter dissecting our first season, looking at what we did right and where we can improve. What can we do better?”

There is still time to get a meal at Dockside Fish and Chips before they close for the winter; Rick says they are aiming to stay open until late November. “Then, the real work begins,” he laughs. “We will spend the winter dissecting our first season, looking at what we did right and where we can improve. What can we do better? But even on the darkest days this season - when the halibut hasn’t shown up or the fryer has died - even on those days, I have a strong belief that this business will succeed and thrive. Campbell River is just that kind of place.”



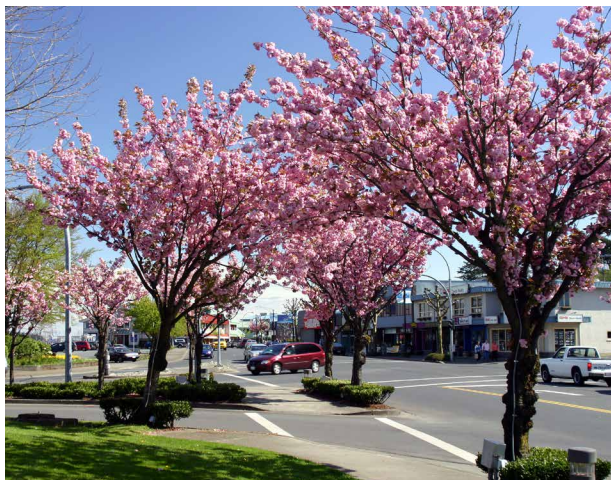
Lisa Whitmore - Downtown Business Improvement Association

COMING TOGETHER TO EFFECT POSITIVE CHANGE

Lisa Whitmore is a Campbell River business owner and business advocate. She is also co-chair of the Downtown Business Improvement Association (BIA) and, through this, she has been tirelessly working to encourage growth in the downtown area. Speaking from behind the counter of her own Tye Plaza business, Signature Oil and Vinegar, Lisa is enthusiastic about the changes she has seen in recent years.

“It’s encouraging to see all of the positive developments that the BIA has helped to create, in full partnership with downtown businesses,” she says. “Recent months and years have seen a huge uptick in collaboration and involvement - I don’t see that slowing down anytime soon!”

As co-chair of the BIA, Lisa is on the front lines when it comes to downtown projects and events. Other members include Heather Gordon-Murphy, also co-chair, and Jan Wade, the executive director of the group.



“It’s encouraging to see all of the positive developments that the BIA has helped to create, in full partnership with downtown businesses.”

Together with their committee consisting of several downtown business owners, and their large membership, the BIA has worked diligently to help beautify the downtown area and support the local business scene. The group also sponsors and organizes several annual Campbell River events.

A Community Working Hard, Together

Lisa opened Signature Oil and Vinegar in 2014, and says she did encounter some of the skepticism that can crop up when an unusual business appears in Campbell River.

“I was told multiple times that this sort of business wouldn’t work here,” she recalls. “People said ‘Campbell Riverites aren’t going to buy fancy oils.’ I disagreed and opened up anyways, and well...I’m still here!” Wanting to become a part of the downtown business community as quickly as possible, Lisa immediately joined the Chamber of Commerce and the BIA once she opened her doors.

The mandate of the Downtown BIA is to promote the downtown area as a vibrant, safe and business-friendly place, and it is supported by land and business owners in the area. The boundary extends from Pure Martial Arts and Fitness

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on the south end of Shoppers Row, all along to the Harbourside Inn on the north end. It also encompasses the Tye Plaza and several businesses on 11th Ave., including Healthyway Natural Foods and Ocean Mountain Yoga.

“How it works is that, every year, when downtown property owners pay their taxes, a portion of those taxes comes back into the Downtown BIA as a grant,” Lisa explains. “We then utilize that money to set up community events, work on beautification projects and other activities to fulfill our mandate. It means that everybody is contributing, and everybody benefits.”

Recent Projects

Over the years, the BIA has helped enhance the attractiveness of the downtown core by installing improved lighting, planting colourful flowers, wrapping electrical boxes with photos depicting our history and natural surroundings, and maintaining additions such as benches and decorative pilings along Shoppers Row. The most recent beautification project is an incredible mural, painted by local artist Alex Witcombe, of Drifted Creations,

last year. Situated at the corner of Shoppers Row and 11th Ave., Lisa praises the project as a dynamic and successful collaboration between Alex, the property owner, the BIA and the City.

“It is stunning, and a wonderful addition to the art pieces around the downtown core,” she says. “The next phase of the project is to add lighting so it stands out at night.”

The Downtown BIA doesn’t just focus on aesthetics, however. Liaising with the City on items such as parking, landscaping, graffiti and facilities maintenance, the BIA supports the safety of downtown.

In July, the City of Campbell River officially opened its Downtown Safety Office and Lisa has noticed a significant impact already. “It really comes down to offering help to those who need it,” she explains. “Connecting vulnerable people with the services they need is a huge step forward in addressing some of the social issues that led to this being needed in the first place. It also works to help shoppers and visitors who move through the downtown feel safe, and know that they are in a friendly environment.”

Community Events

Lisa notes proudly that the BIA is contributing to the vibrancy of Campbell River's downtown through some fun initiatives. They work incredibly hard year-round to sponsor and put together community events that bring the people of Campbell River together. For example, this past summer, the BIA played a part in putting on the River City Arts Festival, a downtown event showcasing Campbell River's artisans and vendors. They also organized a successful Giant Garage Sale earlier this month, encouraging people to reuse and recycle while enjoying the downtown space and connecting with fellow citizens.

Annual favourites also include the Easter egg hunt at Robert Ostler Park, which attracted around 500 children and parents last year, as well as the downtown Halloween celebration, happening again this year. Participating downtown businesses display orange balloons outside, and costumed employees hand out treats to the goblins and ghouls stopping by. This year, the BIA has added a Monster Mash costume parade with prizes, hot dogs and hot chocolate.

And of course, Lisa and her colleagues are responsible for putting on the ever-popular Starlight Shopping and Big Truck Parade. "This is one of our biggest events of the year," says Lisa, "and we just love putting it on. The community really comes out to support it, and it seems like it gets bigger every year!"

The parade sees local companies and individuals decking out their logging trucks, dump trucks, cement trucks and other vehicles with incredible Christmas light designs, and parading from the bottom of Rockland Road, along Highway 19A to

the downtown core. Spectators are then encouraged to do some Christmas shopping by buying local; stores are open late and often offering special promotions. Lisa explains that, for some businesses, this is one of their busiest days leading up to Christmas. "So many of these businesses in the downtown area are independently run, and we try to find every opportunity that we can to connect these businesses with shoppers. Buying local means you are supporting not only a business, but the livelihood of your neighbour who owns that business. It makes a huge difference."

This year, the Starlight Shopping and Big Truck Parade is happening on Friday, November 30. More information about the BIA and other events can be found at their [website](#).

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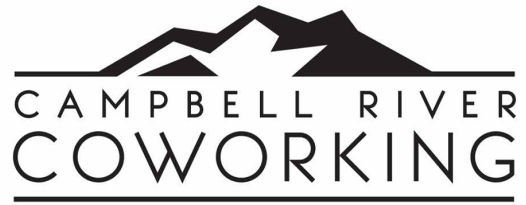
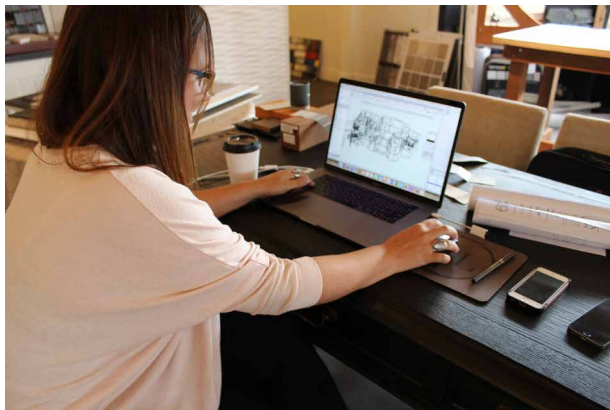


Desiree Ross and Matthew Fox - Campbell River Coworking

WORKING TOGETHER TO WORK TOGETHER

It's no secret that the traditional way of working is becoming less relevant in today's connected, technology-based world. Smartphones, Wi-Fi, online collaboration and video calling are only a few of the tools that make it easier - and often less expensive - for people to work from home rather than in a traditional office building. In addition, more and more of the workforce is operating on a contract or freelance model, pursuing their own work in the fields of marketing, sales, writing, design and other in-demand services. This shift in the workforce has helped foster the explosion of coworking spaces around the world, including here in British Columbia. You will find Coworking spaces in Victoria, Duncan, Nanaimo, Qualicum, Cumberland and Courtenay. And now, you can find one in Campbell River.

Desiree Barton is a busy interior designer by trade, while Matthew Fox describes himself as a budding 'serial entrepreneur'. Matthew also operates a digital and GIS consulting firm. Together, they are turning a Tye Plaza storefront into a modern, welcoming and collaborative work environment.



"We are going for a casual, coffee-shop vibe with a focus on productivity," says Matthew, describing the intention of the space. The storefront sits at the corner of the north block of Tye Plaza, leading down the thorough-way that opens onto Highway 19A across from the Quadra ferry. Boasting multiple large windows and a nearly 900 sq. ft main area, Matthew and Desiree envision a variety of opportunities here for workers from Campbell River and out-of-town.

"There will be a mix of dedicated desks, available for a low monthly fee, and 'flex' desks, which can be reserved for half or full days," explains Desiree. "We also have a private boardroom in the back and a mezzanine area that we are converting into some sort of workspace."

Fostering Creativity and Collaboration

Desiree describes the vision for the coworking space as “a place for people to collaborate together, where ideas can be shared and worked on.” The layout of the main work area promotes this idea of collaboration; desks aren’t stuffed into private cubicles, and there’s a casual meeting area with comfortable chairs and large windows as soon as you walk in the front door. There will also be a shared kitchen area, with a microwave, coffee/tea station and a fridge. “However, when it comes to the fridge, there’s one rule,” laughs Desiree. “If it’s turning into a science experiment, it gets thrown out!”

The only doors to block people’s access to one another are on the boardroom in the back, and the bathroom. However, Matthew Fox is clear that it won’t be a free-for-all, interruption-heavy environment.

“We really hope to build a community of freelancers and entrepreneurs, people coming and working together in one space. We are very hopeful that it’s going to be great.”

“I’m envisioning a traffic-light system for people who are working in here,” he explains, “similar to systems that you see at some restaurants. Everybody gets a status cylinder that sits on your desk. It can be set to red, yellow or green. Green means you’re open to being approached for conversation, yellow means you’re busy but could make time for something important, and red means you would prefer to not be interrupted.” Matthew says this system would give entrepreneurs and freelancers a level of autonomy with their daily work schedule that they might not find in a traditional setting, or even while working from home.



Since she opened the doors in April 2016, the storefront was used by Desiree as a retail space to complement her interior design business - she carried products such as gift items and home decor. However, it soon became clear that she had to make a choice. “Honestly, I’d found myself torn between the design and retail sides of my business,” Desiree explains. “I couldn’t give myself fully to either, and found myself working 6 or 7 days a week. I wasn’t able to balance work and family life with the retail store open. Design has always been and will always be my passion, so I decided to take the storefront in a different direction.”

Matthew and Desiree connected at their children’s soccer game and started chatting, immediately recognizing a shared passion for business and community. According to Matthew, they both “saw a need for this sort of thing in the community” and began sharing ideas. “We really hope to build a community of freelancers and entrepreneurs, people coming and working together in one space. We are very hopeful that it’s going to be great.”

Design, Meet Productivity

As you might guess when there is a professional interior designer on board, the coworking space is beautiful and functional. Even in its not-quite-finished state, it is obvious that this will be a productive, casual and comfortable place to spend time. White walls set off dark-toned shelving and some desks, while other desks sport gorgeous natural-wood tops. The mismatched light fixtures

are funky and bright, and the large windows invite natural light into every corner. The plan is to build bar-height flex-desks along the front windows, and offer advertising space in the bottom halves of the windows to members and monthly customers.

“This is a very high-traffic area, with lots of commuters and shoppers all year long,” says Matthew. “It will be incredible exposure for businesses looking to get their name out there.” The boardroom at the back features a chic glass table with seating for up to 8 people, and the mezzanine will likely host a small ‘kids corner’ for young entrepreneurs to explore and play.

“Casual, creative and flexible,” says Desiree with a smile. “That’s our goal with this space, and we think it will go over really well.”

Campbell River Coworking will offer high-speed internet, printing services and personal lockers, all on a cost-efficient and flexible pricing model. Pricing and booking will soon be available on their website (www.campbellrivercoworking.com). Like and Share their [Facebook page](#) to stay connected and updated about the grand opening, planned for sometime this fall, and to reach out to Desiree or Matthew to discuss bookings and dedicated desk rentals at info@campbellrivercoworking.com.



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Join Darrell Goertzen, Business Advisor for Export Navigator, for two workshops on November 7th. We are pleased to present both sessions at no charge, but registration is required to save a seat. Follow the links provided below to save your spot!

November 7 at the Comfort Inn - Expand Your Market, 7:30 – 9 am

Developing new markets can offset impacts of seasonal business fluctuations and dependency on just a few clients. No matter what your experience is with selling outside of our local market, this interactive workshop will prove invaluable to those seriously looking to strengthen or grow their business by pursuing markets beyond Campbell River.

Join us for breakfast, and look forward to learning how to:

- successfully identify and assess new target markets;
- tap into numerous provincial and federal support services;
- write a brief and concise growth plan for use with lenders and other agencies
- network, share and learn from fellow participants; and
- receive continued, free support from the Export Advisor for this area



November 7 at the Comfort Inn - Selling Your Business, 12 – 1:30 pm

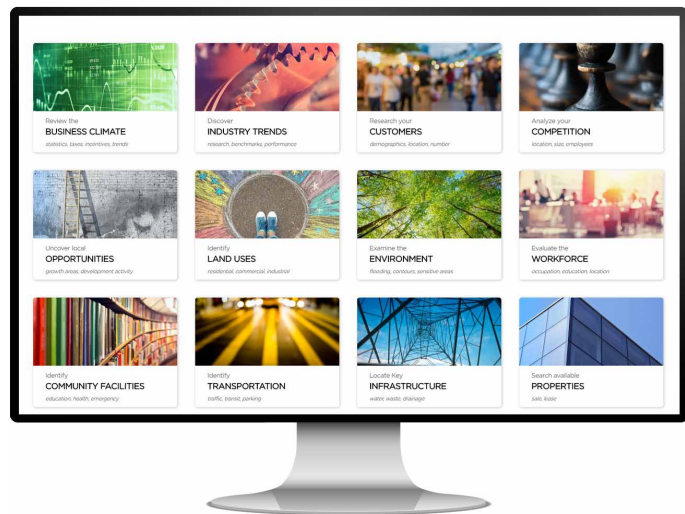
Every business will sell at some point, even yours. And when it's time to sell, your business will become inventory - one of hundreds of other businesses on the market needing a buyer. How will you make sure your business stands out and gains the interest of a buyer?

It's a buyer's market now and this is expected to be the situation for many years to come. You need to be prepared and have your business positioned strongly to appeal to potential buyers. The financial payoff can be significant and your emotional strain greatly reduced when your business is correctly prepared. Even if you don't plan to sell for years to come, it's not too early to start.

Again, these workshops are offered free of charge, but you must reserve your seat to attend. [Register now](#) to avoid missing out on this crucial information.

THE EDO 'DID YOU KNOW...?'

Did you know that we have launched an investment portal? The Economic Development Office has created, in partnership with Canadian industry-leader Localintel, a data-site with the sole purpose of providing up-to-date, relevant information about our local business market. This is a Campbell River-focused site that gives startups, emerging and small businesses – and everyone else – a range of valuable information, making it easier for them to:



- research the local business climate and industry trends
- identify their customers and competitors
- uncover local opportunities
- find available properties

Business retention and expansion as well as supporting entrepreneurs looking at investment opportunities in Campbell River is a key component of the City of Campbell Rivers economic development strategic framework. The site is an easy-to-use tool with information that promotes Campbell River's advantages and shares current demographic, geographic and market data that connects businesses with the community. [Check out the new site here](#), and visit the [Campbell River EDO website](#) for more valuable information.



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