

Microsoft wants to team up with entrepreneurs

By Roger Belgrave

If you're an entrepreneur, Microsoft Canada wants to be your partner.

The technology giant, along with Metroland Media, is sponsoring the June 5 Breakfast Speaking Series that has been organized to encourage and assist local entrepreneurs.

Headlining the event at Mississauga's Living Arts Centre from 7-9:30 a.m. is Arlene Dickinson.

She is best known for her role as one of the five venture capitalists who fields pitches from entrepreneurs looking for financial backing on the CBC show *Dragon's Den*.

This Canadian business icon and Microsoft Canada recently shook hands on a partnership conceived to give Canada's entrepreneurs the tech support they need to help launch businesses or take ventures to the next level.

Entrepreneurs are feeding and driving the nation's economic engine, suggested Chitra Anand, Microsoft Canada head of public relations and communications.

"There's a movement around entrepreneurialism as it relates to Canada and really fueling economic activity and innovation," she said.

Microsoft Canada wants to play an active role in that movement and is committing significant resources to initiatives like the speakers series, Startup Weekend Peel, the annual June 6-8 event where startup enthusiasts share and get ideas, and Dickerson's YouInc.com, an online community created to celebrate and support entrepreneurs all over the world.

The business technology leader's involvement in the seminar event series, and other similar initiatives that seek to empower entrepreneurs, was



Arlene Dickinson

seen as an opportunity to be a part of the movement propelling Canada's economic growth.

"Technology is an enabler for business," said Anand, who added the tech giant wants to take a lead in showing entrepreneurs, and small and medium sized businesses how technology can be used as a platform to launch, drive and accelerate a venture forward.

Microsoft, an example of global entrepreneurial success, will offer an experiential component to the event series and other initiatives— showing seminar goers how its services and devices can drive business growth and development.

Technology has become an integral part of today's world and business space.

It is the backbone and infrastructure that is going to help many entrepreneurs build strong businesses, Anand believes.

However, Anand and Microsoft have found a lot of people still struggle with how to use and integrate technology in their lives and business.

"We want to be that partner in this space because it's such an important agenda to drive growth and innovation in the Canadian economy," she insisted.

Tickets to the Breakfast Seminar are \$90. For more information call 905-273-8111 or 905-273-8153.

For more information on Startup Weekend Peel visit www.peel.startupweekend.org.



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