

# ProfitLearn

## NEWSLETTER

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The future looks bright for ProfitLearn

**ProfitLearn 2002-2003:**  
Businesses have the choice of over 40 courses to shape their future.

**Meet... Duncan Noble**  
Business Coach

### What Participants Are Saying...

"The workshops offered by ProfitLearn are very interesting, informative and motivating. My business is successfully growing because of the many things I learned. I would highly recommend ProfitLearn workshops to new and existing businesses."

Susan Robichaud, *The Ink Spot Marketing & Design*

"The facilitators always managed to give us that extra push of confidence to show us that we are capable of achieving when we have the right tools and information."

Etienne Allain, *Northeast Security*

### ProfitLearn 2001-2002: Province-Wide Coverage

Working with close to 25 marketing partners, ProfitLearn delivered business management workshops in approximately 25 communities in all five regions of the province.

**ProfitLearn Newsletter** is a publication of the New Brunswick Training Group Inc.

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## Interview with Brian Dick: The Future Looks Bright for ProfitLearn



The ProfitLearn program, launched in 2000, is managed by New Brunswick Training Group Inc. and is supported by Federal / Provincial funding through ACOA and Business New Brunswick. Through a coordinated and comprehensive approach to providing training across the province, ProfitLearn is helping small- and medium-sized businesses enhance their management skills cost-effectively and conveniently.

Brian Dick, Vice-President of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, sees ProfitLearn as a key contributor to the growth of small- and medium-sized businesses in New Brunswick. We spoke with Mr. Dick at the end of this year's program.

### ACOA is a major supporter of ProfitLearn. How does it fit your mandate?

"Clearly small- and medium-sized businesses are the engine of growth in New Brunswick and Atlantic Canada. We also know that entrepreneurs need to constantly acquire new skills as they grow their businesses. We see ProfitLearn as an ideal vehicle to provide businesses with practical tools and skills to take back to their organizations."

### Why the New Brunswick Training Group as the management organization?

"Early on in the 90s, we supported NBTGI's focus on seeking and negotiating international opportunities for the province's training industry through organizations such as CIDA and other potential partners. At the same time, we began to look at our own needs in terms of services the organization could help provide right here in New Brunswick. There was a natural fit. NBTGI had a strong roster of experienced business trainers, a model that worked and the energy to put a dynamic program in place. They had already designed, marketed and delivered similar programs. The opportunity was there to build and leverage the organization's strength while ensuring our entrepreneurs had the advantages of modern business management practices. It was a case of 'killing two birds with one stone'."

### ProfitLearn piloted a new program approach this year – one that incorporated one-on-one post-training consultation for participants. Why the shift in approach?

"We discovered that our training tended to raise questions in the minds of entrepreneurs about how to apply what they learned to the specific needs of their business. While most of our courses were initially one-day or half-day seminars, we experimented with a more extended learning program in combination with follow-up individual consultation on the Miramichi. The feedback was very positive and we are continuing to develop that component of the program."

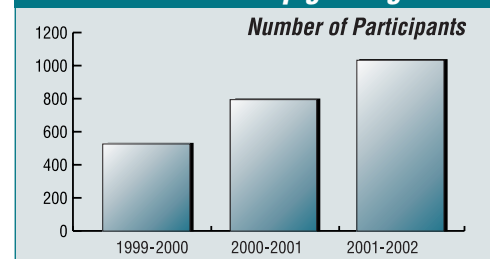
### In general, what has been the response to the program?

"The most revealing evidence about its success has been anecdotal. As I travel the province meeting regularly with our clients, I hear the same sentiment: 'The best thing I ever did was take that course on...'. ProfitLearn covers the gamut of skills needed so that most entrepreneurs can find what they are looking for."

### The ProfitLearn program responds to a diversity of needs. What drives the program planning and course options delivered each year?

"Entrepreneurs need practical tools and skills they can integrate into the planning and operation of their business. And they need the learning opportunities to be readily accessible and affordable. Those considerations drive ProfitLearn's program development, delivery and goals. But just as important, ProfitLearn listens to CEDAs, Chambers of Commerce, Community Business Development Centres and other marketing partners within each region. For example, this year we customized our general course on *Establishing an HR Management System* to meet identified needs of the IT sector."

### The numbers keep growing...



### Are there other areas you see the program getting involved in down the road?

"It's too early to be specific. However, our current focus on innovation could bring about a whole other agenda for the program. We need to move towards creating a culture of innovation. We have highly sophisticated technology in this province in a wide variety of areas. However, too few businesses use it to leverage growth and development."

### The bottom line is really job creation isn't it?

"Of course. Growing businesses create jobs. But, growth also precipitates challenges for entrepreneurs – new demand for human resource management strategies, the need for more sophisticated marketing skills, the need for know-how on breaking into export markets and more. The fact that we are largely a rural province presents significant learning and skills acquisition challenges, particularly for entrepreneurs in smaller communities. ProfitLearn has learned how to make its program visible, accessible and valuable right across the province."

# ProfitLearn 2002-2003: Participants have the choice of over 40 courses to shape their future

Owners of small- and medium-sized businesses in New Brunswick have had a lot of good advice recently. And, they are about to get more. **ProfitLearn**, a province-wide program delivered by the New Brunswick Training Group Inc. (NBTGI), has a simple goal – to help New Brunswick companies get the skills and knowledge they need to increase their profits. Before **ProfitLearn**, NBTGI and ACOA delivered province-wide training for small- and medium-sized businesses under the *Better Business Management Practices Program* which began in 1997. The program was expanded and re-launched under **ProfitLearn** in 2000.

When the program resumes in the Fall of 2002, participants will have over 40 courses from which to choose, ranging from HR topics to financial management to marketing and sales. **ProfitLearn** will add at least five new courses to its Fall program. An important part of the program is that participants and community economic development organizations get to have input as to what those courses will be!

"We listen to what people want and need and then design our courses in response to that feedback," says Patty Hope, **ProfitLearn** project co-ordinator in Fredericton. "Business needs change year by year. That means we have to be flexible and adaptable."

One change planned for the Fall is the addition of post-training consultation for more program participants. "We piloted a program of group workshops combined with post training consultation and it was extremely well received." A similar pilot in Saint John that saw an existing course adapted for the IT sector. Enterprise Saint John Labour Force Development Officer Michelle Robichaud says attendance was more than expected and early indications are that the customized content received high approval ratings.

"The addition of post training opportunities is filling a gap" says Robichaud. "We have had many instances where questions arise after the course is completed and our clients need answers. Programs like this one will allow them to meet one-on-one with our facilitators after the course to find the solutions they need."

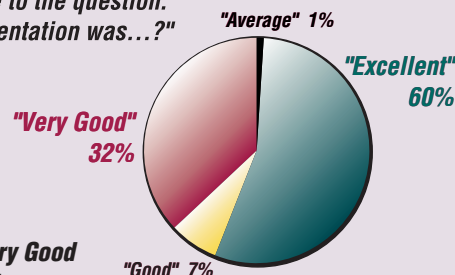
A strong focus on being responsive to client's needs has made **ProfitLearn** a made-in-New Brunswick success story. And the number of participants continues to grow. Since **ProfitLearn** began, over 2,000 New Brunswick business people have taken advantage of program opportunities. The rate of participation has increased from 902 in 2000-2001 to 1,172 in 2001-02.

"We listen to what are clients want," says Hope. "That is our strength and we will continue to build on that".

## Satisfied Customers!

Participants' response to the question:  
"The facilitator's presentation was...?"

"Excellent" = 60%  
"Very Good" = 32%  
"Good" = 7%  
"Average" = 1%



Rated Excellent or Very Good  
by 92% of Participants

## Meet Duncan Noble: Business Coach

If you have questions about making your business succeed, Duncan Noble just may have the answers.

As one of 15 expert facilitators in the New Brunswick Training Group's **ProfitLearn** program, Noble specializes in helping businesses grow through his *Success Strategies for Business* course. Noble says such courses are essential if companies are to grow successfully.

"Given the important role small- and medium-sized businesses play in our economy, the importance of continuing to upgrade business skills and training cannot be emphasized enough," he said. "Fueling the growth of even a few businesses can have a significant economic impact on a community."

Noble brings an impressive background to **ProfitLearn** programs. He has an engineering degree from the University of New Brunswick and an MBA from Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario. His strength and his own admitted passion is helping business people identify problems and find the right solutions. He has worked as an executive coach and as a business owner employing 50 people. Noble now teaches at Mount Allison University's Commerce Department.

"Organizations first have to have a clear idea of where they want to go and then how to get there," Noble said. "They have to learn what works and most importantly, have to stay focused on the outcome they desire."

One particularly rewarding experience for Noble was a course he held in Saint John to help businesses deal with continual growth issues. Approximately 25 New Brunswick companies attended the course which was designed to give them a practical strategic growth model to take home with them. Noble says the number of participants is a reflection of the interest and needs of small business in New Brunswick.

"When companies are small, owners tend to concentrate on the thing they do best such as sales, for example," he said. "As a company expands, the skills of the owner must also grow. They have to deal with issues like delegation, financial planning, organizational management and how to handle human resource issues. The growth in number of participants attending **ProfitLearn** workshops is a clear demonstration of the drive and energy entrepreneurs have in this province."

## Meet a Facilitator...

Each edition, **ProfitLearn** will introduce you to one of 15 skilled facilitator/trainers.

For this publication, we talked to Duncan Noble who delivered the popular *Success Strategies for Business* workshop.

Courses alone are not the total answer, Noble says. "There is a very real need for ongoing post-training assistance to help companies focus on what their real needs are. This is where I really can add value."

In addition to his teaching at Mount Allison where he is in his element shaping tomorrow's entrepreneurs, Noble looks forward to more stints with **ProfitLearn**. "Business people who sign up for **ProfitLearn** programs are eager for practical, hands-on tools and skills they can implement right now. It's a real challenge to respond with what they need and want. But it's a challenge I thoroughly enjoy. If you make a difference in just one business, it's a worthwhile investment."