

Chamber's Women's Summit offers virtual experience, local perspective

Female business leaders from across Canada and around the corner are set to come together to teach, motivate and inspire this month as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce hosts their annual Women's Summit in an interactive and virtual way.

Set to be hosted on the Canadian-developed conference platform Pheedloop, the Women's Summit kicks off on October 27 with a keynote address from author Samra Zafar (*A Good Wife: Escaping the Life I Never Chose*).

And this is just the beginning. Through October 29, more than half-a-dozen local female business leaders will share their success stories, touching on a variety of topics ranging from how businesses can develop and improve their digital strategy, to the best use of video, to the value of coaching and mentorship.

"The Town of Aurora has a very strong female entrepreneur/business women community and this has always been a very well-attended summit with about 200 - 220 people attending," says Sandra Ferri, President & CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. "Because of the pandemic, we believe there is a lot of need for support out there within our business community and we wanted to make sure we came up with a lineup that would support our members in the various types of things they needed and still be able to give them that conference feel."

"The Pheedloop platform replicates a conference experience. It has features such as a lobby, an exhibitors' lounge, live one-on-one chat with exhibitors and between attendees, and a lot of features you would have at a real face-to-face conference."

As businesses work their way through the pandemic, Ms. Ferri says the Chamber has found business owners and entrepreneurs are looking for ways to manage their resources and to figure out what they need to sustain their businesses for when we come out the other side of the global health crisis.

"One thing is for sure they all need some support and they don't all need the same support," says Ms. Ferri. "What we tried to do is touch on a number of different topics that would be designed to help businesses, primarily with their digital strategy, email list development, coaching and mentoring, [and] business adaptability in terms of what you have to do."

"If there is a second wave, [we will touch on] what you have to do to adapt to make sure you're able to continue servicing your clients."

Following Ms. Zafar's keynote, which will focus on resilience, facing adversity and coming through stronger, Avery Swartz, founder and CEO of Camp Tech and resident tech expert for CTV Your Morning will take the stage on October 29 with a keynote entitled "Ruling Your Domain: Building Your Business through Digital Marketing." She will share her advice on how to enhance your online presence, with the first 100 registrants for the full conference receiving a copy of her e-book "See You On The Internet: Building Your Small Business with Digital Marketing."

Rounding out the lineup on October 27 will be Tracy Smith, Founder & CEO of Kitchen Table CEOs discussing "You've Got Mail: The Crucial Role of Email Lists", Jennifer Ettinger of Pink Dreams Inc., with "Business Adaptability in Times of COVID-19", and Nikki Pett, Founder of Sigma Promotions, on "Personal Development for Increased Profits and Productivity."

On October 29, Jennifer Walker, co-owner of Carruthers Financial will discuss "Women, Financial Planning and a Pandemic: Balancing the Unknown," followed by Michelle Bower Carter, President of Mission Fundraising, on "Leveraging Online Video to Grow Revenue and Increase Customer Retention," with Mae Khamissa, co-owner of Omar's Shoes, closing out the conference with a talk on "Building & Supporting Your Local Community."

"The pandemic has really thrown all businesses - and businesses have had to adapt, pivot and change the way they do things," says Ms. Ferri. "What I want [participants] to come away with from the Women's Summit is to know that digital will continue to be very

important as a presence, especially if there is a second wave, and people are a little more reticent to leave the home.

?Digital will be all important going forward and a lot of what we're doing on this day relates to your digital presence and elevating your game, which is the tagline for the conference. We also want them to walk away feeling motivated and strong, knowing that they're not in this alone and there is a lot of support for them. We want them to understand that there are financial implications and they need to be thinking about those implications.?

For more on the Aurora Chamber of Commerce's Women's Summit, including how to register, visit aurorachamber.on.ca.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter