Have a lot to do? ?Outsource it locally!?



By Brock Weir

Riding on the bus or train, one can't help hearing other people's conversations.

During the early morning or late evening rush hours, these conversations often turn to complaints about their busy lives and trying to find a moment to do that odd errand in the shops and at home, or simply finding a moment for one's self. Rather than just complaining about it to anyone who would listen ? or eavesdrop ? Aurora's Shabbir Evershine has decided to do something about it.

Mr. Evershine and two friends have launched ?LocaWoka? an online service which allows people through social media like Facebook and LinkedIn to ?outsource? their errands, thus helping them reach the bottom of their inbox and check off that last item on their ?honey do? list.
On the other hand, people would be able to find local, temporary work earning extra money to make ends meet.

?My co-founder and I had been thinking about this for a while now in how we can enable people to basically outsource their errands and their temporary work to other people around them who are willing, able, and have the skills,? says Mr. Evershine. ?A person will have a better, more enriched life by outsourcing some of the things they are too busy to do. The people around them who have the skills and are passionate about fixing somebody's car, mowing the lawn, or just wanting some extra income can benefit from it as well.?

LocaWoka ? a play on ?local worker? ? recently got a boost from Toronto's MaRS, providing assistance to start-ups and entrepreneurs. Their advisors have been on hand to help them get up and running and out of a field of 100 recent applicants they were whittled down into the top 10.

?They helped us understand the market dynamics and research around it,? says Mr. Evershine. ?We are now hoping to fully launch from a commercial perspective by the end of August.?

The concept will see people sign up to their website connected to their Facebook or LinkedIn Accounts, advertising their special skills and services, and connect with people in their surrounding community who might want to take them up on their offer. It is a temporary, non-binding relationship, he says.

Different models had been considered in the pre-launch stage. They considered screening everybody who comes into the program and while they said there are merits in that, it ?defeats the purpose? of their vision of a ?self-growing community. Ultimately this will be a self-policing platform governed in a similar structure to eBay in that users would be able to leave ratings and reviews for

services rendered.

?When we launch it as a fill mechanism, people will post what they need,? he says. ?In the future, once we build a community of people who know each other and are online within that ?ecosystem', it will almost be a reverse auction as well with people saying, ?this is what I can do, this is what I am great at, and this is what I am passionate about and offering'.

?Time has become such that you don't know your neighbours or the people on your street. There could be people who are great musicians, people who are great piano players, and people who just love to garden. If we can tap into that and there is an underemployed market, or people who are just looking for more leisure and recreational work, I think this helps bond neighbours as well. If I have a neighbour two doors down who can help me and who has the expertise then why not get it through him? He is going to make some money, I am going to get the help I need, and at the same time, we're building a community as well.?

Mr. Evershine moved to Aurora over a year ago from the Yonge Street and Finch Avenue area. Hearing good things about the community from friends who had moved here a few years previous, he says word of mouth was accurate and it is the kind of community he wants to foster through LocaWoka.

?I feel the folks are great here and I feel something like this would facilitate what is already going on here ? great people and great community. Since I moved here, I pretty much know everyone who lives on the block and I think this kind of technology helps us become closer.?

For more information, visit www.locawoka.com.