



Bizzone/National Bank Survey reveals biggest issues

Bizzone, organiser of the Business Expo, has joined forces with The National Bank to find out how they can both best support business owners in 2009.

"This year, facing a challenging economic climate, it is even more vital that the National Bank and **Bizzone Business Expos** stay tuned to the needs of business," says Andy Somerville, GM National Bank Business Banking.

Bizzone managing director **Sarah Trotman** agrees. "It was the right time to take a pulse check of what business was thinking and the Biggest Business Issue Survey enabled us to do just that."

The National Bank recognised that inviting businesses to name their number one business issue would help better shape its Seminar Series at this year's expo, as well as the bank's offering for SMEs. It is also a fantastic way to remind business owners of the free resources available to them through its online Business Resource Centre (www.nationalbank.co.nz/brc).

"The survey has enabled us to put in place business support mechanisms that



Bizzone MD Sarah Trotman.

meet current needs and help businesses plan and move forward even in a difficult climate," says Trotman.

"We want to encourage businesses to continue growing. The National Bank wants to see business work as productively and efficiently as possible," adds Somerville.

The National Bank and **Bizzone** brainstormed what additional support they could provide businesses. "We concluded that a year ago we would have easily predicted the key challenges facing business, but the landscape has changed and if we were both to offer practical, relevant solutions then we would need to ask this question right now to get a true picture," Trotman says.

So **Bizzone** and The National bank surveyed 44,000 business owners asking "What is your biggest business issue?"

Merged results from the survey show the two major issues facing business today are Cashflow (32.6 percent) and Sales & Marketing (13.6 percent).

"Smart and confident marketing is going to carry business owners through a recession, it is imperative



that business owners protect their customer base and the revenues generated from it," says Trotman.

Speakers at The National Bank Seminar Series will all address the key challenges facing business owners at the moment. "Experts from The National Bank will offer seminars such as 'how to get more bang from your marketing buck', and 'tips for managing your cashflow'," says Somerville. Content will be shaped around the survey results, addressing in detail the major challenges for business right now.

The results are not surprising. The National Bank offers free business workshops on specific business topics

and has seen popularity in their 'Understanding Your Financials' workshop dramatically increase – so much so that a new workshop 'How to manage your cashflow better' has been added to help customers with practical advice on how to avoid cashflow 'surprises'.

"The **Bizzone Business Expo** this year will offer more support for business than ever before," says Trotman. "Because it will be tailored to current business demands and to help businesses seek new ways to improve efficiency and develop new revenue streams."

The dates for the 2009 **Bizzone Business Expos** are Auckland, 27-29 May; Wellington, 22-24 July and Christchurch, 5-7 August.



Andy Somerville, GM National Bank Business Banking.