

SHERIDAN NEWS

HalTech series kicks off with session on selling yourself

Posted by Lauren <



STORY AND PHOTO BY LAUREN O'BRIEN

It may have looked like fun and games in the library atrium last week, but students were gathered during lunch hour to hear a speaker tell them about the need to sell themselves.

Marguerite Zimmerman of E=mz2 presented "Sell Yourself: The Secrets to Your Successful Future" as the launch of HalTech's Future Of Work series.

The Future Of Work is a lunchtime series for entrepreneurs or anyone interested in starting their own business, and is open to students and the public. About 30 people attended the first session, in the Trafalgar Campus library atrium, where the trees and skylights overhang a small indoor courtyard beside the learning commons. The series will continue throughout the school year with different topics, presenters and includes free pizza and beverages.

Last week's topic was sales: selling a product, service or yourself as an employee. Zimmerman had everyone's attention as she discussed sales techniques such as proper communication and how to influence with integrity. She had the crowd participate in a simple exercise – asking them to look for how many blue items they could see in the room, then immediately asking how many red items we saw when we looked around. This was to demonstrate that people often only notice what they are looking for.

"At the end of the day we're really always selling ourselves, and integrity is critical because you're never selling an idea or, if you're in sales you're never selling something for the short term. It's all about the long term. You put a lot of stuff in the bank and if you don't have integrity you're taking a lot out of the bank – more than you ever put in," said Zimmerman after the presentation.

The Future Of Work series is run by HalTech, which is a not-for-profit company that supports and assists entrepreneurs and technology companies in Halton Region, and is located at Trafalgar Campus.

Each month HalTech hosts at least five events focused on knowledge building, providing networks and information that entrepreneurs need.

"Last month we also had three peer-to-peers, and that's where we bring between 10 to 20 company CEOs together in a certain sector, and they talk about their issues, their products, and sort of burning issues for them, and then they help one another," explained Karen Sievwright, president of HalTech.

The company also has access to \$17million worth of market research, which it uses to help its clients succeed in their target market.

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HalTech is one of 14 Regional Innovation Centres in Ontario, and part of the One Network (Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs). It provides various supports for entrepreneurial companies, whether they are small to medium existing companies that are adding services or growing, new companies that are "pre-revenue" – meaning the business hasn't started earning money yet – or startup companies.

"We are set up independently so we can understand the unique needs of our particular geography, and then have programs and services that match those needs," said Sievwright.

HalTech provides personalized service to its clients, including entrepreneurship training, access to funding opportunities and grants, market research, business advisory services, networking and mentoring. The program has qualified and experienced volunteers from the community who mentor companies for six months to a year.

One example of a success story from HalTech in co-operation with Sheridan is a company called Cinema Suite, which is a 3D reality company.

"They do 3D reality for therapeutic uses, so it's really 3D gaming with therapy. We worked with them at Sheridan and they've won quite a number of awards. They're working with therapists to look at psychiatric illnesses as well as post-traumatic stress disorder in soldiers and folks who've been in combat," Sievwright said,

HalTech is located "under the stairs" in J Wing, room J103H.