



Shelby Schneider

Director of Marketing, Economic Development Specialist
Saratoga Economic Development Corporation

SS: I think it's important to have a single point of contact for business development in any community. Businesses need to know that they have an advocate, and if they have a problem or need, we're here to help. That is SEDC's role in Saratoga County. Our mission is to create jobs and diversify the tax base while improving the quality of life for the residents of Saratoga County.

SM: How has helping businesses on their paths to success been a rewarding experience for you?

SS: I truly love the field of economic development. I am one of the biggest cheerleaders for Upstate New York business development. Helping businesses prosper, create jobs, and invest in our community means that someone has job security or that someone who moved away from the area to find a good job in their field has the opportunity to return. I grew up in Upstate New York and watched some serious economic decline since my childhood. I believe in what we do and I'm proud to be involved in an effort to build a supportive business environment.

SM: Who has been most helpful to you on your own path to success?

SS: Who hasn't been helpful? Saratoga County is growing but it hasn't lost its sense of "community." There are so many supportive people willing to mentor—I have a tough time identifying one person along my path. What makes Saratoga County special is that when someone reaches a certain stature in their

field, they take the time to mentor and groom leaders to one day follow in their footsteps. Whether its business or public service, I have found that mentorship is the dominant culture here.

I must say that my boss Dennis Brobston has been incredibly supportive of me and it has been an honor and pleasure to work with him since he came back as president of SEDC. He's incredibly open to new ideas and is willing to take some risks to reap rewards. And he's just fun to work with.

SM: What is the SEDC's relationship with GLOBALFOUNDRIES?

SS: We've had a great relationship with GLOBALFOUNDRIES. SEDC led the site selection team that attracted AMD, which became GLOBALFOUNDRIES, so we have been involved with all of the key players from day one. They know what we do and how we provide value to the community and have been very supportive of our business retention and development efforts. We recently produced a marketing video to raise global awareness of Saratoga County and our assets. When we asked GLOBALFOUNDRIES to participate, not only were they receptive, CEO Doug Grose came in and personally spoke about the benefits of locating in Saratoga County. They continue to be supportive in that respect and it means the world to us.

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Success Magazine: How did you begin working with the SEDC?

Shelby Schneider: I started at SEDC as an intern, right around the same time that SEDC was preparing Saratoga County's application for the New York State Empire Zones Program. When NYS designated Saratoga County Empire Zone status in 2001, the position opened up to coordinate the program. The program recently came to a close, but we have plenty of work to do here and my role has transitioned to support our marketing and business development efforts.

SM: Why do you feel it is important for businesses to receive assistance through the SEDC?



Natalie Woods

President/Owner - N&B Consulting, LLC

NW: My goal was to take control of my future rather than continue to have someone else determine it. I understood that with technology it was possible to help others while providing a low-cost solution to someone else's needs.

SM: How have you expanded your focus or changed your goals since founding the business?

NW: In the short time that N&B has been formed, our overall scope has morphed. Originally, I opened and formed the business as a virtual assistant business. For my first client I had to re-scope N&B's role. We were running a small software business by performing such roles as new business development manager, and HR recruiting and placement services. In 2009, once that project was completed, I refocused the business back to the virtual assistant roles, and re-entered the wireless telecommunications world where the "passion" of N&B was formed. A niche for N&B is the real estate market. As a NYS salesperson and having worked in the real estate world at some level for the past twenty years, this seemed to be the natural direction to take. As such, N&B is now a property management agent for a local home makeover business.

SM: What does the term "virtual assistant" mean to you at N&B Consulting?

NW: To me, a "virtual assistant" is your personal assistant that you hire to perform the administrative tasks of running your business,

which can be done from anywhere.

SM: What services do you offer?

NW: N&B offers a wide variety of services with scopes ranging from general administrative tasks, event planning, marketing and advertising, wireless site acquisition and leasing work, to real estate property management services. A full menu of services can be found at: nandbconsultingllc.com.

SM: Who can benefit most from these services? And, what are some of the benefits that go along with the services you provide?

NW: Ideally, I believe that small business owners would most benefit since it is the small business owner who is trying to expand, but may not have the economic means to support a full-time person on staff to take care of the miscellaneous details needed to run a business successfully. The benefit of using N&B is that we are a lower cost expense to the client, but it is a service provided by someone that cares and is growing with you and your business.

SM: What achievement are you most proud of and why?

NW: I am proud to have started N&B Consulting in 2006 as a single mother.

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Success Magazine: Natalie, what was your experience prior to starting N&B Consulting?

Natalie Woods: Immediately prior to starting N&B Consulting, I worked in "corporate America" at two large wireless telecommunication companies. I was an administrative assistant to the national director of engineering. Prior to that, I was a paralegal in the legal department. Before arriving in corporate America I was a paralegal in large law firms and sole practitioner law offices in the Capital District and surrounding areas.

SM: What was your main objective in starting this company back in 2006?