

BUSINESS EDITOR: KEVIN CROWLEY
894-2231 EXT. 2624
kcrowley@therecord.com

SECTION E

BUSINESS

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**GRAND
OPENING - E4**
Toyota launches
Hino truck plant
in Woodstock



DOLLAR 89.85¢ US -0.69¢	GOLD \$629.40 US -\$13.90	EURO \$1.4286 Cdn +0.25	TSX 11,666.14 -33.35	TSX VE 2,757.17 -73.06	TSX 60 655.73 -0.08	DOW 11,002.14 -46.58	S&P 500 1,263.85 -1.44	NASDAQ 2,162.78 -6.84
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What's there to eat? Ask Dana

SMALL BUSINESS

Passion for food drives Waterloo entrepreneur

By **CHUCK HOWITT**
RECORD STAFF
Some people know from a very early age what they want to do with their lives.

Dana Shortt is one of those people.

At eight, while her friends were playing with dolls, riding bikes and doing whatever else young girls do at that age, she was reading cookbooks.

She remembers telling her mom she wanted to have people over for dinner every night when she grew up.

Confident, driven and determined, she just knew she wanted to work in the food business.

Now that adulthood has arrived, the 28-year-old Shortt still isn't entertaining every night. But some would say she's gone one better.

Other people are having her over every night — and often during the day, too.

And if Shortt's not there in person providing the food, people are eating the gourmet snacks and meals she sells in her food shop at 55 Erb St. E., Waterloo.

"I've always loved cooking and baking — especially baking," says Shortt, who has an engaging smile and brims with ideas for being creative in the kitchen and in her business.

The official name of the shop is Dana Shortt Gourmet Made Easy, with emphasis on the word gourmet.

A glance over the items on her menus is like taking a walk over the global food landscape.

There's Moroccan chicken b'steeya, miniature stilton cakes with a candied pecan topping, wasabi-ginger shrimp with wonton cups and mango and daikon summer rolls with peanut sauce. And those are just the hors d'oeuvres.



Dana Shortt (right) operates Dana Shortt Gourmet Made Easy in Waterloo with employee-chefs Lynda Young and Scott Yates. Shortt, 28, has a bachelor's degree in commerce (hotel and food administration) and studied culinary management at a community college.

"When you own your own business, it's difficult to go home and turn your brain off."

DANA SHORTT
GOURMET MADE EASY

These are the kind of food items you might want if you really want to impress somebody — and that's what Shortt is in the business of doing.

Despite her youth, she's already paid some major dues in learning the business.

While she was at George Brown College in Toronto, earn-

ing a culinary management diploma, Shortt saw an opportunity to work as a private caterer for several well-to-do families. There was just one problem. She had no vehicle.

Determined to do the job, however, the young chef took the bus to the grocery store and back for supplies, prepared the food at home, then used the subway and another bus, food platters and cooking equipment in hand, to get to the customer's house.

Later, rather than serve an apprenticeship with a qualified chef as required by the college, Shortt set up her own personal apprenticeship at the City of

Q&A

We asked Dana Shortt, owner of Dana Shortt Gourmet Made Easy in Waterloo:

Q. Is there any part of your business that has been particularly successful?

A. "We've had huge growth in our pick-up catering service. There's a need for people to pick up a really nice soup or dessert. I'm doing all kinds of showers this weekend."

Kitchener's Breithaupt Community Centre on Margaret Avenue, where she ran a catering service out of the centre's commercial-grade kitchen.

A Kitchener native and graduate of Bluevale Collegiate in

Waterloo, Shortt earned a bachelor of commerce degree in hotel and food administration at the University of Guelph prior to attending George Brown College.

SEE GOURMET: PAGE E2

Networking works best if you have a goal

When you're looking at starting or growing a business, networking can provide lots of benefits — from camaraderie with other small business owners and entrepreneurs to helping you find customers and suppliers.

There are many types of networking, everything from informal chats to highly structured groups and everything in between. Over time you will learn the opportunities that work best for your style and business.

Here are some tips to help you network more successfully:

• **Determine the purpose of your networking activity.**

There are dozens if not hundreds of networking activities you can attend.

Some gatherings have another primary function and the networking is simply a bonus. These include conferences and awards ceremonies.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are groups designed specifically for business networking. Find them by searching the business section of your local newspaper (for example, the Coming Events list that's on



ANGIE MOHR

today's page E2). Some of these groups meet specifically to generate sales leads and participants are required to provide leads to others in the group.

To make the most of any network opportunity, know what you want to get out of it.

Do you want to learn more about trends in your industry? Do you want new customers? Do you simply want to be around other business owners to feel like you're not in this alone? Once you have determined what you want to get out of the experience, you will be much more likely to succeed.

• **Introduce your business to your network.**

The adage that you never get a second chance to make a first

impression is one that especially rings true for entrepreneurs.

Before you step foot into a business networking situation, make sure you have developed and practised a 10-second and a 30-second introduction.

Your 10-second introduction, for example, might be: "We bring new and innovative communications products to the sales and marketing departments of large corporations."

The 30-second version would elaborate and include a concrete example of a product or service you offer.

With either introduction, your presentation should be smooth and appear natural. Practice is the key here, especially if you are nervous and shy in large groups.

• **Ask questions about others' companies.**

A common problem at networking functions is that business owners are so focused on reaping rewards that they talk far more than they listen.

Ask yourself this: Who are you more likely to gravitate to — someone who goes on and on about their own business or

someone who appears genuinely interested in yours?

Actively listen when others describe their businesses and ask questions to help you understand what they may be doing better than your business.

Also ask them what you can do to help them meet their networking goals. Your networking contacts are more likely to refer their customers to you if you've shown that you have the ability to listen.

• **Strategize ways to introduce your network's companies to your own customers and contacts.**

Once again, networking is as much (or more!) about giving as receiving. Spend time figuring out how you can help the other businesses in your network meet their goals.

Ask them what they're looking for: It may be to source customers, or suppliers, or simply to interact with other business owners.

If you show you are proactively trying to help others in the network, that same commitment will come back to you many times over.

• **Thank your network members for each and every referral.**

Every time one of your network contacts makes an effort to help you meet your goals, make sure you take the time to thank them in some way.

It may be as simple as sending a thank-you card in the mail (a much more personal and appreciated option than an e-mail) or sending flowers or another token of your appreciation.

Do this even if your contact's effort didn't lead to a success. For example, if a networking contact refers a customer to you and that customer decides to purchase from someone else, thank your contact in any event. Their next referral may end up being a significant one.

In summary, don't be afraid of networking. Just get out there and start talking to other business owners. The possibilities are endless!

• *Angie Mohr of Waterloo is the author of the Numbers 101 for Small Business series of books. Send questions for this column to her at angie@numbers101.com*

"THE BLUE CHIP TIP"

A Few Thoughts on the Recent Market Volatility

The last few weeks have been difficult for equities globally as the markets have experienced a sell-off due to commodity-linked inflationary fears and interest rate expectations. Both the Bank of Canada and the US Federal Reserve Board have raised interest rates to multi-year highs to help ward off inflationary pressures and slow economic growth to a sustainable pace. The combination of synchronized central bank tightening, rising long-term yields and overbought equity indexes are key factors in the broad stock market decline of the past few weeks. By and large, global equity indexes have shed 2% - 6% from their most recent peaks a month ago. In Canada, the drop has been closer to 10% as the energy stocks that led the way on the upside over the past year were hardest hit in the

recent decline. The markets have had a pretty good run since the low point 3 1/2 years ago, so it's not unusual or unhealthy for a corrective decline but I stand by my belief, as I wrote here back in March, that investors should be cautious in their Canadian Equity exposure, due to the high concentration of natural resource stocks. The strength of the global economy and a possible end to central bank interest rate increases should support another rise in equity markets for the second half of 2006, but it's very important that you have the right asset allocation and be properly diversified. If you would like a second opinion on your portfolio, I'd be happy to review your situation in strict confidence and without cost or obligation. Call me directly at (519) 725-1003.

This newsletter was prepared by Brian Vickers who is an Investment Advisor with TD Waterhouse Private Investment Advice, a division of TD Waterhouse Canada Inc. which is a subsidiary of the TD Bank. TD Waterhouse Canada Inc. - Member CIPF.



BRIAN VICKERS
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
INVESTMENT ADVISOR

TD Waterhouse
Private Client Services

TD WATERHOUSE
412 ALBERT STREET
WATERLOO, ONTARIO N2L 3V3
(519) 725-1003
1-866-393-0066

BRIAN.VICKERS@TD.COM

K0915667TT