



■ **TOO MUCH WORK:** A Statistics Canada study, released last year, found almost half (44 per cent) of Canadians reported they were trying to do too many things at once.

SOURCE: Metro Vancouver News Services



“SUCCESS IS going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm.”

SOURCE: en.thinkexist.com

— Winston Churchill (left)



Techvibes, a technology networking organization and website, held a homecoming last week at the downtown Vancouver eatery Relish.

WARREN FREY/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Techvibes connects

By WARREN FREY
for Metro Vancouver

You can get almost anything you want online these days, except face time with fellow professionals.

But one Vancouver company turns off the laptop and turns on the charm on a monthly basis.

Vancouver's high-tech community got together at the downtown Vancouver eatery Relish last week to network, talk shop and reflect on four lively years in Silicon Valley North.

But the glue that keeps Vancouver's many high-tech industries connected is Techvibes, which is part website, part conferences and all about technology.

"We started four years ago. We saw a real need in the industry to keep people connected," said Techvibes

president Mike Schwarz.

He said the organization saw a need for a social organization after several networking events shut down following the dot-com crash.

Since that time, Techvibes has not only held monthly get-togethers for technology workers, but also started to host conferences, including "Massive," a trade show held in March that spanned three levels of Science World in downtown Vancouver.

"We started by connecting people at events, but we're going to concentrate more on events like Massive," Schwarz said.

But he added the company is also branching out to new users who want to make connections and build community, on and off line. The company recently created MyZone, a portal that points the way not only to

Techvibes but also to Clubzone, a nightlife site, along with an online gambling community, a dating service and other socially-oriented sites.

"But everything here is based on return on investment. There's no more 'pump and dump' websites with no fundamentals.

"We're 99 per cent self funded, with a 100 per cent growth rate year after year," Schwarz said.

He added not only Techvibes but also most other technology companies in Vancouver base their business on profit, not the stock speculation that marked the dot-com boom.

"And we're like an advertising firm, which is the first thing to go in a recession, so our growth indicates the economy here is very strong," he said.

Social singles come together

By WARREN FREY
for Metro Vancouver

Vancouver's social singles had a chance to mingle and sample their options last week at Crush Champagne Lounge.

The Granville Street venue was the setting for meeting, greeting and promoting some of Vancouver's premier activity groups and entertainment connoisseurs.

The Social Event Showcase, the first event of its kind in Vancouver, was a chance for groups such as Urban Mixer, Social Empire, thevspot.ca, online dating services and other movers and shakers in the city's social sphere to hook up.

Frances Hui, who runs the Social Empire, said there's an unspoken desire amongst urban Vancouverites to connect. "It seems like there's a lot of people in town who want to be social and do things," she said.

But she added the idea behind groups such as the Social Empire is to pre-screen potential members so

everyone in the group has a "base capability to interact, creating a level playing field."

Rajesh Taneja, who runs the affiliated Urban Mixer group, said Social Empire also creates a low-pressure space for predominantly single Vancouverites to interact and engage in intelligent conversation.

"It's strictly no dating, no business," he said.

But he added there is a demand for singles events that don't have the pressure or risks associated with the bar scene. "So for dating I created the Urban Mixer group," he said.

The Social Empire currently has about 250 members, he said, with about 300 members involved in Urban Mixer.

Taneja's currently working on a new group called Executive Zone that will concentrate on "non-cheesy business networking."

"It's all about getting people out of their comfort zone, but it's also about learning from people. Every person I meet, I learn from," Hui said.



Frances Hui and Rajesh Taneja organized the first Social Events Showcase, at Crush Champagne Lounge.

WARREN FREY/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Relationships can trigger concerns about career

There are many decisions to be made when job searching.

What kind of jobs are you willing to do?

How far are you willing to go for a job? Are you willing to relocate?

But we must be aware that our answers to these questions may change. There are variables that can alter your plan.

Love is one of these unforeseen variables. I've always been fascinated by the effect love has on a person's career path.

Relationships are not easy on their own, far less when career decisions about relocating factor into the mix.

If you're in a happy, healthy relationship it's hard to pick up and leave. At the same time, you've worked hard to find a career, whether it's been years of study or years of experience, and a great opportunity cannot be ignored.

There are decisions you and your partner have to think about. Are you willing to try a long-distance relationship? Is your partner willing to come with you? If you don't go, will you end up feeling resent-

THE GRADUATE

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ful?

There are many people who are willing to have a long-distance relationship despite the strain it puts on the relationship.

But while there is potential for the fire to fizzle, there are also many success stories. Michelle Chan, who recently left Canada to teach English in Japan, had to face this dilemma. She has been with her boyfriend for six years and considers the relationship serious.

"I felt that if I didn't go, I would regret this," Michelle says. "Although he (my boyfriend) was upset, he supported my going as something I had to do for myself."

Although Michelle's boyfriend was upset by the news the idea of breaking up upset him even more. "I had suggested taking a break while I was gone,

but he became extremely upset," says Michelle. "I was worried that I may want to stay more than one year. He assured me that he would wait until whenever I got back."

Technology has made it easy for them to stay in touch. While it's not the same as being with each other and may not be enough to keep things alive for a year, Michelle remains positive.

"I think it is possible. I have seen it work out, 10 years ago, my cousin's then-boyfriend went away for a year to Japan. They are now married with two kids," says Michelle.

However, Michelle is aware that leaving puts a strain on their relationship and there is always the possibility that her boyfriend may have moved on by the time she returns.

"I think I would be upset, but it would depend on if my own feelings have moved on as well," she says. "It really isn't fair to make him wait for me. Even if I was devastated, I think that I would really have no right to be because I was the one who left him."

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