



Q & A with Seth Asimakos, Saint John Community Loan Fund-Social Enterprise Hub

What does innovation mean to you?

Innovation requires doing things differently. It adds on to what has worked, while adding something new to leverage an improvement in the status quo. From the Saint John Community Loan Fund perspective, we are always trying to reach beyond our grasp. We are a small organization with big ideas. Some work. Some don't. But it's the trying that counts.

How does your organization approach innovation?

At the Social Enterprise Hub, we are providing a space that deliberately sets out to build an entrepreneurial mindset around poverty reduction. Bringing together social enterprise, micro-enterprise and enterprising non-profits; many who are leaders in their fields. Under one roof, it provides a space to collaborate more deliberately, to scale ideas, to be entrepreneurial and innovative.

Why do you think innovation is important for Saint John and the province?

Innovation is important for society; clearly it is important for Saint John and the Province. We have wonderful assets in Saint John. It is a matter of leveraging them, adding new ideas to the mix, and through the mix of what's working with some adjustment, we can create new opportunities.

What are some simple things people can do to drive change?

Change comes when you get a bit uncomfortable. We need to accept that, and have venues to celebrate that and build that process in.

How is technology changing your business model?

Technology can help us access and manage information more efficiently, and thereby leave us freer to innovate. Currently we are leveraging Salesforce, as well as a new website platform. Partners use GIS to map and tell the story of neighbourhoods.

Where would you direct people if they wanted to learn more about innovation?

I believe you can walk into Connexion Works or the Social Enterprise Hub to see innovation in action. And of course, there are real leaders in IT like Mariner Partners. And ESJ would be a good clearing house

of information. But you can find innovation in some of the new bars downtown that provide venues for sharing ideas in a non-judgemental setting.