



HP supports small business education in the Northern Territory with opening of training centre

Local business BLKMGK ICT and Northern Territory Business Enterprise Centre uses HP grant to help local businesses grow

Darwin, Australia, May 22, 2009 – Hewlett Packard Australia (HP), today announced that the Northern Territory Business Enterprise Centre (BEC), together with local ICT company BLKMGK (aka Black Magic), are successfully launching the HP Entrepreneurship Learning Program (HELP) on Monday 25th May.

HELP is designed to fully explain the options IT gives to entrepreneurial companies looking for support in the growth of their micro enterprise. This grant given to BLKMGK and BEC includes the donation of HP IT equipment, IT software, and a full HP training curriculum.

Arjuna (AJ) Kulatunga, the founder of BLKMGK and Northern Territory Young Achiever Award Winner in 2008, submitted a proposal to HELP for the grant in 2007 in order to create and plan a three phased technology training initiative based in Darwin.

The first phase, to be opened on Monday in Darwin, is the launch of technology training initiatives that will provide IT skills training and mentoring courses 120 small business owners in the Northern Territory. The initiative will utilise the course known as the Smart Technology for Smarter Business™ curriculum. It will form part of an important education for small businesses in this area of Australia.

Following this launch, the second phase of the project will involve the selection of 10 secondary school students who will participate in an inter-school business plan competition utilising the HP Equipment and components of the Smart Technology for Smarter Business™ curriculum. And the third phase that the grant will go towards is training up two indigenous people to maintain and repair IT equipment in remote communities.

"I am genuinely excited about this positive initiative," said Grant Cleary, Marketing Director of SMB, HP Australia. "It will provide IT skills training to three important groups of people: small business owners, young people, and indigenous people. I look forward to seeing this, and the next phases of the Technology Training Initiative, up and running successfully."

AJ Kulatunga said, "There is no other course like this available in the Northern Territory. The primary goal of this curriculum is to bridge the divide between business skills and

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technical skills courses already offered by microenterprise development organisations. We will actually be showing small business owners how to overcome business technology issues and tell them what equipment or software is out there, how to use it and how best to gain actual benefits with it for their business.”

By helping micro entrepreneurs to see the connections between common business challenges and technology solutions, this curriculum aims to amplify the effectiveness of existing business and technology courses.

Kulatunga went on to say, “Our biggest hurdle is to first change the perception that these business owners have – they think they don’t need technology to run their business. For example, a mechanic may know his trade inside out and be excellent at his job but if he’s running his own business, he might not even realise the benefits technology could bring to him in terms of operations management, finance, marketing and communications. With an understanding of the options available businesses will be more efficient, will have more time to grow and have more time to concentrate on their expertise.”

In order to change these perceptions and achieve these goals, the curriculum focuses on helping micro entrepreneurs to firstly gain awareness of the options available and feel comfortable with ICT, secondly gain knowledge and skills in the business applications of ICT and finally be able to use ICT to improve their business’ efficiency and growth. The four main areas being focused on are operations management, finance, marketing and communications.

Course participants will be using the latest HP business desktop and notebook PCs running Windows Vista software.

This initiative has the support of the NT Government, specifically the Department of Business and Employment.

About Smart Technology for a Smarter Business™

This Smart Technology for a Smarter Business™ teaches participants how to use several different technology tools for business purposes. In addition to these immediate skills, the curriculum also equips them to consider whether the features of a given technology could be useful to them in their own business. Participants learn to weigh the costs and benefits derived from using technology so they can make informed choices about future investments or training.

1. Describe different ICT technology solutions that address different challenges businesses face in the areas of Management and Operations, Finances, Communication, and Marketing
2. Explain the application of various ICT technologies that may enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their businesses
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of certain technologies
4. Apply ICT technologies to different business scenarios
5. Evaluate and upgrade their skills using different ICT technologies
6. Evaluate their need for, or interest in, further knowledge, training, or ICT purchases



About BLKMGK ICT

BLKMGK ICT is a dynamic Information and Communications Technology company based in the Northern Territory of Australia that aims to deliver innovative technology education services and solutions to local industries. More information is available at www.blkmgk.com.au

About BEC

The Business Enterprise is a not for profit organization that provides advice assistance and guidance to people wanting to start a business and those in the early part of their business life. For more information go to www.becnt.com.au

About HP

HP, the world's largest technology company, simplifies the technology experience for consumers and businesses with a portfolio that spans printing, personal computing, software, services and IT infrastructure. More information about HP (NYSE: HPQ) is available at www.hp.com.au.

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