



For Immediate Release

Win This Space business plan competition will match business owners with coveted retail space in downtown Guelph

\$40,000 in prizes available, including cash, rent incentives and business mentorship

January 19, 2021 (Guelph, ON). Entrepreneurs, businesses owners, and individuals considering starting a business have a new opportunity to access prime retail space in downtown Guelph with the launch of the Business Centre Guelph-Wellington's (BCGW) new Win This Space business pitch competition. The initiative is a partnership with the Downtown Guelph Business Association (DGBA) and Invest in Guelph.

"For many business owners, accessing prime retail space in the downtown core of a large city to share their passion is the big dream," said Kristel Manes, Executive Director of Business Centre Guelph-Wellington. "However this dream comes with significant operational and financial barriers, particularly in our current COVID reality. Win This Space is about removing some of those barriers by providing the training and planning businesses need to take the next step."

Applicants will participate in five weeks of training through the BCGW created specifically for bricks-and-mortar businesses, with sessions on business development, marketing, operations, and financial management. Contestants will then compete in a pitch qualifier, with five (5) selected finalists moving on to pitch to a panel of qualified judges and commercial property owners for a prize pool valued at more than \$40,000 in cash, rent incentives, and ongoing business mentorship.

Businesses that apply for the Win This Space competition must be independently owned (sole proprietorship or partnership), and can be new or existing businesses. The deadline to apply is January 29, 2021.

Innovative and collaborative commercial property owners with available storefront space in downtown Guelph are also invited to join the initiative.

"Win This Space is a scouting mission to find innovative business ideas in our community, and connect entrepreneurs with the training, space and support they need to make their ideas happen," said Marty Williams, Executive Director of the DGBA. "Our goal is to match strong tenants, vetted and coached by the Business Centre, with forward-thinking landlords to ensure downtown Guelph continues to thrive."

Commercial property owners and landlords interested in participating in Win This Space should contact Williams by email at marty@downtownguelph.com.

"The Business Centre Guelph-Wellington is thrilled to have the commitment of both Invest in Guelph and DGBA as partners on the Win This Space project as it perfectly aligns with our collective vision of making it easier for businesses to succeed, and ensuring the continued vibrancy of our vital downtown," said Manes.

To apply for the Win This Space business plan competition, and for complete eligibility, program and prize information, business owners can visit <https://www.guelphbusiness.com> or call 519-826-4701 to learn more.



About Business Centre Guelph-Wellington

Business Centre Guelph-Wellington is a not for profit organization that has been helping entrepreneurs, business owners, professionals and students achieve business success since 1999. For nearly 20 years, we have added to the wealth and the diversity of our business community, one entrepreneur at a time.

About Downtown Guelph Business Association

The Downtown Guelph Business Association (DGBA) is a Business Improvement Area (BIA) with over 500 business and property owners as members. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who are appointed by Guelph City Council. Created in 1972, the DGBA is one of the oldest BIAs in Ontario. For more information, please visit downtownguelph.com.

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