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## Spotlight: Picture yourself with a big-city job in Laconia

By ADAM DRAPCHO, THE LACONIA DAILY SUN Oct 19, 2018



Marc McNamara, founder of The Enablement Group, located at 65 Water Street in Laconia. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun)

LACONIA — For 30 years, Marc McNamara has had a home in Gilmanton on a quiet road, with a nice view and plenty of land for farming. But he had little time to enjoy it, because he was working in Boston or on the Seacoast for large corporations and managing small start-ups.

Then one day, he saw an opportunity to change that.

“When I was making a lot of money, I had very little personal time,” he said. He quit three years ago to become an entrepreneur. Today, he runs The Enablement Group, a small and growing firm that aims to work with companies around the world but keep its headquarters in Laconia.



The Enablement Group offers a valuable service to corporations. As companies grow and mature, they collect a vast amount of information necessary to train, develop and evaluate their employees. However, that information is often poorly archived and difficult for the employees to find or consume. McNamara’s company fixes that problem.

“We become the content managers. Turn it into something that someone else can consume,” he said. They might turn the written information into a video or interactive application. They might even “game-ify” the process, whereby an employee gains status or awards within the application based on how much of the training information they successfully take in.

“We’re creating this content, we’re designing this content, for easy consumption,” he said.

The model has proven to be successful so far. The company has established satellite offices in Portsmouth, Dallas and London, and this year the Laconia operation moved from a work-at-home plan to an office at 65 Water Street. It now has eight employees, and McNamara is looking to move to a larger suite within the same building.

He could have started his business in a city further south, such as Manchester or Boston, as other outsource-based communications firms have done. But as those have zigged, McNamara decided to zag.

“You know what? There’s a competitive advantage here,” he said. Employees in larger markets that have the skills that he needs would command a high salary, but they would also have higher costs of living. And they would work all year for the chance to spend a couple of weeks in a place such as the Lakes Region.

An advertisement for Bank of New Hampshire Home Equity Loans. The background features a young boy with glasses and a graduation cap, sitting and reading a book. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top, it says "Use the equity in your home" in red. Below that, "HOME EQUITY LOANS" is written in large, bold, red letters. A list of uses includes "Home Improvements", "Dream Vacation", "Education Costs", and "Debt Consolidation". The Bank of New Hampshire logo is on the left, with the website "BankNH.com" and phone number "1.800.832.0912" below it. A "Member FDIC" label is also present. On the right, there is a "REAL ESTATE LENDER" logo. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text "View Rates or Apply Today!" in white.

McNamara wants to bring those kinds of jobs here, where he can pay people well for this area, and they can enjoy living where others vacation.

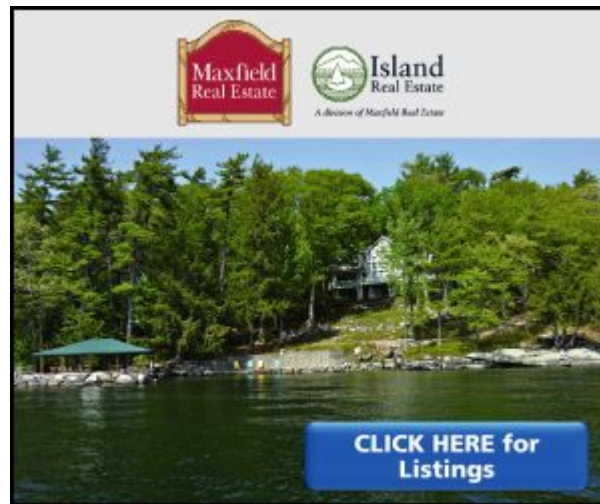
“The one thing we can appreciate in this region is the quality of life,” he said. “And you don’t have to make six figures to be comfortable here. There’s a way to take good, young, smart people and expose them to something they wouldn’t otherwise be exposed to... and give them an opportunity to stay here. As a mission for me, it becomes very important to create jobs in this community and pass it on.”

The Enablement Group needs employees who can edit photos and videos, can write effectively, can code using HTML and Javascript, and can manage projects. But he’s willing to consider that the best employees might not be perfectly qualified.

“Those skills may not totally exist,” McNamara said, adding that he’s more interested in workers with a passion for adding skills and solving problems.

Recruiting those workers has been a challenge, and he has found that the best way to identify candidates is through personal connections and networking. In about five years, he sees the company growing to about 12 to 20 employees, which might be about as much as this region can provide.

“I’m proud of the fact that I’m able to continue to nurture and develop people. I hope that the well doesn’t run dry, we’re just going to continue to grow.”



Now that he isn’t spending most of his waking hours out of the region, he has come to appreciate how connected to one another Lakes Region people are, especially in Laconia. That’s why it’s worth it to him to locate his business in the Lakes Region’s city.

“You come here, it’s vibrant, there are people trying to do stuff. And more than that, they’re all trying to help each other,” he said. “There’s a lot that can happen here, but we need young people.”