

Bulletin redesign brainstormed at Federation members' meeting

By Sharon Letovsky

As Mike Shahin, chair of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's Communications and Community Relations Committee, has noted ("The *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* prepares to re-launch for the future," November 26, 2012), the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin* is currently undergoing a print and web redesign process, with a decidedly 21st century, multi-generational mindset.

On November 15, at the Federation's semi-annual members' meeting at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, David Berman of David Berman Communications, the firm commissioned to redesign our Jewish community newspaper, held a fabulous brainstorming event to aid in conceptualizing the redesign. The meeting was open to the public and representatives were invited from all of the Federation's constituent organizations.

Following a brief introduction by Berman, the ideas began to fly. Berman's team had set up the room in advance. There were six

round tables with a flip chart at each one. Each table was assigned a topic for discussion – readership, financial sustainability, design and production, editorial content, accessibility, competencies – and each table group was assigned the task of writing individual ideas on sticky notes, then organizing them onto flip charts to pull out key suggestions.

As if things were not buzzing enough, David asked for volunteers from each group. He then gave each volunteer a headband with bee antennae swinging on springs. The bees were to fly from group to group, cross-fertilizing ideas. What a buzz!

Many ideas were generated – some reflected one person's thinking while others represented broader consensus.

Just a few of the many dozens of ideas flying around the room were identifying non-readers and attracting new markets via engaging content and different points of view; using the Internet – including social media, archiving and web-searchable articles – to build



Mike Shahin (left) and Barry Silverman were among the bees flying around the room at the *Bulletin* brainstorming session.

new relationships within the community and attract new readers, including using micro-targeting; increasing the use of guest columnists from across the political spectrum; making the *Bulletin* website an inclusive portal for Jewish agencies and services; and, using the Internet to make the *Bulletin* more accessible to the visual-

ly impaired.

It was clear our community representatives love the *Bulletin* and want it to reflect both the local and wider Jewish community. They want it to take advantage of the vast opportunities that could be offered by an online version, yet not lose the readership that prefers the traditional print news-



David Berman, with paddle in hand, discusses potential ideas to be incorporated into the *Bulletin's* redesign.

paper. They want a range of articles from across the community and political spectrum with opportunities for readership comment. And they want to do all this while remaining fiscally responsible.

The countdown to summer 2013 has begun!



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