



**Creative Services Cluster Minutes  
December 6, 2007  
The Ringling College of Art and Design**

Mary Craig, Co-Chair of the Creative Services Cluster welcomed the group and Rick Hughes, the other Co-Chair served as facilitator for the panel discussion.

The Topic was Business 101 for Creative Business in Sarasota County. The esteemed panel consisted of Douglas Cherry, attorney with Abel Band whose focus is on intellectual property, consulting, acquisition, licensing and litigation. Beth Ebersole, CPA/ IABV, from Kerkering Barberio & Co., specializes in personal and small business consulting, tax planning and preparation, and business evaluation. Pat Ekblad, Charter Health Plan Manager for Sarasota Memorial Hospital has more than 30 years experience in the healthcare and insurance industry.

Doug Cherry spoke about tangible loss, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets. Copyrights are for artistic expression and a trademark is for name association. Trade secrets are ways of doing business. He spoke about intellectual property. He cautioned everyone about making fatal assumptions and be sure to check names and logo trademarks before proceeding ahead in naming and branding their company. Doug said, "Did you know that before selling a product or offering services under a certain name or logo, it is important that a proper trademark or service mark clearance search be conducted. Otherwise, it is possible that use of the mark may infringe another's priority rights and you may be liable for damages and/or forced to stop using the mark (perhaps even several years down the road after you have established significant client/customer goodwill with the mark). If the mark is cleared, trademark registration should be considered next, as registration offers several significant advantages."

Beth Ebersole gave highpoints about tax information laws. She spoke about different ways of setting up your business and said "If you choose to organize your business as a limited liability company, you still have several choices for taxing including electing to be taxed as an "S" corporation." Some suggested websites are: [www.nase.org](http://www.nase.org); [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov); [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov); [www.cch.com](http://www.cch.com).

Pat Ekblad spoke about health care today and Sarasota Memorial Hospital's program. It is the Charter Plan and enables small companies and entrepreneurs to afford healthcare, even businesses with only two employees. Her website is: [www.smhcharterplan.com](http://www.smhcharterplan.com)

A lively Q & A followed the panelists' overview. Many questions were asked about laws of running small businesses, independent contractors, pro-bono work and protecting one's assets and artistic ideas. All of the panelists had handouts about their topics and programs.