



## **Suncoast Technology Forum Welcomes BarCamp to Board of Directors**

***Technology industry group expands collaborative efforts in support of area business***

**SARASOTA, Florida (June 8, 2011)** - Suncoast Technology Forum (STF), the leading technology industry advocacy group for companies creating and developing technology solutions in Sarasota and Manatee counties has launched a collaborative partnership with BarCamp Sarasota and is pleased to welcome BarCamp founders Sara Hand and Stan Schultes to the STF Board of Directors. BarCamp Sarasota is part of an international network of user-generated technology-based conferences and participatory workshop events. STF's mission is to foster technology industry growth in the south Tampa Bay region and serve as a key resource for start-ups, entrepreneurs and existing area businesses to grow and prosper. Both organizations have traditionally focused on enhancing the local technology ecosystem by providing a powerful networking and educational event forum; and the new partnership is designed to further these efforts by sharing resources, collaborating on events of value to the business community and reaching out to a more diverse member base within the tech community.

Sara Hand, co-founder and leader of BarCamp Sarasota is also the principal at SP Hand and Associates. A seasoned business consultant, professional coach and community builder, Sara has always been passionate about the intersection of technology, education and economic development. Sara also serves as president of Sarasota Gulf Coast Venture Forum, president of the Sarasota Bill Gove Speech Club and has been an active member of many local community organizations. Addressing the recent collaboration, Sara stated, "I am excited about the newly formed community partnership between BarCamp Sarasota and the Suncoast Technology Forum. Southwest Florida is incredibly rich in a variety of resources, both geographically and demographically, and as our respective organizational leadership teams focus on collaboration, we together continue to foster an environment favorable to increased economic development and growth."

Stan Schultes, co-founder of BarCamp Sarasota, has been a professional software developer for more than 30 years and is a current Microsoft MVP. He has a demonstrated passion for building tech communities and teaching software skills to the developer community through writing, speaking, webcasts, and an Internet TV show. Stan is an author, former tech magazine columnist and his work has appeared in the Microsoft Developer Network (MSDN) resources. He currently runs the Sarasota .NET Developers Group.

Jeff Kratsch, Executive Director for STF, stated, "We are thrilled to welcome Sara and Stan to our Board. Suncoast Technology Forum's member-oriented event and resource initiatives are continually developing. The growing ties between our member companies, local economic development organizations, educational institutions and regional technology industry partners have become a catalyst for our business community and enhance the area's prospect for sustained growth. By working together in support of our technology cluster along the Suncoast, STF and BarCamp will be even more effective in our respective efforts."

### **About Suncoast Technology Forum**

Suncoast Technology Forum was founded in 2005 by a group of local entrepreneurs, professionals and the Sarasota and Manatee economic development organizations. STF is a professional association of people united to make the bi-county area a place where technology-based business and innovation thrives. STF's mission is to create a technology-rich community, support technology entrepreneurship, and connect technology professionals with appropriate resources in the Florida Gulf Coast Region: "In short, to grow and promote the technology ecosystem in Sarasota and Manatee counties." For more information about the Suncoast Technology Forum, call 941-870-0078, email [info@suncoasttechnologyforum.com](mailto:info@suncoasttechnologyforum.com), or visit [www.suncoasttechnologyforum.com](http://www.suncoasttechnologyforum.com).

### **About BarCamp Sarasota**

BarCamp Sarasota emphasizes the intersection of technology, education, and economic development. Building a community through user-generated conferences, participatory workshops, lunch and learn and after-hour events, the open forum format is born from the desire for people to share and learn in an open environment, and the belief that the best learning at any conference takes place while networking with other professionals between scheduled sessions. For more information visit our community forum at <http://barcampsarasota.ning.com>.

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