Small Business BOF

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**Free Electrons**

Free Electrons

Embedded Linux Developers
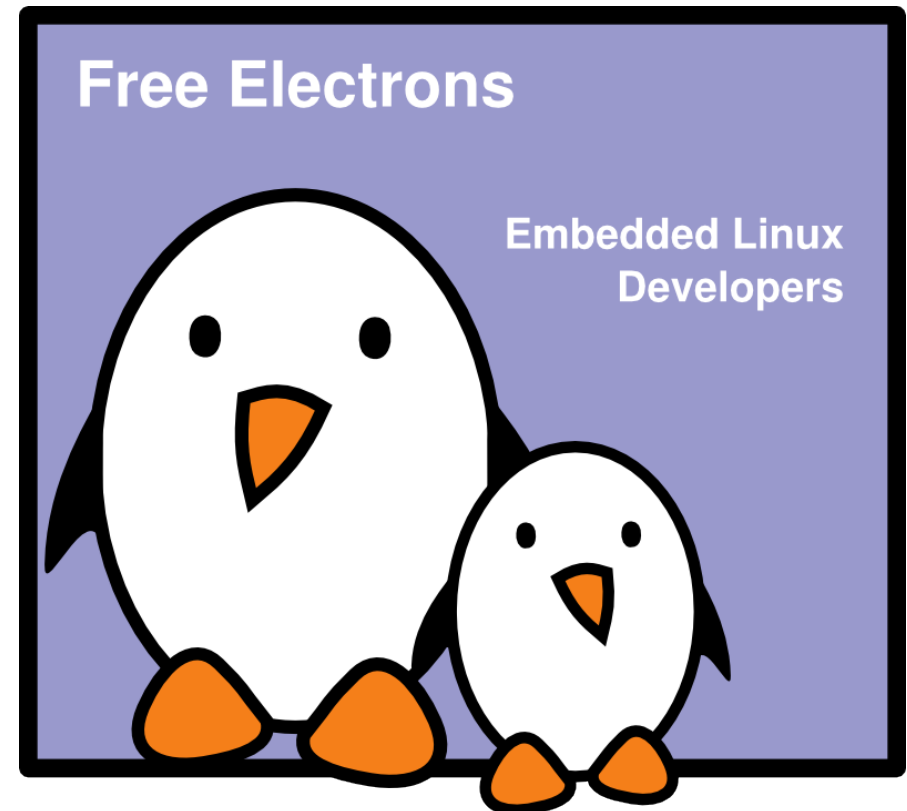
What is a small company?

- A company that is not rich enough to deny its engineers to go to ELC and ELCE

- Free Electrons' employees would have a hard time convincing me not to go to ELCE ;-)

- What's the smallest company here?

- What's the biggest small company?

- Who wants to create a small company?

Why this BOF?

▶ Suggested by Grant Likely (Secret Lab) after ELC 2009

▶ Allows us to meet and know each other

▶ Opens possibilities to cooperate on projects
  - leveraging complementary skills
  - to reach a sufficient size on big projects
  - to offer a local contact in other countries

▶ Experience sharing

▶ Evaluate the idea of a mini-summit at ELC 2010
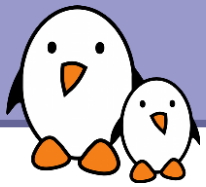
Introduce yourselves quickly

- ▶ Who?

- ▶ How small?

- ▶ Where?

- ▶ Areas of expertise?

- ▶ Customers and served markets?

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Free Electrons. Kernel, drivers and embedded Linux development, consulting, training and support. **http//free-electrons.com**

Preparing quotes, estimating, invoicing...

▶ Any tools (free software) you use? CRM systems or templates?

▶ How do you make estimates for big projects, without spending too much (unpaid) time?

▶ How do you face legal issues and risks? Costly insurance policies? Using "NO WARRANTY" statements? Have your own "Terms and Conditions"?

▶ Strategies to convince customers to give back code?

▶ What do you do when you are too busy and receive a new request?

▶ How do you filter out requests that are less likely to turn into real projects, or from companies that may not be able to pay you?
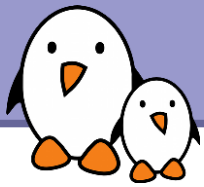
Marketing, advertising...

Marketing, advertising, and building the business.

▶ Your strategy?

▶ Going to trade shows?

▶ Going to technical conferences?

▶ How to find new customers?

▶ Free software tools to track project progress and resources?

▶ Tools to manage your time?

Community relationship

- Relationship with the community?
    - Giving back to the community?
    - Interacting with the local community?
- Relationship with similar service providers
    - Competing, partnering or just ignoring?

▶ Supporting customers with a vendor contract?

▶ Partnering with vendors or working for them?

- How to you find your new hires?

- Using social networking sites?

- What are your main difficulties?

- Your preferred profiles?

- Is working from home an advantage?
  Or do some people prefer an office and colleagues working next to them?

▶ These slides and notes will be available on
http://elinux.org/Small_Business_Conference

▶ They will also be sent to our mailing list:
small-business@tree.celinuxforum.org
(http://tree.celinuxforum.org/mailman/listinfo/small-business)

▶ Interest in an "Embedded Linux small business miniconf"
at ELC 2010?