Success Story

Defining the Art of Energy Efficiency

Background:
After having spent over 5 years in the South Village (SoHo) of New York City, running a home furnishing gallery, Jody and Lisa Harrington decided it was time to pack up the car and their two young children and head west to Pennsylvania. Jody and Lisa arrived in State College at the end of 2008.

During 2009, while Jody was a “stay at home dad” he spent many sessions working with the SBDC business consultant on the development of a business plan with the dream of opening an art/furniture gallery in State College. On weekends, Jody and Lisa would tour the downtown district of State College in hopes of finding a suitable location for their new business.

In December of 2009, Jody and Lisa signed a lease on an eclectic loft space one block off the main street in downtown State College. While the space seemed perfect for an art/furniture gallery, it lacked a proper heating and cooling system.

During this period of assistance, the SBDC business consultant introduced Jody and Lisa to the Environment Management Assistance Program (EMAP) consultant. The EMAP consultant assisted them in identifying and applying for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Small Business Advantage Grant (SBAG). The DEP SBAG provides a 50% match award up to $7,500 to small businesses undertaking projects that reduce waste, pollution, or energy use. The EMAP consultant guided Jodi and Lisa through the SBAG grant application process and ultimately they were awarded $5,471 to install an Energy Star® rated HVAC system in their loft/gallery resulting in a 4.1 year return on their investment.

During most of 2010, Jody and Lisa spent time renovating the loft and negotiating inventory purchases. The ION gallery had its official grand opening on November 13, 2010. Jody and Lisa have taken great pride in choosing the pieces from around the world for their store. All the items in the store are unique and satisfy a broad range of budgets.

SBDC Assistance: Jody and Lisa were referred by their commercial lender to contact the SBDC for assistance in putting together a financial package that would help them qualify for a proposed loan package. During meetings with the SBDC, the business consultant worked with Jody to develop a business plan and financial package that could be submitted to a bank for consideration. A loan was approved in the summer of 2010. In addition, the EMAP consultant provided grant writing assistance pertaining to energy efficiency upgrades to the HVAC system which will reduce energy costs with an estimated annual savings of 3,716 kWh/$446 and 347 therms/$868. The equipment upgrade will eliminate 4.8 tons of air emissions annually.

Jody Harrington, Owner
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Industry: Home Furnishing Gallery
Year Founded: 2010

SBDC Assistance: Business plan: in particular prepared financial package for bank. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (provided funding).

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“Although I operated a similar gallery in New York City, it was great being able to discuss my ideas with the local Small Business Development. The support that their staff provided was outstanding.”
- Jody Harrington