

Small Business Development Center at UCF



Pesto Diva



PESTO DIVA's Anna Mele with
SBDC Consultant Roger Green-
wald

Anna Mele loves to cook and started Pesto Diva in 1997, making nine flavors of pesto for sale every Saturday at the Winter Park Farmers Market. This all-natural Pesto became a popular local item. The big break to take her business beyond the farmers market came in 2008 when a Whole Foods representative and regular customer expressed interest in offering her pesto in two Central Florida stores, Winter Park and Dr. Phillips.

From her home, Anna produced the 18 to 20+ cases per week to meet a demand that was growing. In early 2009, Whole Foods notified Anna of their desire to expand the distribution to all 16 stores statewide through their distribution center in Naples. A small business owner's dream comes true? Anna now faced the real challenges of taking her business to the next level. Production was going to increase to 150 to 300 cases per month which required professional kitchen space, walk in freezers, container and ingredients inventory, employees, billing/invoicing, pallet size shipments and most importantly working capital.

Anna looked to the SBDC at UCF for assistance, she and SBDC counselor, Roger Greenwald, CBA, stepped back and prepared an operations plan detailing the needs, cost and time lines. Additionally, a financial pro forma was developed as a platform to secure necessary funding. Anna was successful in obtaining private funding enabling her to inventory containers, ingredients, rent kitchen space and have adequate working capital to produce and deliver an initial order exceeding 80 cases representing nearly 960 product units.

"We are fortunate to have the support of high level SBDC personal such as Pauline Davis to help us when we needed assistance running our company."

Andre Uribe
FM Financial Services

Helping Businesses Start, Grow and Succeed