

DrW Life Skills Institute

Ever wonder how that colleague of yours at work always manages to successfully navigate around the day-to-day drama that seems to exist in every modern company? Have you wished you had more of what they have? In fact, you probably have more of that special quality than you think.

That special quality is called emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to identify, use, understand, and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict.

Dr. Wanda Bonet-Gascot recognized that EQ is an under-emphasized skill set in today's business and personal life. Seeing that gap, she undertook to build an emotional intelligence educational institution that would teach EQ coaching skills and help create careers for EQ coaching professionals. And from there, the EQ coaches and trainers could begin training individuals and corporations in emotional intelligence skills that will help them manage their personal relationships and improve their leadership abilities.

So was born the DRW Life Skills Institute, based in Kissimmee, Florida. Like all new concepts, it was an uphill fight at the outset. Although DRW joined the UCF Business Incubator in Kissimmee and benefited from their support, as time passed the company found it was having trouble attracting audiences to their seminars and didn't know what next to do.

It was at that moment that Wanda decided to step back and look for additional assistance. She decided she wanted to work "on" her business, not just "in" her business is how she describes it. She turned to the Florida SBDC at UCF's office in Kissimmee/Osceola County for the help she needed.

It started with her attending a FSBDC seminar where she learned about its services: no-cost, confidential consulting, seminars and workshops, and extensive information resources. Wanda latched onto the consulting services and made an appointment to meet with Rafael Pratts, the FSBDC area manager for the Kissimmee/Osceola County Office.

"I decided that brainstorming with an expert like Rafael was my best option," says Wanda, "and I was right." They reviewed DRW's business plan, assessed new options and dug down into the company's value proposition. "They are so welcoming, honest, calm, thoughtful, and analytical," Wanda states. "As an entrepreneur, I rely upon the FSBDC to help me with guidance to make better decisions about where I want to take the Institute."

Based on their discussions, the company set out on an expanded path built around offering a complete emotional intelligence curriculum aimed at those wanting a career in EQ and a meaningful return-on-investment from their Institute tuition. And the transition has worked. The DRW Life Skills Institute is looking forward to graduating 25 coaches in December 2105 and is looking at international and domestic expansion plans.

"The FSBDC has been and is an amazing resource," concluded Wanda. "For those entrepreneurs and business owners looking for that push, that mentorship, that information which will get them over hurdles in the market and up to the next level of success, the FSBDC is the place to go."

Providing the tools, strategies, and expertise to help Florida's business community thrive.

State Designated as Florida's Principal Provider of Business Assistance [288.001, Fla. Stat.]

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MEET DR. WANDA BONET-GASCOT

"I recommend the FSBDC to all entrepreneurs. They gave me hope when I was feeling pretty hopeless. Then they helped me see the promise in my concept and plan for the future, produce meaningful financial projections and approach investors for the capital I need. They have changed my mindset. I now think of myself and operate as a small business, not just as a TV producer."



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