

ELIPSIS ENGINEERING & CONSULTING



In the beginning of 2009, with the economy in a severe downturn and many businesses failing, Sarah Blake took a risk and opened Elipsis Engineering & Consulting, LLC with no capital, two employees and \$200,000 in revenue. Since then, she has overcome many challenges, some with the help of the Florida SBDC at UCF.

A significant milestone for the firm in its quest for success occurred in 2012 when Elipsis applied to participate in the FSBDC at UCF's Advisory Board Council program. "We joined the Advisory Board Council because we were such a young company and didn't have all the expertise we needed," remarked Blake. She worked with Advisory Board Council Program Manager Jill Kaufman, who hand-picked a team of board members to address the company's needs and accelerate their growth. Experts in marketing, human resources, business law, finance, accounting, strategic planning and government contracting comprised Elipsis' board of advisors.



MEET SARAH BLAKE

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The board acted as a catalyst that helped drive the firm's rapid development and expansion. "My board always made themselves available to me," explained Blake. "They have helped develop our business strategy and improve our hiring process, especially in a tighter labor market. With the financials they have helped me understand our profit margin and develop goals and metrics for strong financial growth. They have helped us establish a plan for our growth and resources." In addition to the board's input on the business, they also mentored Blake on her personal development. "The board has helped me develop as a business owner," commented Blake. "My perspective has changed and I have realized what I need to be delegating. They have helped me to become a better leader."

Blake says the top accomplishments of her company since her advisory board began in 2012 include: purchase of an office building; doubling the size of their fleet of vehicles from 10 to 20; increased staff from 17 to 30 employees; and increased revenue by 82%. These accomplishments have reaped many rewards as the firm recently celebrated its fifth year in operation and was named one of the 2014 fastest growing private companies in Central Florida by the Orlando Business Journal (OBJ). Many other accolades have come the company's way with one of the awards that Blake is most proud being named among the 2013 Central Florida Top Philanthropic Companies.

As for the FSBDC at UCF's Advisory Board Council, Blake notes, "It's an opportunity that you don't typically have as a small business. It's hard to get the professional advice that you need and that's affordable. I would recommend the Advisory Board Council program because it is a great resource at no cost."



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