

Small Business Development Center at UCF



Hooah



HOOAH'S President Jorge Suria

Just 18 months after becoming a client of the Advisory Board Council, this interactive communications company achieves 265% revenue growth. Even while developing his creative talents in art school, Jorge Suria knew he wanted to be an entrepreneur. His dream of opening his own agency came to fruition in 2003 when he established Hooah LLC. An expression of high morale, strength and confidence popular in the military, Suria thought Hooah would be an ideal name for his firm which provides marketing, IT and video production services to clients such as the U.S. Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserves.

Hooah has been utilizing the services of the SBDC at UCF's Procurement and Technical Assistance Center since 2007. In 2008, after attending an SBDC Advisory Board Council (ABC) Reception for Small Business Owners, Suria decided to apply to the program. "We wanted to have an advisory board because we saw potential for growth and the challenges it would bring and we wanted to get objective advice from people who didn't have any personal interest in the company," remarked Suria. When Hooah applied to the Advisory Board Council there was some discussion on the firm's readiness for the program as they barely met some of the ABC's eligibility guidelines. However, the company was working hard to reach their potential and was certified as a Minority Business Enterprise and had just been granted Small Disadvantaged Business 8(a) status by the U.S. SBA. Jill Kaufman, ABC Program Manager, decided to accept Hooah as a client and began work on their board formation.

According to Suria, "One of the most valuable aspects of working with the Advisory Board Council is the fact that they specifically tailored Hooah's board to our company's needs. He continued, "I can't imagine putting together a board without the SBDC's help." Some of the projects Hooah sought help with from their board include: contract negotiations and contract review; putting proper accounting systems in place; determining cost and price structures; and mapping out their business development strategy. According to Hooah vice president, Tanya Zeiher, "The board has helped us at a strategic level to map out our growth strategies and really hone in on what we do and who we are. They helped us define our strengths and clarify the areas of service we should focus on." In addition, Hooah's board recommended the company rebrand itself, re-position the firm in the marketplace and determine where they needed to focus the business. Some of the board's best advice surrounded Hooah's business development plan. Suria commented, "The board helped us create a very effective business development strategy which enabled us to branch into and win work in the utilities sector, a new industry segment for us."

Today, Hooah is one of the fastest growing companies in the entire ABC program. "There is a direct correlation between the board's involvement and our growth," remarked Zeiher. Revenues have jumped 265% to \$2 million and in 2010 the firm expects to double its sales again. Hooah has also tripled its number of employees and hired 10 new staff members. The firm targets federal and local government work and also serves large private sector organizations. In August 2009, Hooah opened a branch office in Arlington, Virginia to better serve their growing clientele in Washington, D.C. That office employs a staff of five information technology professionals. One of their main projects has involved managing a large internal website for the Army National Guard called Virtual Armory.

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Hooah, LLC

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