

Helping Businesses Start, Grow and Succeed

News Release



Small Business Development Center at UCF

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SBDC at UCF in Palm Coast Helps Benchmark Glass and Mirror Grow

SBDC helps Benchmark Find New Customers

Orlando, FL – The decision to start a business was an easy one for Tom Bird, an experienced installer of shower glass, decorative glass, sliding doors and mirrors. Finding customers proved more challenging.

By the time Bird visited the Small Business Development Center at University of Central Florida's office (SBDC At UCF) in Palm Coast last May, he was feeling discouraged about the future of his business, Benchmark Glass and Mirror. "Nothing seemed to be working in finding customers, so I thought it couldn't hurt to seek another point of view," Bird said.

"Tom was questioning his own commitment to his business and was having difficulty finding customers, and by the end of our session, Tom seemed overwhelmed by the tasks at hand," said Joe Roy, area manager of both the SBDC at UCF and the Palm Coast Business Assistance Center (BAC), of their first meeting.

Benchmark Glass and Mirror's problem was not one of growth, but rather one of survival. That day, Roy outlined the steps Bird needed to take. Six weeks later, Bird returned to the SBDC at UCF with more information. Benchmark Glass and Mirror was having some difficulty understanding job costing, selling strategies and value for service. It was clear Bird was offering a quality product and service, Roy said; hence, "there was a good foundation on which to build this business."

By early July 2012, Bird returned again to the SBDC at UCF, now fully convinced his strategy of building his business by providing quality products and service at affordable pricing was the right one. Bird began to understand how his costs affected his selling price. Rather than raise prices, Bird found ways to reduce his costs while increasing his productivity – allowing him to keep his selling price very competitive.

Working with the SBDC at UCF, Bird created a sales strategy to increase his success rate of quotes provided to customers. Now better equipped to understand his costs, Bird increased his customer quote success rate from 3 per 10 quotes to 6 per 10 quotes – a 100-percent increase.

Benchmark Glass and Mirror has added one part-time position and is on track to grow sales revenues by 50 percent compared to 2011. Since meeting with the SBDC at UCF, Benchmark Glass and Mirror has developed a business plan including a marketing and sales strategy.

“I’m now better equipped to grow my business,” said Bird. “I’m far more focused on my costs and my customers than at any time in my business. I can’t believe how much working with the SBDC at UCF has changed my outlook on daily operations.”

Benchmark Glass and Mirror represents both the challenges and opportunities faced by the small business community in Palm Coast, said Roy. “Tom has turned a corner and is now growing a competitive business providing exceptional quality products and service. You can see the passion in his eyes and it’s translating into a great customer experience at very competitive pricing,” he said.

If you have a question about your business, stop by the SBDC at UCF and meet with Joe Roy. Like Benchmark Glass and Mirror, your “Journey to Business Excellence” begins at the Palm Coast BAC and the SBDC at UCF.

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With its main office in the National Entrepreneur Center (formerly the Disney Entrepreneur Center) now located at the Fashion Square Mall in Orlando, the Small Business Development Center at the University of Central Florida (SBDC at UCF) is part of the UCF College of Business Administration and the Florida Small Business Development Center Network, providing business seminars and no-cost, one-on-one business consultation to small business owners. The SBDC at UCF serves an eight-county area that includes Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties and maintains seven satellite service centers. In 2011, the SBDC at UCF helped entrepreneurs create or retain 1,517 jobs, win contract awards worth \$28.9 million, acquire \$17.7 million in capital formation, and increase sales by \$51.9 million. The SBDC at UCF is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

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