

# Helping Businesses Grow & Succeed

## News Release



Florida SBDC at the University of Central Florida

July 10, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Elipsis Engineering & Consulting Realizes Success

#### With Assistance from FSBDC at UCF's Advisory Board Council

*Engineering firm Achieves Rapid Growth While Staying True to Guiding Principles*

**Orlando** - 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. This risk has 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)*.

A second significant milestone for the firm 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. According to Blake, "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."

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 which expanded their facility from 3,000 sq. ft. to 7,000 sq. ft.; doubling the size of their fleet of vehicles from 10 to 20; increased staff from 17 to 30 employees; and increased revenue by 82%. Moreover, the firm was awarded two 5 year \$5 million continuing service contracts with the Florida Department of Transportation for materials testing and geotechnical services and construction engineering inspection support. In addition, Elipsis has worked on some of the region's largest projects including Sunrail, Wekiva Parkway and I-4 Ultimate.

As she leads Elipsis, Blake is guided by a set of deeply-held core values which include “Significance”. “We strive to be Significant by giving back to our community and assisting organizations that are making a difference locally and internationally,” Blake explained. Although Blake and Elipsis have won numerous accolades including 2014 *OBJ* Fast 50; 2013 *OBJ* 40 Under 40; Orlando’s 2014 *OBJ* Top Engineering Firms; Orlando’s 2013 Largest Women-Owned Businesses; 2013 *OBJ* Women Who Mean Business; and 2014 *OBJ* Best Places to Work, one of the awards she is most proud of was being named among the 2013 Central Florida Top Philanthropic Companies. “Our focus hasn’t been on large profits,” explained Blake. “Our focus has been on having a good, stable work environment. What we have found is that we have been more blessed than we ever could have imagined. We are a company that our employees are proud to work for.”

-- FSBDC --

### **About the FSBDC at UCF**

With its main office in the National Entrepreneur Center located at the Fashion Square Mall in Orlando, the Florida SBDC at the University of Central Florida (FSBDC at UCF) is part of the UCF Office of Research & Commercialization and the Florida SBDC Network (FSBDC Network). THE FSBDC at UCF provides business seminars and no-cost, one-on-one business consultation to emerging and established businesses. The FSBDC at UCF serves an eight-county area that includes Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties and maintains 10 service centers across Central Florida.

In 2012, the FSBDC at UCF served almost 6500 entrepreneurs and small business owners through consulting and training, resulting in 9,961 Central Florida jobs created, retained or saved; \$1.3 billion in sales growth; \$50.4 million in capital formation; \$104.6 million in government contract awards; and 108 new businesses started.

### **About the FSBDC Network**

The FSBDC at UCF is a member of the Florida SBDC Network, a statewide service network funded in part through cooperative agreements with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida and other private and public partners. The Florida SBDC Network is hosted by the University of West Florida and is nationally accredited by the Association of SBDCs. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.

For over 35 years, the FSBDC Network has nourished a statewide partnership between higher education and economic development organizations, dedicated to providing emerging and established business owners with management and technical assistance, enabling overall growth and increased profitability for the businesses and economic prosperity for the state. The FSBDC Network is a statewide service system of 41 centers with 60 outreach locations, including the FSBDC at UCF.

In 2012, the Florida SBDCs served approximately 38,000 entrepreneurs and small business owners through consulting and training, resulting in 47,845 jobs created, retained and saved; \$6.3 billion in sales growth; \$235.2 million in capital accessed; \$588.4 million in government contract awards; and 744 new businesses started. And, for every \$1 of Florida public and private sector investment in the FSBDC programing 2012, \$40 was returned to the state in tax revenue

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