

The Vocational Academy of Makeup & Prosthetics



MEET HEATHER FILDES & KIMBERLY SPRATT

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You have a passion. You have creativity and skills. And you have a vision of how others can become experts in your chosen craft in the RIGHT way – with in-depth training built upon a unique curriculum taught by industry professionals. With all of this in hand, what do you do next?

If you are Heather Fildes and Kimberly Spratt, you set to work to open a school teaching modern special effects and beauty professional makeup artistry. And you start in the right place: by writing a business plan.

It was there that Fildes and Spratt found themselves in 2015. With a clear view of the business they wanted to be in, a sharp definition of the kind of training they wanted to offer and a keen understanding of how their experience in special effects and beauty makeup could be used to turn makeup enthusiasts into professionals, writing their business plan was an exciting opportunity to articulate their ideas, and turn them into a blueprint for realizing their dreams and business success.

Producing the financial plan for the school presented challenges, however. With neither having a background in accounting or finance, Fildes and Spratt were in unfamiliar territory. That's when they turned to the Florida SBDC at the University of Central Florida and consultant Hunt Dawkins.

"We were OK until we got to the budgets and financials," recalls founder and owner Kimberly Spratt. "We thought we had to take everything down to the penny and our progress stalled. So we turned to the FSBDC and thank goodness we did. We met with Hunt Dawkins at the FSBDC's offices. He made the financials easier. He simplified it all. He guided us through the process."

And very successfully it turns out. First, Fildes and Spratt completed their business plan, and at Dawkins' urging, entered and became finalists in the Orlando 2015 Business Plan Competition of the National Association of Woman Business Owners (NAWBO). They used their plan as the basis of their successful application for school certification by the Florida Department of Education's Commission for Independent Education. And it served as their road map for beginning their business: finding a location for the school with proper zoning, forecasting startup costs and working capital needs, designing the school's construction buildout and building improvements and launching their marketing efforts.

Today, The Vocational Academy of Makeup & Prosthetics (VAMP) is off to a great start. It offers a special effects makeup laboratory and a beauty applications classroom that are both state-of-the art. A respected faculty of experienced professionals is in place and the school has graduated its first Modern Effects Makeup Artistry class; the next one is starting soon. And a Beauty Professional Makeup Artistry class is forming. The FSBDC is now working with them on their second stage marketing campaign.

"We would absolutely encourage everyone to work with the FSBDC," commented founder and owner Heather Fildes. "Being a business owner takes so much more than we expected. I don't know if we could have done what we're doing now if we hadn't had their help. The FSBDC is a great resource."

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

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The Florida SBDC at UCF is a member of the Florida SBDC Network, a statewide service network funded in part through cooperative agreements with the U.S. SBA, Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida, and other private and public partners; hosted by the University of West Florida; and nationally accredited by the Association of SBDCs.

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