

One of the most fundamental ingredients in building a successful business is passion. Passion creates excitement and drives motivation. I discovered my passion for Graphic Design & Printing over ten years ago when I first began the Graphic Design course at Fanshawe College. In 2002 I graduated from Fanshawe and headed out on a journey that captured each and every aspect of the design and printing world, and from that I knew my goal was to own my own Graphic Design and Printing shop. After five years of valuable experience I went to the Small Business Centre (SBC) in hopes of starting my life long dream. I started MLS Graphic Design, my small home based business, with the help of the Self-Employment Benefit Program (SEB) and the dedicated and caring individuals of the SBC. Four years later I purchased a printing company and combined my passion for graphic design and vast of knowledge for printing together to form what is today Graphics London & Printing Inc.

Over the past year and a half, Graphics London & Printing Inc. has shown remarkable expansion through increased services, job creation and client retention and growth. Graphics London & Printing Inc. retained over 100 new clients in 2010 alone proving that market research, effective promotion and community support goes a long way. I credit the ongoing support of the SBC for helping our new business grow and remain sustainable. The Centre continually offers assistance with networking, market research, advertising and promotional advice along with resources to help grow my business. Over the years the SBC has continued to provide consistent and genuine support of my business. Thank you to the fabulous staff of the London Small Business Centre who helped me achieve my life long dream!

Michelle Sherman,
Graphics London & Printing Inc.

As a Foods & Nutrition student at the University of Western Ontario, I have always dreamed of running my own nutrition consulting company as a Registered Dietitian and Sports Nutritionist. Last year, while I was finishing up my training to become a dietitian, I made the decision to attend the "Starting a Small Business Seminar" at the Small Business Centre. Little did I know that would turn out to be one of the best decisions I have ever made in my entire life! I found the workshop informative and invigorating, and felt better prepared for the long road in front of me to create and run my own small business. On the break, I was able to speak with Business Advisor, John Anagnostou, who informed me of the Summer Company program available through the centre and the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. This program, aimed at helping youth become entrepreneurs, fit perfectly with my strategic plan to start my new business while upgrading my education as a Masters of Science student at UWO. John and the other Business Advisors helped me to write, edit, and perfect my Summer Company business plan, and I was absolutely thrilled to be selected as one of the few winners for a Summer Company start-up award valued at \$3,000.

I officially opened NutritionRx (www.nutritionrx.ca) on May 1st, 2011, and I'm happy to provide qualified nutrition counselling, meal plans, and diet analyses for individuals and athletes in London, Ontario.

Jennifer Broxterman,
Nutrition RX

I moved to London with friends in 1995, with my belongings in a large black duffel bag. My income was freelancing art while waitressing, intending to move to BC. It was a combination of the SBC and the Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF) which enabled me to turn the negative of being laid off from my waitressing job to a positive of becoming self-employed, working as an artist for my sole income since my official launch in 1996.

The SBC provided two services. First, it had an EI program, where selected clients could collect EI while in the critical incubation phase of their business. Second was the access to business counsellors who coached clients into moulding their ideas into business plans, aiding in goal setting and financial documents. This helped in narrowing my focus to murals, high end finishes and paintings.

The CYBF was crucial because I needed financial support. At 21, I was well under their cut off age of 30 and with the help of the SBC I had a viable business plan. I had no guarantors or assets, so banks were unreceptive. So the CYBF stepped up and I was able to purchase business necessities like a laptop, business cards and brochures.

Today, I am financially sound, my business is thriving, with many institutional patrons, including LHSC, and my artwork is featured in residences and businesses across Ontario. I am currently in the process of securing a location where I plan to open a gallery/shared studio space in 2012.

Jen Romnes,
Desorcy Designs

I am very fortunate to have been associated with the London Small Business Centre (SBC) in various ways for more than thirteen years.

My initial connection was in accessing the resources of the Business Enterprise Centre to explore starting a business. Later, as a client in the SEB program, I received high quality training and guidance in launching my new business. Eventually, I joined the SBC as the Business Information Officer and was pleased to provide information and advice to a range of business clients. After leaving the SBC to join the London Economic Development Corporation I was invited to return to the SBC as a member of the Board of Directors. I served six years in various Board roles, including President and my association with the SBC continues through a number of partnering projects including the Venture London Business Competition.

It has been my great pleasure to work with the excellent management and staff of the SBC as a client, a colleague, in a governance role, and now as a partner.

I congratulate the London Small Business Centre on 25 years of dedicated service to the London business community and I look forward to working alongside these talented people for many more years.

Larry MacKinnon,
Director,
Business Development, Technology
London Economic Development
Corporation (LEDC)