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When life hands you lemons, make “Limoncello”! Bloomery SweetShine Utilizes Small Business Development Center

CHARLES TOWN, WEST VIRGINIA – In 2010, after returning from a trip to Italy, Linda Losey and Tom Kiefer searched America high and low to find the best limoncello. Unfortunately, or fortunately depending on how you look at it, the duo was unable to locate the taste and experience they had during the unforgettable, now life changing, adventure.

America may not have produced the exquisite Italian savor that the two were looking for, but being known as the “Land of Opportunity”, Losey and Kiefer decided to open their own small business, Bloomery SweetShine, and make the sugary lemon-infused beverage found on the dessert menus of many Italian restaurants.



Left to right: Bob Marggraf, Linda Losey, Rob Losey

After discovering the perfectly-unique 12-acre parcel with a rustic 1840’s log cabin, in Charles Town, WV, the team got to work. They found not only could they make the popular Italian liquor but they could make many succulent flavors of spirits. Rob Losey, director of sales and distribution, came on as their first employee and worked on building the greenhouse, planting the lemon trees and raspberry fields, and doing many other countless tasks.

The business was doing well, selling as quickly as they could fill their bottles, and they knew it was time to expand. In April of 2012 the team reached out to Bob Marggraf, business coach with the Small Business Development Center, which is funded, in part, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Marggraf worked diligently with the team to set them up for expansion. He scheduled mandatory weekly meetings where they worked through 13 versions of their business plan. The coaching didn’t end there, Marggraf worked with the Sweetshine team to create a tool that calculated finances, which set them up to have proprietorship of the future of their business.

“I was traveling and needed to project costs for a presentation I was doing, instead of reaching out to someone, I was quickly able to use the tool we built and have the answer I needed in minutes,” states Losey. “I really can’t say enough good things about the business coaching we received from Bob and the SBDC.”

Since the time Marggraf first met with Sweetshine, they have doubled their revenue and increased their staff from three to twelve employees. “Linda, Tom, and Rob were dedicated to making the business *shine*,” says Marggraf. “Through the work I do at the SBDC, I was pleased to be able to provide them with the knowledge and tools to take their business to the next level.”

To get your business started, find a mentor, or get information on loan-guarantees and more, visit www.sba.gov/wv or call the WV SBA office at 304-623-7445. To contact the WWSBDC, call the Business AskMe! Line at 888-982-7232.

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