

View this email in a [browser](#).



Business Talk, A UH-Bauer College SBDC Star Member E-Newsletter

October 2014

Spotlight on SBDC Client: Sweet Heat Jam Company.... The Jam with Attitude



©C. JAMES NELSON

The Sweet Heat Jam Company got its start in 2011 when Christine Stilwell wanted to find a way for her son Nolan to support himself. Nolan is a budding entrepreneur, a gardener and a fan of the culinary arts who especially likes to grow and cook hot peppers – and who also just happens to have Down’s syndrome. Christine thought a business that would trade on Nolan’s interests and skills would be just the thing, and Nolan’s Sweet Heat was born. The company makes and sells all natural jalapeno jellies and salsas featuring organically grown peppers. It also provides an opportunity for others like Nolan to learn what it takes to work in the food industry, since the company also provides training and employment opportunities to other special needs young adults.

In This Issue:

Spotlight on SBDC Client:
Sweet Heat Jam Company

GrowSmart™

Quick Website Tips

Featured Seminars:

Which QuickBooks is Right for
Your Business?

10/09/2014

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM



Opening a Restaurant
10/21/2014 & 10/22/2014

5:00 PM - 9:00 PM



Commercial Leasing
10/29/2014

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM



We welcome comments,

Christine Stilwell first met SBDC Business Advisor Chris King when she came to the center in 2013 to attend a workshop, "State and Federal Taxes for a Sole Proprietorship." Christine was exploring the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) as a possible funding source, and wanted assistance in setting up the financial reporting needed to meet the agency's standards. Her intention was to eventually pursue large manufacturing contracts so that Nolan's Sweet Heat could support her son as well as other young adults with Down's syndrome.

Chris determined that Christine needed to create both a business and a marketing plan, but that her immediate need was to set up the company's financial data in QuickBooks. She was in discussions with several wholesale customers and needed good financial data in order to negotiate deals that were beneficial to both the customers and to Sweet Heat. Chris helped Christine set up the company profile, the Online Banking Center, and the Chart of Accounts. Chris also provided her procedures to generate monthly profit & loss and balance sheet reports.

As Chris and Christine began reviewing and fine tuning the financials, grocery chain HEB announced a "Texas Best" contest for the best food products made in Texas. Chris suggested to Christine that she enter the contest. The SBDC stepped up to help with the entry: Chris assisted with the company information/bio required by HEB and Renee Tichavsky, the SBDC's Marketing Advisor, helped with the marketing section of the application.

Out of 600 participants, Christine and Nolan were selected as one of 25 HEB finalists eligible to compete for the grand prize of \$25,000. Renee and Chris provided additional assistance: prepping Christine and Nolan for their presentation, helping to prepare the financials, and assisting in developing the collateral materials. Chris and Renee also staged a practice presentation, researched her competition against her business model, and set up budget forecasts in the event she won the competition. Renee created an awesome catalog of their products for the judges.

Nolan didn't win the HEB Texas Best top prize, but HEB was so impressed that they asked Sweet Heat to launch three of their jams in their Pin Oak store in Katy, Texas during the upcoming holiday season. Holiday Heat, Apricot Heat and the Original will be on the shelves in time for the December parties and festivities. Find out where else you can buy the jams and see the full range of flavors at the [Sweet Heat website](#). And if you're a fan, like Nolan and his jams on [Facebook](#).

The HEB experience and exposure has been a great opportunity for a very special young man. Nolan is still receiving media attention and entertaining other opportunities because of the contest. SBDC Advisor Chris King continues to help with forecasting and strategic planning to take Sweet Heat to the next level.

To learn more about how the UH-Bauer College SBDC helps businesses like Nolan's, visit [our website](#).

Back by Popular Demand!

Is your business on the brink of growth? Do you know where you want to be, but need help developing an actionable plan to get you there? If so, you'll want to attend our exciting GrowSmart™: Expertise for Growing Businesses program. First offered in March of this year, we're bringing back

questions and suggestions concerning our Business Talk newsletter. Please send a letter to our editor, Jacqueline Taylor.



Visit us on the Web! Login online to access special features only available to Star Members, or tell a colleague about the vital business information and expert assistance they can find at the UH-Bauer College Small Business Development Center.



The UH-Bauer College SBDC is a center of the Texas Gulf Coast SBDC Network. The Texas Gulf Coast SBDC Network serves 32 counties in Southeast Texas. SBDC programs are nondiscriminatory and available to individuals with disabilities. Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. The University of Houston is an EEO/AA institution. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Contact UH SBDC at 713-752-8488 for accommodations.



the full program, including our top-notch instructor, Tim Fulton.

Here's what one attendee had to say: "The GrowSmart™ program was amazing! I especially enjoyed the instructor and the many ways that he was able to engage experienced business owners like myself. The up-to-date, real-time resources made the entire experience very worthwhile, giving you workable ways to grow your business." (Marylyn Harris, Harland Healthcare Consulting LLC)

The program begins on Thursday, October 30th and consists of five full-day sessions offered over a period of five weeks. Session topics are Planning, Marketing, Leadership and Management, Financial Analysis, and Operations. When you complete the program, you'll have developed a "strategy map" that will align your vision for growth with the steps you need to take to get there.

James Keathley of James Craig Furnishings sums up the program by saying: "I would highly recommend this class for other business owners because you don't know it all! This is a great way to get some structure to how you can better run your business."

If your company has been successfully operating for at least two years, has annual revenues of \$300,000 or more, and you have the desire and the capacity to grow, don't miss out. Go to www.sbdc.uh.edu/growsmart to see the details, the full course schedule, and to register. The program will be held at UH-Bauer College SBDC's state-of-the-art facility in midtown Houston, but will also be offered as a live webcast. Veterans are eligible for a full scholarship to cover the \$395 program cost.

Quick Tips for Improving Your Business Website

Say you're a mom whose kids badly need haircuts. A search for "hair salon for kids" offers some options, and you click to learn more.

When you arrive at a website, you see a bright, cheerful homepage with photos of a kid-friendly salon, complete with free stickers. You immediately see the address, phone number, and hours of operation at the top of the web page. Your first impression: perfect. You see they're open, you call for an appointment and you get directions, without having to scan through their website for more info.

This section of a website, called the header, is a valuable but often under-utilized area. Here are some simple tricks to improve your customers' experience by focusing on both this section and the footer.

The header is the first thing a website visitor sees. The information you include here can influence whether customers decide to stick around and explore your website.

Here are a few quick tips:

- Include a tagline or slogan that summarizes what you do and what you offer.
- Tell customers what action to take with a "call-to-action."
- If you'd like people to give you a call, be sure to list your phone number.

A strong header is important to introduce visitors to your site, but don't forget to finish strong, too. The footer, or bottom section of a web page, is an opportunity to show your closing pitch.

The information you include should support your goals:

- Repeat information from the header.
- Show contact information, like the business address, phone number and email address.
- Highlight special offers to encourage people to take the next step before leaving the website.

Reprinted with permission from the [America's SBDC Blog](#). Contributed by Whitney Lemon, [Friday 15 Host](#), Google Small Business Engagement.

UH-Bauer College SBDC Business Talk Newsletter published by
Kimberly Smith, Marketing & Publicity, Texas Gulf Coast SBDC Network;
edited by Jacqueline Taylor, Deputy Director, Strategic Operations, Texas Gulf Coast SBDC Network

You have received this message because you are subscribed to our Business Talk email list.
[Click here](#) to manage your subscriptions.