

SUCCESS STORY

PAT'S GRANOLA

Finding healthy snacks that keep you satisfied can be hard when you are on the go. Some snacks have a long list of ingredients and taste good in the moment but end up leaving you hungry an hour later.

Patricia Bennett, a single mother of three school-age athletes, found herself needing to make real food that would hold them over for the long car rides to their competitions. They could eat junk food and take out, but it wasn't sufficient to fuel their bodies and give them the motivation to be at their best for their games.

After experimenting with trail mixes and "making granola in every spare moment," Pat created a few recipes that became something everyone enjoyed and kept her sons' teammates full.

In 2018, Pat decided to create her business, Pat's Granola. It is a gluten-free line of three granolas that use ingredients specially selected for taste and nutritional value, and they are packaged conveniently for people enjoying busy lifestyles.

*Patricia Bennett,
Owner of Pat's Granola*



Pat started looking for any free resource she could get her hands on to help launch her business. Having taken the Scratchmade Incubator course with her local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in 2017, Pat knew she could trust going to the center again.

She formed a relationship with SBDC Advisor Lindsey Evans, and they worked together on marketing, business operations, food production, co-packing, and digital strategies.

They not only wanted to create a suitable business to begin with, but to prepare Pat's Granola to attract future capital so she could scale and expand.

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The SBDC assistance was critical to helping me understand the nuances of making food,” Pat said. “Whether it’s the labeling, packaging, or safety, those are the things that gave me the understanding of how to move forward with my business.

Pat transitioned into making Pat’s Granola her full-time job in the beginning of 2020, right before the coronavirus hit the country. Before the pandemic, the majority of Pat’s sales were from retailers.

The SBDC helped her transition to online sales, giving her referrals and developing a digital footprint that included website assistance and social media. Now, Pat gets almost all her revenue from online sales and word of mouth.

From March to October 2020, Pat’s Granola received more online orders and increased visibility among peer and industry leaders, in addition to gaining three stock investors. They also appeared on two live TV segments for New Day Cleveland, which helped their brand gain national attention from Shopify, QVC, and Starbucks.

“Anybody not using their local SBDC is missing the mark in helping grow their business, especially now, with the hard times of COVID-19 on small businesses,” Pat



Business collaboration with Hartzler Family Dairy.

said. “I took phenomenal training and worked with top consultants with not just food, but in business overall. And it was all free.”

From 2019 to 2020, Pat’s sales increased 3,000 percent, and her social media insights increased more than 400 percent. Pat is actively working with Lindsey to put together a strategy for the beginning of 2021. She hopes to create new recipes and add a subscription service to the website.

Pat encourages other small businesses to strategize what’s right for you. She said “the time is now. We need to be able to build, sustain, and help bring others along, and the SBDC helps people do just that.”

For more information on Pat’s Granola, visit patsgranola.com

To learn more about the Ohio Small Business Development Centers, visit clients.ohiosbdc.ohio.gov.

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