

California Small Business Development Centers

SUCCESS STORY # 244

*Small Business
Success
Is Our Business*

Ami Sol: Turning a Passion for Sun Protection into Profits

Ami Sol

Connie Ozdil

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BACKGROUND

Ami Sol is an online retailer of organic and natural sun protective clothing for children, toddlers and babies. It was born from the passion of “mompeneur” Connie Ozdil, who wanted a better way to protect her children from the harmful UV rays of the sun than toxic chemical sunscreens.

Through her E-commerce website and blog, Connie sells clothing line to consumers and offers useful advice to moms.

CHALLENGES

As a first-time online retailer, Connie faced a number of significant challenges. First she needed to locate a fabric that met the specifications for sun protection without containing harmful chemicals.

The next challenge was the need for a supplier who could manufacture high-quality clothing and accommodate small minimum orders. Connie also had no prior experience developing a website or in branding and marketing.

ACTIONS

It all began 3 years ago when Connie took the SBDC Pre-Venture training class. She came to the class with a vague business idea plus a dream of what she wanted to do and eventually made her way to learning about the opportunities for product development and how others have been successful. Her SBDC Business Advisor Steve Schneider’s experience with manufacturing overseas gave her solid insight on how products are manufactured in other countries. Seeing the need for a solid business plan, Connie enrolled in the 12-week NxLevelL course with Paul Bozzo and even won the class award for best business plan. To get the help she needed in marketing and branding and website development Connie worked with SBDC Business Advisors Cynthia Riggs and Janet Wentworth. The team helped ensure Connie had a running start with a robust E-commerce presence.

RESULTS

Connie launched the Ami Sol website and children’s clothing line in June of 2010. “As an eco-friendly company, avoiding print-based marketing is my goal; an attractive, effective web site is critical,” Connie said. “Thanks to the assistance of the SBDC that is what I have! The SDBC helped me tremendously to lower my startup costs, work through the many issues of importing apparel, and create an online ecommerce presence. I know I was able to avoid many costly mistakes during this start-up process through their wonderful mentoring. www.ami-sol.com is now live and I continue to work with SBDC advisors to improve my marketing and profitability.”



“I CAN SAY THAT I STARTED FROM GROUND ZERO, WHEN I CAME TO THE SBDC, AND THAT WAS PROBABLY THE BEST BUSINESS DECISION I’VE MADE SO FAR.”

