Success Story

Synergy Print Design

Russ and Steph Watkins had been actively searching to own their own business for several years, making use of Widener University Small Business Development Center’s networking sessions and classes – such as the First Step Seminar – to help them on their way. After finding such an opportunity with Synergy Print Design, however, they knew they had found the right fit. Despite lacking previous experience in the industry, the pair quickly discovered that the team of employees set up by Synergy’s previous owner was independent, hard-working, and reliable, allowing them to focus on managing and expanding the business while also learning the ins and outs of screen printing and design.

During their purchase of Synergy, however, Russ and Steph expected to experience difficulties with obtaining a loan to help continue and expand the business, with relatively poor economic conditions making banks hesitant to extend financing to small businesses. Further, while the established team of employees ultimately proved to be an invaluable asset to the pair, there was some trepidation as the duo were the “new guys” in the business, and the previous employees faced completely new ownership. With the help of both classes they attended and one-on-one counseling they received from the Widener SBDC and strong relationships with a local lender, Russ and Steph were able to further develop and implement their plans for Synergy.

The pair has since been able to maintain the five employees Synergy had prior, and even have begun expanding by adding an outside sales representative. Russ explained that he and Steph’s goal is to continue maintaining the level of profit and employees they’ve had so far, eventually growing enough to move to a larger location. Ultimately, they hope to continue to provide more local jobs as well as “maintain that small business feel while giving back to the community.”

“Don’t be afraid to take that chance. You won’t ever be successful sitting at home thinking ‘Maybe I could do that’.”
-Russ Watkins