



E. Claire Salon – Illinois SBDC at SIU-Carbondale



Business website address: www.eclairesalon.com

Number of Employees: 7

E. Claire Salon is a full-Service Redken education-based salon offering haircuts and styling, Redken color services, manicure/pedicures, facials, body waxing, spray tanning, and massage therapy.

What Elizabeth needed...She found at the SBDC

In January 2014, Elizabeth came to The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Southern Illinois University to finalize her business plan and ensure she had all the proper paperwork and tax ID numbers in place prior to opening. Elizabeth was not seeking financing to start, but she did feel very strongly about the need for a well-planned business, which included a map of her growth plan. Working closely with Aimee Wigfall, Small Business Specialist, she reviewed and tweaked financial projections and deliberately designed her daily business management practices, to ensure she was comfortable with the business side.

Elizabeth renovated a space and launched E Claire Salon in March 2014. In the first year of operation, she was encouraged by recognizing steady growth in her startup location. A little over a year in that space, building up her clientele, growing her team from 2 to 7 providers, and actively participating in the local Chamber and various networking groups, Elizabeth had created a strong brand very quickly. When the right location opened up, much larger, very unique and more indicative of her style, and on one of the busiest intersections in downtown Carbondale, she jumped at the opportunity to lease and renovate that space.

After spending summer 2015 renovating and subsequently moving into her new location, E. Claire Salon has quadrupled its monthly sales, and is currently in the process of hiring additional staff. With little turnover from her first hires, Elizabeth prides herself on building a team of professionals focused on continuing education and improving the services they offer. The E. Claire Salon brand and Elizabeth's business model continue to grow as a result of the consistent efforts and outreach to the community they have exemplified since day one. E. Claire Salon is a truly connected a business, keyed into the "good vibe space" of a growing business economy.

Elizabeth continues to utilize the advice and networking opportunities provided by the Small Business Development Center at SIU. As a creative, yet conscientious, business owner, she seeks clarification and guidance in analyzing her marketing strategies,





as well as the financial health of her business, so she can continue to make good decisions ensuring the salon's future success.

Elizabeth prides herself on her relationship with her Small Business Specialist, leaning on Aimee as an objective but skilled business mentor and team member: "Aimee Wigfall began my journey into the business world with a smile and a whole lot of handholding! She was able to give me confidence by proofing my forms for business, IRS, etc. I would not be able to understand what I am doing without the help of the SBDC. I have on multiple occasions gone in to ask for help with growth, moving, and brainstorming. In the future, I look to grow and open more salons. I will continue to need and rely on the SBDC to help me with planning where this business will go!"



Elizabeth Strusz, E. Claire Salon, serving as Moderator at our 4/19/2016 Entrepreneurship Month in conjunction with the Carbondale Chamber of Commerce.

http://thesouthern.com/business/southern-business-journal/being-the-boss-elizabeth-strusz/article_48c3201a-c0d5-5139-8165-49f499172195.html

http://thesouthern.com/julia-building/image_7eb7a881-85a8-5fea-943d-3b00c1760fbb.html