

## **SUCCESS STORY**

### **Portland District Office**

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### ***The Queen Bee of Creations***

#### ***Rebecca Percy, Queen Bee Creations***

Rebecca Percy spent years building her specialty handbag business, Queen Bee Creations. She started her business from the corner of her bedroom while she was in high school. Later she studied at a textile and fabric institute in Philadelphia. Percy loves color so much that she uses all the colors of nature in her purses. She started her Queen Bee Creations in Olympia, Washington in 1996 and moved it to Portland in 2002.

For 10 years she did just about everything – from designing bags to producing the items to shipping to bookkeeping. Percy worked so many hours to turn her business into a national success that she had no personal life. She was close to giving it up. Luckily, a friend suggested that she talk to a counselor at the **Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Portland Community College** and she did.

Some of the most important advice Percy heard from counselors was to stop "being the business and instead run the business." Many small business owners try to do it all in hope of saving money.

"It was really encouraging to hear from the counselor that I could run this business and that I needed to hire people and that I should stop worrying about money," said Percy.

Now, she's taken SBDC entrepreneurial classes that taught everything from writing a business plan, to hiring employees, to paying business taxes. She also learned from her classmates who talked about their own business challenges and solutions.

The SBDC, located inside the Lloyd Center Mall, is funded by PCC as well as the U.S. Small Business Administration and the state's Economic and Community Development Department. The mandate: help grow businesses and the economy. The one-on-one counseling is free. "We are all about creating employers," said Tom Lowles, who oversees the local office.

Percy loves the image of bees and uses the bee as the logo for her business. Besides color, Percy loves fabric. She designs the creations and has 11 employees working in her hive. She is thrilled & amazed that her little bed room project has turned into a thriving company involving the skills and contributions of so many talented people.

"I had no idea that my business was going to be where it is now," said Percy.

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