

Rebecca Ufkes of Hanahan Is the 2010 National Small Business Person Runner-Up



Rebecca Ufkes is the first runner-up National 2010 Small Business Person of the Year. Her company, UEC Electronics, turns clients' ideas into finished products through its design, prototyping and manufacturing capabilities. Rebecca represented South Carolina as the state's Small Business Person of the Year. She was honored at the SBA's National Small Business Awards Ceremony on May 23, during National Small Business Week.

Rebecca started UEC in 1995 as a home-based engineering consulting firm. Within the first few years of business, UEC's primary customer suddenly reduced its orders by 50 percent. Faced with that obstacle, Rebecca decided to compete for government contracts to diversify UEC's customer base.

But UEC soon hit another obstacle. With no prior federal contracting experience, the company had difficulty securing government jobs. And so Rebecca joined the Navy's Manufacturing Technical Assistance Production Program, becoming its first successful graduate. Within two years, UEC had become a regular prime contractor with the Department of Defense.

To further ensure her company's contracting success, Rebecca received regular counseling from the SBA's former Procurement Center Representative, as well as from the Charleston Area Small Business Development Center. And in 2005, she joined the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program, a nine-year program that provides small businesses with the management and technical assistance to help them compete effectively in the federal marketplace.

Since then, UEC has continued to grow. In 2009, despite the recession, UEC hired 11 employees and opened a new 19,000 square foot facility. Today, UEC has 115 employees and 80,000 square feet of manufacturing and electronics integration facilities. Recently, the company collaborated with a local surgeon to create a portable UV sterilization system for medical facilities and worked with a former soldier to create self-releasing temporary restraint systems.

UEC Electronics has used its success to help both South Carolina's small businesses and the local community. UEC is a resource partner of SC Launch, a non-profit organization that provides assistance to technology start-up companies. Through SC Launch, UEC provides its design and production services at affordable prices to support new entrepreneurs. And because Rebecca is passionate about encouraging interest in math and science, UEC regularly provides guest speakers to local middle and high schools and hosts field trips to its facilities.

Rebecca lives with her husband Philip and their two children in Mount Pleasant.



A South Carolina District Office success story