

September 14, 2007

Kids Discover Success Therapeutics, LLC

Deb Buchanan began her professional career as an Occupational Therapist (OT) working for an agency that contracted OT services to schools in the greater Milwaukee area. After six years at the agency, she had an opportunity to provide services to the Indian Community School and the Cudahy School District as an independent contractor. That experience led to a referral from a colleague to provide services at an independent charter school, which led to several others. Consequently, she discovered she had found a niche market and decided to start her own OT business. She grew her client base to six of the 16 Charter Schools in her target market area. With that growth, she needed to hire an employee.

Now she was an OT, a supervisor, a trainer, a mentor, and a business owner. As Deb puts it, “the light bulb went on and I found I knew OT but didn’t have a clue about running a business”. She sought the advice of an attorney, who filed her LLC status, and an accountant, who set up her financial books. However, she still felt uncomfortable not really understanding what a business owner needs to know about managing and running of a business.

As luck would have it, a UW – Milwaukee Small Business Development Center brochure arrived at her business. It announced an upcoming Entrepreneurial Training Program. The description of the program sounded like exactly what she needed and registered for the April 2006 class. It was in fact just that. The program fit her needs exactly. The marketing skills and knowledge she learned allowed her to plan marketing strategies, such as branding her business, developing a website, and planning for future products and services. The financial tools positioned her to do real-time financial analysis – especially cash flow, budgeting, and prioritizing projects with financial impacts. She still uses the financial spreadsheets from the class today.

Her future goals include growing the existing business and developing some spin-off products, such as OT documentation standards for use in other school systems. She plans to take more SBDC marketing programs to help her in this endeavor.



“The ETP program took a daunting project, building a business plan, and broke it down into workable, learnable steps. The class really made me understand how to be a successful business manager.”

– Deb Buchanan, Owner