



KU SBDC Gives Thanx Hair Artistry a New Style for Success

Dauphin
Lebanon
Berks
Lancaster
Chester
Reading

Thanx Hair Artistry is located in the Mt. Penn Area, just outside of Reading

Diane and Chris Keck
Thanx Hair Artistry
<http://www.thanxhairartistry.com>

Industry: Beauty Salon

Year Founded: 2006

SBDC Assistance: Business and Financial planning

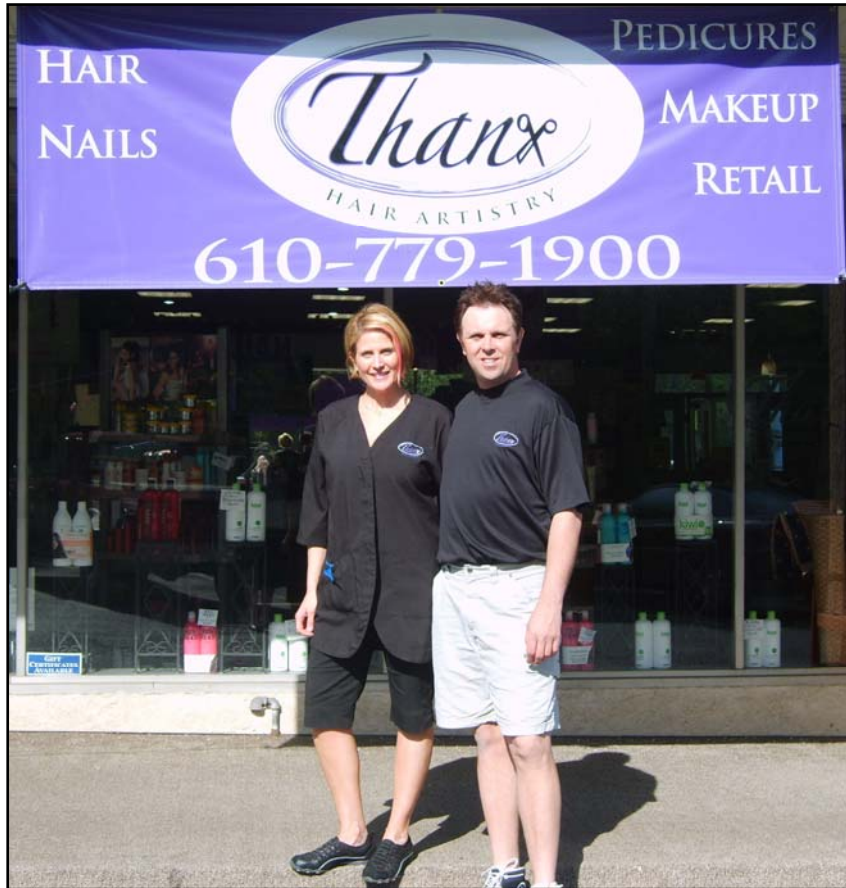
Kutztown University SBDC
Ernie Post, Director
www.kutztownsbdc.org

June 2007 Success Story Kutztown SBDC Success Connection

Diane and Chris Keck opened Thanx Hair Artistry in May 2006, and haven't looked back since. After a chance encounter with KU SBDC Director, Ernie Post, Diane, owner/operator, enlisted the tools she and her husband Chris needed to get Thanx off the ground. With help from the Kutztown University Small Business Development Center (KU SBDC), Diane and Chris had access to business and financial planning, launching Thanx from dream to reality.

With 23 years experience in the salon industry, it's no surprise Diane's path has taken her to owner of a salon. Before beginning her journey down the road of entrepreneurialism, Diane worked as a consultant in the corporate world of the salon industry, trouble-shooting with new salons on issues such as training and hiring, a skill Diane would later use when building her own salon.

In 1997, Diane hung up her business suit for good and tied on her apron, pockets stuffed with combs and scissors, and began working as a stylist in various salons. She would eventually find her place with her own salon, Thanx Hair Artistry.



Diane and Chris in front of their salon, Thanx

The inviting space and atmosphere at Thanx has trickled down from Chris' and Diane's passion and understanding for customer service, even the staff embodies the same disposition. Clearly this stems from Diane's attitude towards hiring she developed while consulting. "I hire for attitude, and train for talent. You can hire bodies, but they have to click," she says. The Kecks' progressive approach has allowed them to build a team of people willing to go the extra mile, just like the Kecks. "Take advantage of the people who are out there to help," says Chris

on advice to new entrepreneurs looking for guidance, "shop around for the people who will work with you."

Chris plays a dual roll of office manager, taking care of payroll and some of the company's finances, and also as a glass glazer specialist for construction companies. He helped with the renovation of the salon space, installing the large storefront window. His main focus is becoming full-time manager of Thanx, through his devotion to customer service and promotions. "In your infancy, you have to be creative with your marketing," says Chris.

And Thanx is the definition of creative when it comes to marketing. The Kecks have combined their passion for customer service and their promotions creativity to better their community and help their name get out there. Thanx has been seen at local baseball and basketball games throwing t-shirts into the crowds, and as sponsors appearing in the event programs.

Diane is also involved in the Look Good Feel Better Program of the American Cancer Society as a certified facilitator. What does that mean? Once a month, Diane donates her time fitting wigs on cancer patients who have lost their hair. As with everything else about their business, Chris and Diane view their involvement in the community as an educational opportunity, and encourage the staff to partake as well. For an attitude to catch on, it needs to start at the top, and that's what Thanx is all about.

Diane and Chris came into contact with the KU SBDC after Diane struck up a conversation about careers while cutting the hair of one of her customers, Ernie Post, Director of the KU SBDC. Once the two started talking, it was only a matter of time before Chris and Diane were taking advantage of KU SBDC services.

Post would reiterate to the couple how important research is when investigating a new business venture. Start-up costs and location play a vital role in crafting a business plan. The Kecks even went so far as consulting with a lighting specialist while planning the salon lay-out, covering details down to the right lighting for the salon. Fortunately for Chris and Diane, their hard work paid off. "The business plan really helped with our business and even our personal finance ability and history," says Chris. "It wasn't even a question when we went to the bank."



Inside the salon, customers can browse the many product lines while waiting for a new hair style

Ernie also assisted the two in finding the right accountant. Without much interaction with their previous accountant, Diane and Chris were on the search for a hands on approach to their finances. And Ernie knew just the man for the job. The new accountant educated the Kecks by involving them in their finances and the processes they were unaware of before. Finally, the Kecks had found an accountant who fit into their same philosophy, "We found a person that got to know us. He taught us how to use the money we needed," says Chris. "Shop around for an accountant, someone with a nurturing personality. He/she has to understand you're a new business, and may not know what you're doing."

Through the help of the KU SBDC, Chris and Diane Keck have grown exponentially over the past two years, and will continue to grow in the years to come. The business and financial planning they received from the KU SBDC helped Thanx get on its feet, and now it's running down the road to success.



You can find Thanx Hair Artistry at 3933 Perkiomen Avenue in Reading, PA 19606, near the Mt. Penn area. For more information, or to book a hair, nail or beauty consulting appointment, visit Thanx's website, <http://www.thanxhairartistry.com>, or call 610.779.1900.

The Kutztown University Small Business Development Center provides one-on-one consulting, business planning tools, and free online business courses. Information about these free services is available at our interactive website, www.kutztownsbdc.org. Want to contact us by mail? Send correspondence to deFrancesco Building Room 2, Kutztown, PA 19530.

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