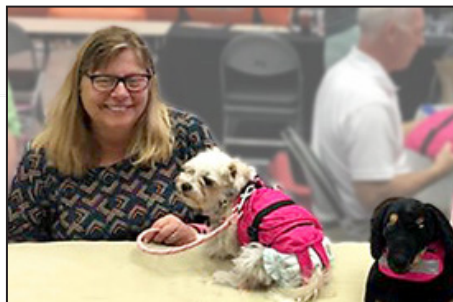


SUCCESS STORY: DOGONGEAR

Love for Dogs Unleashes Unique Business



Advice from the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) continues to help Dawn Howell as she works to grow DOGonGEAR LLC, her unique canine protective hunting vest and dog diaper wrap business.

Howell began working with SCORE business mentor Bill Encell in 2016 as she drafted her business plan. The two then enlisted the expertise of NBDC consultant Kyle Hampton to complete the business plan and refine the company's financial projections.

"Kyle was great in helping us with the financial projections, and with defining what we have to do to make our goals," Howell says. Armed with the business plan and financial projections, she is currently seeking a partner to help move the business forward.

Howell says it all began in 2008 with a deaf Maltese puppy she adopted and named Sammy.

Using a mix of pee pads and outdoor time, Howell believed Sammy's potty training was going well. "What we didn't notice was that Sammy was marking behind our living room furniture and anywhere he thought I wasn't looking," she says.

Howell tried placing Sammy in baby diapers because they are less expensive than canine diapers. "I altered the diaper to accommodate his tail, and added an adult pee-pad for extra protection," she says. "Unfortunately, Sammy quickly wriggled free of the diaper, and chewed it." Next, she tried securing the diaper with a child's onesie, but that also was unsuccessful.

Finally, Howell started designing and sewing different styles of diaper wraps. "I came up with several designs before I finally made a wrap that would hold Sammy's diaper in place and be comfortable for him to wear all day and night," she says.

Howell originally founded her small family business to design, produce and market dog diaper wraps, patented and sold under the brand, DOGonGEAR.

She then turned her attention to dog safety, specifically the dangers hunting dogs often encounter, such as serious injuries due to barbed wire fences and sharp branches hidden in underbrush. Her next patented design, the Dog Hunting Vest UnderBelly and Chest Protection, covers and protects a dog's chest, underbelly and genitals.

Howell originally marketed her dog products on Amazon, as well as her own website. She has since added sales on Etsy as she continues to grow the market. She donates her dog diaper wraps and hunting vests to search and rescue organizations for use by their canine teams.

CONSULTANTS: KYLE HAMPTON, ARETHA BOEX

REPORT DATE

› April, 2019

INDUSTRY

› NAICS 424990: Misc. Nondurable Goods Merchant Wholesalers

CONSULTING

- › Financial projections
- › Business plan
- › Coordinating with SCORE

RESULTS

- › Online business established
- › Market expansion
- › New product introduction