

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER SUCCESS STORY

COMPUTER WHIZ ON CALL

Camarillo
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BEFORE:

Paul Nachian decided he had enough of the uncertainty of working for high-tech companies after being laid off by a large global information technology company. So, in 2004, he launched Computer Whiz On Call, specializing in back-ups, data recovery, virus removal and hardware and software repair for individual users. When the recession hit, the business grew increasingly slow over the following year.

Nachian was determined to improve his business and began working with the Economic Development Collaborative-Ventura County's SBDC in 2012. He and his SBDC advisor analyzed current markets and sales and identified untapped markets.

BEST ADVICE:

Encouraged by his SBDC advisor, Nachian expanded beyond the individual user to pursue small- and medium-size businesses. Businesses tend to rely on their computers, so by focusing on this market segment Nachian could count on an ongoing and stable need for his services.

To break into these new markets, Nachian needed to boost his marketing efforts. After working with his SBDC advisor on Internet marketing, Nachian updated his website to improve search engine optimization (SEO) and established a presence on social media. He now averages four phone calls per week from his website.

He also worked with the SBDC to develop collateral materials, a sales pitch and a strategic marketing plan. Nachian is continuing to focus on expanding his business and maximize his efforts to reach new customers who can help his business be sustainable for the long-term.

"Beyond pointing me in the right direction to grow my business, the SBDC provided me with hands-on tools like counseling and networking opportunities that really allowed me to succeed," said Nachian.

AFTER:

Since working with the SBDC, Nachian has increased his annual revenue by over 50%. He has more than 100 clients in Ventura County and has celebrated his 10th anniversary in business.



LESSONS LEARNED:

• Building Connections

"Attending mixers and networking events helped me receive referrals, but, more importantly, attending industry-related networking events has been very beneficial," said Nachian. "I was able to speak with other IT professionals about how they operate, what products they use and how they utilize social media and SEO."

• Be Prepared

"Things are busy now, but it's important to have plans in place and be ready to engage with potential clients if work slows down," said Nachian. "With the help of EDC-VC, I've been working on marketing tactics to keep new clients coming."

• Putting It All Together

"I learned that it's important to look at the whole picture. All of the little things add up—social media, SEO, following up on leads and referrals—all those aspects work together to increase business," said Nachian. "You can't put all your time and energy into one aspect; efforts should be strategic and diverse."



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