

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER SUCCESS STORY

SOILMOISTURE EQUIPMENT CORP.

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BEFORE:

Soilmoisture Equipment Corp. is a family-owned business in Goleta whose roots in soil sciences date back to the late 1930s. Selling and marketing products worldwide for over 60 years that measure and extract moisture from soils and plants, the company has faced stiff competition from foreign markets with lower labor rates and minimal “in country” shipping costs.

“The only way to gain market share worldwide is in having superior equipment and service, as well as a well-trained and knowledgeable dealer network to properly represent your products and services,” said owner Whitney Skaling.

While Soilmoisture has grown slowly and steadily over the years, Skaling turned to EDC-VC in 2012 to spur the business’s growth.

BEST ADVICE:

Working with SBDC Director Ray Bowman and advisor Sylvia Martini, Skaling and Megan Cullen, Soilmoisture’s international sales/marketing manager, initially wanted help with the company’s global client website while having sales staff become Certified Global Business Professionals.

“EDC-VC has been instrumental over the last several years in providing helpful hints, suggestions and certification in international selling practices, techniques and ways that may improve our global marketing systems,” Skaling added. “We have found EDC-VC to be of real value as a knowledgeable resource to bounce off ideas for verification of our current practices or in looking for a better suggestion in selling in an international arena.”

AFTER:

With the help of EDC-VC, in 2014 Soilmoisture focused its efforts on improving the scope of its products and expanding its data and software interface capabilities to handheld devices, tablets and computers. As a result, the company is releasing six new product lines in 2016. Skaling said they are also looking forward to increasing sales volumes and distribution paths.

“The future of growth for us is in making sure that we are providing both underdeveloped and developed areas of the world with appropriate products and services,” Skaling said.



Whitney Skaling

LESSONS LEARNED:

- **Be Open**
“Some of the best advice the SBDC advisors gave was for us to stay open-minded and keep looking for opportunities,” said Cullen.
- **Workforce Development**
“EDC-VC helped our sales team become Certified Global Business Professionals, and as a result my staff is better qualified to perform their jobs,” said Cullen.
- **Don’t Stagnate**
“We’ve placed a much greater effort on looking for opportunities with broader appeal, higher volume distribution paths and that are more consumer-related. In 2014, we improved the scope of our products and expanded their data and software interface capabilities to handheld devices, tablets and computers,” said Skaling.
- **Product Placement**
“To stay current and relevant in a global economy, our product mix and capabilities need to interface with new emerging technologies and we need to know where they apply. We also need to identify where older, less complicated versions are preferred and accepted,” said Skaling.