



## Graduate Spotlight: Bobby Thompson The Help Desk LLC

My name is Bobby Thompson and I'm the owner of a new business in Emporia, KS named The Help Desk, a small "mom and pop" style computer repair/retail store. I started my business in early May 2008 after dreaming and casually planning for many years. Starting a business was something I always wanted to do, but the idea seemed too overwhelming when thinking about all the details involved. My motivation would always die off as soon as I began thinking about leasing a building, tax liability and the idea of having to deal with creditors.

In early January of 2008 a family member mentioned there was a class beginning at the Flint Hills Technical College. The class was called START YOUR OWN BUSINESS. I hesitantly signed up at the last minute not knowing what to expect. What I discovered was a group of instructors highly motivated and committed to helping people like me take an idea and transform it into an action plan. The learning material was very helpful, but it was the group interaction that made my starting a business become a reality. Through the class we met representatives from every sector related to starting a new business. Suddenly it wasn't so intimidating to think of going to speak with an attorney, an accountant or (gasp) a bank officer. The business plan came together slowly throughout the class and suddenly my thought process changed from "I have a crazy idea" to "Why have I not already started this business?"

I definitely owe a great deal of thanks and gratitude to Flint Hills Technical College, Emporia Main Street Association and the Small Business Development Center for partnering to offer the program and to Mary Helmer, Kim Redeker and Lisa Brumbaugh for teaching the class. I would encourage anyone to take this class even if you are still in the dream stage of planning your own business.

Thank you,  
Bobby Thompson  
Owner

## Graduate Spotlight: Rick Robidou Flint Hills Laser Expressions LLC

*Class, Hard Work & Community Support  
Key to Success*

"I truly appreciate the FHTC Start Your Own Business class and still use the class materials," stated Rick Robidou, owner and operator of Flint Hills Laser Expressions. Robidou is a graduate of the inaugural Start Your Own Business Class, completed in spring 2007. This multi-session course hosted by Flint Hills Technical College, Emporia Main Street and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) helped Rick and his wife kick off a multi-faceted engraving business that is expanding far beyond the couple's original business plan.

"We originally looked at simple pet stone engraving but have grown into multiple engraving areas since our July 2007 kick-off. Today we engrave glass,

photos, awards, plexiglass and woodcarvings."

Now over two years into their new business, the Robidou family is selling products locally and regionally through several destination businesses and directly to customers. Business has grown so rapidly that they have already seen their first expansion, from the original Americus office to the new location in downtown Emporia.

Rick credits his success to hard work, seeing opportunity throughout his career and taking that leap of faith and enrolling in the class. Rick cited several times the importance of the expert contacts he made and the help he received from instructors Kim Redeker & Mary Helmer, as well as guest expert local SBDC director Lisa Brumbaugh.



Rick Robidou 2007 graduate and owner-operator of Flint Hills Laser Expressions LLC.®



## BUSINESS & INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTER ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

### Program Coordinators

- Emporia Main Street
- Flint Hills Technical College
- KS Small Business Development Center @ ESU

Graduates starting a business will receive a free one year membership to Emporia Main Street. New business owners are eligible to apply for Main Street, Trusler and Network Kansas 0% interest loans.

# START YOUR OWN BUSINESS COURSE

- 10-SESSION ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING PROGRAM

### COURSE DETAILS

## START YOUR OWN BUSINESS (BUS 250)

Location: FHTC Main Campus

February 9 - March 11, 2010

Tuesdays & Thursdays

6:00 PM ~ 9:00 PM

(2 CREDIT CLASS)

TUITION & FEES \$205

(OPTIONAL TEXTBOOK PURCHASED SEPARATELY)

ENROLL BY CALLING (620) 341-1392

OR EMAIL ABECKER@FHTC.EDU

### Get the fundamentals to start your own business!

You have mastered a skill or have a product you want to sell to the community. Now you need the business skills to start and grow a business.

Consider this course, START YOUR OWN BUSINESS, to get you started. At the B&I Training Center, we believe in a three-level approach to making you a successful business owner: master a skill, get the education you need to run a business, and expand your business through the use of the many tools and resources available in our region.

For this course, we have partnered with the Emporia Main Street Organization and the ESU Small Business Development Center to offer a comprehensive training program for potential and current small business owners who bring talent and opportunity to our business community.

Our goal is to show you the resources and knowledge to make you successful. Your training and support only begins with this course. Graduates of SYOB will be eligible to apply for several financial opportunities to make starting a business more affordable and successful.



2008 Graduate Bobby Thompson  
Owner and operator of The Help Desk

## Session Descriptions for "Start Your Own Business"

**All sessions can be attended separately for \$49. Call 620-341-1392 to make arrangements.  
The textbook may be purchased separately and is optional for enrolled students.**

### Deciding on a Business & The Business Plan

This session gives an overview of the business selection process. You will work through a step-by-step approach to selecting a business that matches your strengths and interests. You will also learn the basics of the business plan format, steps to make your business plan better, and an overview of the necessary factors for developing a business plan.

### Understanding the Regional Market & Market Research

Your business will not succeed just because you want it to succeed. Determining if there is a market for your products or services is most critical planning a successful business. Once you decide on your product or service, you must analyze your market, a process involving interviewing competitors, suppliers and new customers. However, before you begin researching your market, you should take a brief, but close, look at your product or service from an objective standpoint. Market research is extremely beneficial, and the information gathered can increase your profit potential.

### Business Tools, Organizational Structure & Insurance

In this session, you will learn your options for deciding the type of business structure that is right for you. Should you go into business alone or with a partner? What type of business organization should be used, and how do you select professional advisors? This session will also explain in simple terms the various forms of insurance you will need and explain the importance of each of them.

### Location & Leasing, Licenses, Permits & Zoning

Choosing a suitable name for your business and finding out what license and permits you may require are daunting tasks. Learn about what you need to do locally, at the state level, and federally to get your permits and name registered. Your great business can also be crippled by a poor location or negotiated lease. Learn how to create your own site model and the important aspects of a lease agreement.

### Basic Accounting, Taxes & Financial Statements

Before you start your business, you will need to learn how to keep score (basic accounting) and how to plan for various tax responsibilities. This session explains both processes in simple terms.

### Cash Flow & How to Finance a Business

In this session, we will discuss how to maintain cash flow, one of the most crucial parts of operating a business. You will also learn how to locate, negotiate and maintain sources of money to get you started and help you expand your business. Topics include identifying how much you need, loans versus investments, funding sources, and what to do after you receive your financing.

### Buying an Existing Business or Franchise, Business Expansion & Handling Problems

Students will learn how to make objective decisions when considering the purchase of a business or franchise--and how to evaluate how much you should pay. You will also learn the best strategies for dealing with both bad and good fortune, including what to do when it's time to expand.

### E-Commerce, E-Marketing & Marketing for Small Business

E-commerce is the fastest growing segment of our economy. It allows even the smallest business to reach a global audience with proper products and message at a minimum cost. This class will focus on the core basics of how and why to setup an e-commerce web site, how to approach e-marketing, and some of the best traditional marketing strategies for small businesses.

### Employer/Employee Relations, Daily Operations & Business Processes

Learn where to get the basic requirements for being an employer of others, and discover resources to help you hire, manage, retain and develop loyal employees. Understanding the daily business requirements can be overwhelming. Learn what basic steps are expected daily when running a business.

### Local Resources & Civic Opportunities

This final session hosted by Emporia Main Street will feature a resource reception with previous speakers and representatives of other helpful organizations. Learn how to integrate your business and your plan with local resources, including the Main Street program, the Chamber of Commerce, the Kansas Small Business Development Center, and more!



Amy Becker, 2008 Graduate  
Owner & Operator

## Meet Your Instructors



Mary Helmer  
Co-Instructor  
Assistant State Coordinator for Kansas  
Main Street Programs  
KS Department of Commerce

Mary served as the Emporia Main Street Executive Director for 9 1/2 years before accepting the Assistant State Coordinator position with Kansas Main Street. Mary has extensive experience with public relations, which includes working with all media outlets, one-on-one communication with business owners and presentations to City, County and State officials. Mary has planned and implemented several community events and activities and serves on several community boards. Mary is a graduate of Emporia State University and serves on the Kansas Downtown Development Association Board of Directors. She is a 2004 graduate of Leadership Kansas and was selected as the Main Street Executive Director of the Year in 2004. Emporia has been recognized as a National Main Street Community for several years and was awarded the Great American Main Street Award, the first ever in Kansas, from the National Main Street Center and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2005.



Lisa Brumbaugh  
Co-Instructor  
Director  
Kansas Small Business  
Development Center  
@ Emporia State University



The KSBDC at ESU is one of eight regional centers in Kansas dedicated to increasing economic prosperity in Kansas by helping entrepreneurs and small businesses. Director Lisa Brumbaugh is an integral part of this course and can assist your business with the following services:

- Business plan assistance
- Financial projection Development
- Cash flow analysis
- Marketing plan development
- Human resources
- Resources of capital and financing
- Inventory control procedures
- Product cost analysis and pricing
- Advertising strategies
- Sales techniques
- and much more...

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Property Investment  
& Management

Owner & Founder  
Amy Harmon  
2007 Graduate



Rob Gilligan  
Co-Instructor

President,  
Emporia Main Street

Rob's experience in both small business start-ups and franchise management has given him many learning opportunities that have been useful in each new venture he takes part in. As an entrepreneur Rob has established two small businesses through partnerships and learned first hand, many of the ups and downs of small business ownership. His experience as a regional manager for a franchise business has allowed him to participate and learn from the ground up in growing and managing multiple store locations.

As a life long resident of Emporia, Rob has been active with the Emporia Main Street organization for 5 years as a member of the board of directors. He is also an active alumni of Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity at Emporia State University where he received his Bachelors degree in Communication.