



Tenth Degree Technologies

Tenth Degree Technologies provides software to sports organizations, tournament organizers, and professional athletes to manage schedules and general administration. The company was founded in 2015 by Tina Nipe, and today has five employees.

The Challenge

Tina had been part of the incubator program at Mason Enterprise Center- Leesburg, and began working with Eric Byrd, Manager, Loudoun SBDC when her business was in the early start-up stage, more than four years ago. Tina was interested in exploring her options for investor funding and knew that the Northern Virginia area had many angel investors. She wanted to understand if funding was right for her and her business, how to reach prospective investors, and better analyze her funding needs.

Working with Loudoun SBDC

Tina reached out to Eric Byrd, Manager, SBDC, who she knew from her time at the MEC incubator. Eric and Tina worked together to walk through the various funding options available as well as process-oriented considerations, like putting together a pitch deck. After much evaluation and discussion of the pros and cons with Eric Byrd, Tina decided to forego the funding route altogether. "The best thing about the SBDC is it gives you an external resource to bounce ideas off of; they know what's been tried, what has been successful," she says. "They have my best interests at heart."

Tina has continued to meet regularly with the SBDC since that time. Early on, Tina would meet with Eric on a monthly basis. She would arrive with an idea or a problem, and she and Eric would whiteboard options. "I've considered Eric the "voice of reason" when I would pitch an idea. As a small business owner, I am in the weeds. Eric and the SBDC provides the big picture, objective perspective I need," she says.

In addition to funding, she has consulted the SBDC about leveraging salesforce.com for lead management. As part of that discussion, Eric Byrd brought in a marketing advisor within the SBDC to assist with the discussion and analysis. "I am not an expert in every facet of my business," Tina notes, "The coaches bring experience in their areas of expertise; so I draw from that."

Today, she checks in as needed. For example, when faced with the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential impacts on her business, Tina reached out to learn more and understand various business loan and grant options available to small businesses. "The SBDC has been instrumental in providing connections to resources and other business that has helped us grow", says Tina.

The Results

"We are on track to surpass revenue projections for this year and the SBDC has played a large role in making that happen," says Tina. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the company, Tina believes she has gained the tools and resources to pivot her business to weather the current business environment.

Tina highly recommends new businesses reach out the SBDC. She believes the SBDC has been instrumental in providing connections to resources and other businesses that have helped the company grow. Her advice? "Put in the work! You are not going to the SBDC for answers, you are going for support to work through problems. But the work is worth it," she says.