

Pushing Onward

After Hours Auto Repair Inc.



After Hours Auto Repair Inc. in southwest Wichita is the life-long dream of Mark Guerrero.

Much like hurdlers, Guerrero and his wife and business partner, Summer, have learned to overcome each personal and business challenge that come their way.

Breast cancer. Iraqi War. And Funding challenges.

Through it all the Guerreros pressed on to fulfill a shared dream – a dream that they realized when Mark was only 16, a dream to be in business for themselves while helping others.

Along the road, life and all of its challenges didn't deter the Guerreros. To turn their dream into a reality, the Guerreros started at the right place and began preparing their credit in advance for a business loan. They began watching their personal finances closely knowing they would need future credit. And to prepare them for the business plan they would inevitably need to write, they sought help from the Kansas Small Business Development Center (KSBDC) at Wichita State University.

Summer took the first step on the business plan and attended *Meeting the 3Ms: Money, Marketing and Management Seminar* – an introductory

workshop offered by the KSBDC at WSU. After attending the workshop, Summer realized that she and Mark would have better results creating their business plan if they worked with one of the KSBDC consultants. As she jokingly shared with the consultant, “Do you really want a mechanic writing a business plan?”

Working with their consultant the Guerreros detailed out the specifics of their business plan and what they needed to guide their decisions moving forward. Just creating the plan was a learning process. Both owners (and marriage partners) learned that they not only had their own perspective, but that each perspective was valuable to the plan and the success of the business.

But sometimes even the best laid plans can go awry.

Looking forward to applying for a business loan, Summer had already closed their credit cards to become more financially fit. However, with their startup date in March 2008, also came the disappointing news of not getting the funding on which they were counting. While they had closed some lines of credit, they learned that by not having enough available existing credit and adding another credit card to the debt would be considered a new source of debt, they weren't qualified for additional debt.

Persistence pays off.

After the loan didn't pan out, Mark began generating and saving money by working an additional 30 hours per week in his personal "After Hours Garage". By combining the new savings, along with their 401k, the Guerreros successfully opened their business to the public.

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And while it took a while to get there, it didn't take very long until they were facing their next hurdle – rapid growth. Apparently, After Hour Auto Repair's quest for learning along with the focus on quality customer service and technical / mechanical expertise proved rather swiftly to be the right recipe for growth.

Quickly outgrowing their first location, the Guerreros sought KSBDC advice as they managed their growing business in the new, larger location.

As the business has grown, so has business ownership. Summer has continued to grow her own business knowledge and acumen through regular engagement with her KSBDC

consultants and KSBDC seminars. Additionally she tapped into industry resources by hiring an auto industry consultant. Summer continues to work with her team, seeking advice from her KSBDC



consultant prior to any major decisions. Working with the KSBDC as well as seeking advice from automotive industry experts has helped the Guerreros learn the specifics of their business that has in turn allowed them to continue to enhance their revenue and bottom line.

All of their passion, drive, push, and perseverance paid off and their sincere desire to help others was solidified, night after night, as they watched adults, often hurting for transportation and fearing the possible outcomes, found a haven at After Hours.

To this day, Summer, an Iraqi War Veteran, breast cancer survivor and

active firefighter, along with her auto-mechanic husband, Mark, continue to work together to provide the leadership and vision for After Hours Auto Repair. By proactively watching the bottom line and segregating collected sales taxes and owed income taxes from their working capital, Summer and Mark have been able to steadily grow their business from the original dream they shared many years ago.

Assisted by
Alan Badgley, KSBDC Consultant
KSBDC at WSU
Wichita. WSU KSBDC | 316.978.3193 |
wichita.edu/ksbdc | ksbdc@wichita.edu

Represented by
Senator Pat Roberts
Senator Jerry Moran
Fed. Dist. #4 – Mike Pompeo
State Sen. Dist.#25 – Michael O'Donnell
State Rep. Dist.#95 – Tom Sawyer