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Spotlight on Success – Culture Studio Screen Printing

Culture Studio Screen Printing and Embroidery is one the most rapidly expanding businesses in the garment industry. Rich Santo and his company of young, hungry entrepreneurs have come a long way since the time they were printing t-shirts and selling them out of the trunks of their cars. Through hard work and determination, Santo and his company have introduced new innovations to the garment industry, giving it a renewed flavor by creating the popular brand Chii Clothing and recently established themselves in their new home in the thriving and colorful district of Wicker Park, Chicago called Thr3ee Boutique. With their passion for creating unique clothing, Culture Studio Screen Printing and Embroidery is quickly becoming one of the top printers in the Midwest.

President Rich Santo has dedicated himself to assembling a team of passionate and talented individuals that share his love for quality printing in order to provide a one-of-a-kind customer experience. The crew at Culture Studio push themselves day in and day out to be innovative and change the garment industry.

During their recent success and explosive growth that has seen large scale hiring, expansion and a vast increase in sales, Culture Studio has sought the assistance of their local **Illinois Small Business Development Center at NORBIC** for many things. Since 2010 the **SBDC at NORBIC** has assisted Mr. Santo with securing grants for the training of their employees that now number over 60. **Andrew Fogaty and the SBDC** helped Culture Studio acquire SBA loans for the expansion of their company into a new 50,000 square foot facility. The **SBDC International Trade Center at NORBIC** has also provided detailed information to Culture Studio on which foreign markets would best suit their company and see the highest sales and best success as they seek to expand into Canada, Europe and Australia.

Culture Studio Screen Printing and Embroidery continues to grow and thrive in their new location in Chicago as they change the game in the garment business. Recently Rich Santo and company were recognized by INC Magazine as one of the country's fastest growing young companies and the **Illinois Small Business Development Center** is glad to have assisted this small business grow and succeed.

WebCATS is Gone on February 1st

Just one final reminder that WebCATS will no longer be available on February 1, 2015. All centers must be fully using NEOSERRA as their client management and tracking system. Outreach Systems has an excellent FAQs section under the Neoserra HELP section and also several instructional videos and other resources available to you. Please contact your Network Coordinator or Tom Becker if you have any questions.

Maximizing Neoserra – Reportable Box

This is a special reminder to all members of the Illinois SBDC Network. Please be sure to check the "Reportable" Box when entering new Counseling, Milestones and Capital Funding activity into Neoserra. If you do not, the activity will NOT be counted on your scorecard graph. You will find the "Reportable" box near the bottom of the page when entering new activity. See below for an example.

Number of
People
Attending: (excluding counselors)

Referral
To:

Reportable?

Valued Resources

50 Awesome Resources to Help You Be a Better Writer and Content Marketer - Open the link below to find a list of resources to improve writing and the content you create for the internet and social media.

<http://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/50-awesome-resources-to-help-you-be-a-better-writer-and-content-marketer.html?cid=em01012week03d>

Network News and Moves

Please join us in congratulating the Illinois SBDC Network's newest NASBITE Certified Global Business Professional (CGBP), Terrance Hall with the Illinois SBDC International Trade Center for the Rockford Area. We also would like to recognize Terrance for recently being named the Director of the Illinois SBDC ITC for the Rockford Area. Terrance takes over the Director position from Carrie Zethmayr following her recent promotion to Executive Director for Trade and Investment for the Rockford Area Economic Development Council. Outstanding job, Terrance! !! Also, HUGE CONGRATULATIONS to both Terrance and Carrie! !!

Illinois Innovation Index

Illinois universities play a critical role in developing the state's pipeline of technology licenses, startups, and entrepreneurs. Using data from the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM) and new surveys by the Illinois Science and Technology Coalition (ISTC), [this quarterly edition of the Illinois Innovation Index](#) provides an update on tech transfer, startup creation, and entrepreneurship development at universities across Illinois.

From school years 2009–10 to 2013–14, Illinois universities' entrepreneurship programs, startup competitions, and mentorship services facilitated or directly aided in the creation of 455 companies. Of these, 76 percent are known to be active and at least 66 percent of active startups are known to be based in Illinois. Meanwhile, university technology transfer offices (TTOs) have aided in the creation of 121 tech transfer startups—those based on university-developed technologies—since 2009.

Increasingly, Illinois' universities, companies, and government are working together to connect technology, talent, and capital in order to more effectively harness the potential of university research for technology-based economic development in Illinois. For more, read [the full article](#).

America's SBDC Network Connect

Please click [HERE](#) to open the latest version of [the America's SBDC Network Connect Newsletter](#).

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to Tom.Becker@illinois.gov. Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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Celebrating 30 Years of Small Business Success

