



"Professional Guidance for Business Growth"

June 8, 2015

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Spotlight on Success – Felix's Famous Cookies

Felix's Famous Cookies, a client at the **Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the College of Lake County**, recently had the story below published *Crain's Chicago Business*. Mr. Fernando Pliego is Ms. Castillo's SBDC advisor. She said, "I have been most impressed with how much my advisor has pushed me to think out of the box to ensure the success of my business. Whether it had to do with creating a 5-year goal plan, or brainstorming on effecting marketing tools, he has helped me to think bigger and more rationally." Ms. Castillo learned from earlier experience, "This is the second business I have owned and run. I knew this time around I needed a 'business coach' to serve as a source of accountability. The **Illinois SBDC at the College of Lake County** was a perfect solution for my business goals."

From *Crain's*: When Laura Castillo moved to the Chicago area, she had trouble finding the powdery cookies she'd loved in Texas; polvorones, a popular regional treat also known as Mexican wedding cookies. Now, the Mundelein mom is selling them through her business, Felix's Famous Cookies.

The Felix in the company name is her 10-year-old son, who urged her to bake the cookies for a craft fair, using a recipe they'd found four years ago on her laptop—a recipe left behind by Castillo's mother, who'd recently died. "I can make them famous," Felix told her. The cookies were such a hit that Castillo eventually began getting calls from people who wanted to order them.



That led her to start an LLC and launch an online store in December. The cookies are now sold at Garden Fresh Market stores in Buffalo Grove, Mundelein and Round Lake Beach, and Castillo is seeking more retail outlets.

"Any time I get my cookies into the hands of a Hispanic person, they're an instant hit," she says. But people of other ethnic groups, including many Indians, are also gobbling up the egg- and dairy-free cookies, which are highly crumbly. "When you bite into it, it's like dust is falling in your mouth," Castillo says.

Felix's Famous Cookies was a winner at Samuel Adams' Brewing the American Dream Pitch Room Competition's regional contest in Chicago on May 4. In December, Castillo will go to New York to compete in the national contest, vying to win a \$10,000 business grant and a year of extended coaching and mentoring from Samuel Adams.

Castillo employs two full-time bakers, and Felix plays an active role in the company, helping out with labeling and sales. Felix's Famous Cookies donates a portion of its proceeds to a different nonprofit each month; May's beneficiary (was) Feed My Starving Children in Libertyville.

SBDC's In The News – Jim Foley to Provide CGBP Training

Our very own Jim Foley will be conducting another training event in Missouri in August. Please see the notice below from our counterparts in Missouri.

The Missouri Small Business & Technology Development Centers and the University of Missouri Trulaske College of Business will offer a three-day workshop from Aug. 11-13 on the MU campus to prepare people for the NASBITE Certified Global Business Professional (CGBP) exam. The CGBP provides a benchmark for competency in global commerce including global business management, marketing, supply chain/logistics and trade finance. Participants will receive thorough training and preparation for the exam and become aware of the crucial role of trade skills in supporting firms' capabilities to expand globally.

Jim Foley, author of the acclaimed The Global Entrepreneur and director of the Turner Center for Entrepreneurship and Illinois SBDC International Trade Center, Bradley University, will conduct this training.

The SBA has identified international trade as a vital SBDC service, requiring five counselors (or 10 percent of total counselors) to be certified as export and trade certified. The CGBP not only meets SBA requirements, it is respected by other export assistance agencies and the international business community at both the federal and local levels. Please feel free

to [forward this message](#) to anyone in your network who may be interested in attending this event.

To register, go to missouribusiness.net/event/?program=EXPORT&event_id=258990

Maximizing Neoserra – Link One Contact to More than One Client Record

Open the link below to learn how to link more a single contact to multiple clients.

<http://support.outreachsystems.com/resources/help/neoserra/faq.jsp?id=n252>

Valued Resources – Running a PPC Campaign for Small Business

Open the link below for tips on how a small business can run an effective pay per click (PPC) advertising campaign.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2015/05/30/small-businesses-can-compete-with-big-brands-on-pay-per-click-ppc-advertising/>

IESBGA Update – Presentations on CenterConnect

Several presentations from the recent Illinois Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth Association’s Annual Professional Development Conference are now available on CenterConnect. We will continue to add additional presentations as they become available.

Network News and Moves – Illinois-The State of Innovation

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is pleased to announce the 3rd edition of [Illinois – The State of Innovation](#). Visit our [website](#) or click [here](#) for the digital edition. Our economic development magazine is a powerful tool for business attraction on a global level, as well as for investors and site selectors as they consider their investment opportunities.

This issue highlights our state’s regional initiatives, tech hubs and startups, strengths in biotech and agribusiness, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy and sustainability, our integrated transportation network and workforce preparation.

Illinois is a great place for business, and we’re just getting started. Our vibrant business climate is home to over 30 Fortune 500 companies and boasts the nation’s largest inland transportation hub and port. We have become an enclave for innovation and high tech ventures, and have the 5th largest economy in the nation with key strengths in agriculture, manufacturing, life sciences, finance and technology.

Our competitive incentives and educated workforce demonstrates our ability to helping businesses succeed in Illinois. Learn more [Why Illinois](#) is helping businesses in all sectors find success through our central location, superior logistics and unrivaled access to markets

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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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