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Local Entrepreneur Launches Nightclub Tour Business

The SBDC assisted this entrepreneur with the roadmap he needed to start his business, expand to two cities and create 12 jobs.

Jason Kuska, an experienced event planner and promoter, launched a new business, Nastive Entertainment, which specializes in providing VIP tours to nightclubs, drink specials and more for an exclusive price. The concept was born when Kuska, who had previously done promotional events for radio stations, started working at a hostel in Hollywood.

"We had a lot of international travelers, and they always wanted to go out to local bars and nightclubs," he explains. "We'd organize small groups to go out on the weekend — that's how I got to know all the club managers." Eventually, Kuska began advertising the events to the general public. As the business began to grow in 2009, Kuska quit his job to continue to grow his business full-time.

INDUSTRY

Tourism

CHALLENGES

- Business Planning
- HR Management
- Bookkeeping

SOLUTIONS

- Business Plan Seminar
- Business formation and employee contract assistance
- QuickBooks assistance

CLIENT IMPACT

- Hired full-time manager and 11 part-time employees
- Successfully expanded to two locations

Challenges

Although Kuska had done well promoting the club crawls while working at the hostel in the past, running a business on his own was a new challenge. "I needed some direction," he said, so he visited the Small Business Development Center hosted by El Camino College.



“That’s the beautiful thing about working with the SBDC, whether you have a small question or a big question, they have everything you need right there so you don’t have to figure out who to hire to ask the question. I could get help with a few little things I didn’t understand... as opposed to hiring someone at \$100 an hour.”

Jason Kuska, Founder,
Nasstive Entertainment

Best Advice

Kuska took a business planning course at the SBDC and began to work with business advisor, Daniel Hancuff, who provided advice on business formation and employee contracts as well as Becki Walker who gave him ideas for growth. Most of all though, the SBDC gave Kuska the confidence to start his own business.

Have a Roadmap

During the business plan class, Kuska learned the essentials of a business plan including business structure, business license information, financial projections and more. “I was pretty sure I was going to [start this business], but the question was how do I do it?” he recalls. “[The class] gave me a roadmap of how to get to where I wanted to go — a layout for what I needed to do to get [the business] off the ground.”

Learn From the Experts

After completing the class, Kuska worked with Hancuff to choose an appropriate business structure. He also needed to hire a manager to help with the business and found a candidate, but “wasn’t even sure how to offer him a contract,” he says. “Dan sat down with me, went over a couple of contracts, and discussed the options. Did I want to give the manager a percentage of the company? Did I want to pay him a salary? That was really helpful. “When I finally drew up a contract, I brought it to Dan and he reviewed it and tweaked a few things to make it work for my business.” When that original manager left, hiring a replacement was much easier to do thanks to Hancuff’s advice.

Get a New Perspective

Kuska worked with Walker on a regular basis, and valued her insights and perspectives on ways he could grow his business. “It was really good to have someone who could step back and give me an outside perspective,” he explains. “She would suggest things — ‘this is what’s worked for me, and I think it might work for you too.’”

For example, Walker opened him up to the idea of partnering with complementary businesses and targeting new niches. “I knew our target audience, which was locals and tourists,” Kuska recalls. “Becki suggested, ‘What about working with tour companies? Singles groups? People that plan bachelorette parties?’”

As a result, Nasstive Entertainment now hosts mixers prior to the club crawls with various singles groups and on occasion, hosts private club crawls with an Australian tour group .

Use the Resources at Your Disposal

Since launching his business, Kuska has continued to turn to the SBDC for help whenever a business question arises. For example, he visited the SBDC for assistance with QuickBooks. “We didn’t start out using it the right way,” he explains. “Things weren’t labeled correctly. The SBDC gave us inside tricks and hints that really helped.

“That’s the beautiful thing about working with [the SBDC],” Kuska continues. “Whether you have a small question or a big question, they have everything you need right there so you don’t have to figure out who to hire to ask the question. I could get help with a few little things I didn’t understand about QuickBooks, as opposed to hiring someone at \$100 an hour.”

Client Impact

When Nasstive Entertainment first launched, a typical night’s event included 15 to 20 people. Today, events generally average 100 people per night. In addition to the regular Friday and Saturday night club crawls, the company now hosts holiday club crawls and promotes its own branded events at various venues.

In 2012, Nasstive Entertainment expanded into San Diego and added a new manager for the region in addition to an already outstanding staff of 11 at its Los Angeles location.

Plans include expanding to additional cities, as well as maintaining the quality of the club crawls to stay ahead of competitors that have opened up and copied the company’s formula for success. Say Kuska, “We want to stand apart as being the best.”

