

Entrepreneur program helps breathe new life into centuries-old barbering traditions

In 2010, Jessica Hoach and husband and business partner Martin launched Eikonic House of Barbers, built on entrepreneurial dreams and an appreciation for the history and craft of barbering. The shop's approach and vibe tapped into the spirit of the time. Eikonic was successful in attracting both customers and the attention of business organizations, winning awards for growth.

"One of our challenges was in staffing," says Jessica. "People seemed hesitant to apply, as if they felt they didn't qualify as a barber."

So Jessica and Martin started an in-house training program, successfully placing about 30 trained barbers, and in the process discovering a love of teaching and sharing their passion for the barbering tradition.

The idea for Eikonic Academy of Beauty and Barbering was born.

Just about the time Jessica was working on a business plan for this new venture and exploring resources to access, she got an email from the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre about the Small Business Accelerator program. The Small Business Accelerator, a provincially-funded Starter Company+ program delivered through the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre is designed to help new or growing businesses with advice, mentorship and financial support. Jessica decided it would be worth applying.

It changed her whole approach. "I found it extremely helpful," says Jessica. "It helped me mentally prepare for the new venture. I wrote a whole new business plan which made me that much more confident and better able to explain it to our business partners."

To top it off, she wrapped up the three-month program in January with a cheque for \$5,000.

Jessica and Martin plan to open up their new Academy sometime over the next few months as they work through space and logistical challenges. They hope to expand the concept across Ontario and Canada over the next five to ten years.

As their business has grown, they have also found another motivation beyond their love of the craft – and that’s people.

“We want to teach a skill and support a tradition, but we also want to support the “people” side,” says Jessica. “When someone comes in for a cut or a style or a shave, that experience should be a bright spot in that person’s day. We want our college to achieve this as well – teaching the technical and interpersonal skills.”

“And the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre helped with that too. Some of the programming is directly translatable to what we’re delivering to our students, lessons they can apply.”

Want to Launch or Accelerate your Business?

The Starter Company+ Small Business Accelerator Program may be for you.

Learn more:

<http://www.brampton.ca/EN/Business/BEC/Pages/small-business-accelerator.aspx>