

BOOT CAMP SUCCESS STORIES



*Attracted over \$1 million
in outside investment*

A Sparkling Success

Ari & David Cordtz, Sonoma Sparkler

- When Sonoma Sparkler owners Ari and David Cordtz attended the inaugural Entrepreneurial Boot Camp at Sonoma State University in June, 2002, their 18-month-old sparkling fruit juice company was at a critical point. Their product and business practices were an unqualified success, but they still lacked a circle of contacts that could help them complete their share offering. That problem was solved when several experienced entrepreneurs involved with the Boot Camp recognized the potential of the business, signing on as investors and trusted Advisory Board members.



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"With the cash infusion, we grew 210 percent in 2003 and are on track for an additional 100 percent growth in 2004," Ari says. "The connections we made at the Boot Camp transformed our company. Not just on the investment side, but also in the additional knowledge we gained from the presentations and panel discussions, and the tremendous support we shared with other business owners. It's a one-of-a-kind program, and we'll be forever grateful to it."

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*Positioned company
for lucrative sale*

She Made It—Big

Cynthia Riggs, Making It Big

- Cynthia Riggs had already poured 17 years of her life into her company, Making It Big, when she enrolled in Sonoma State University's first Entrepreneurial Boot Camp in June, 2002. Her 25-employee catalog company made natural fiber clothing for plus-sized women, and it was a success by every measure. Now, she was ready to take it—and herself—to the next level. What followed at the Boot Camp was a series of often startling business and personal insights that culminated with the sale of her company in May, 2004.



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"The Boot Camp provided me with critical options, opportunities and information I didn't have before," says Cynthia. "It changed my life—opening me up to the possibility of exploring new entrepreneurial activities. Now, I'm involved with three nonprofits and my own business dedicated to supporting entrepreneurs. I'm on to the next venture, and life is good!"

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*Reorganized business
for comfortable
retirement and travel*

Hitting the Mark Doug Pittman, Montana Hawk

- When Doug Pittman's bank offered to send him to the first Sonoma State University Entrepreneurial Boot Camp in June, 2002, he figured he might use the experience to fine-tune a few elements of his 15-year-old business, the Montana Hawk indoor shooting range in Rohnert Park, CA. What he got instead was the insight to begin delegating more of his responsibilities, the impetus to begin positioning his company for later sale, and the inspiration to share his experience with fellow entrepreneurs in the Boot Camp program.



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"It was great to see I could put new systems in place that would immediately free some of my time while also enhancing the value of my company," says Doug. "The Boot Camp helped me realize I could sell the onsite retail side of my business, keep the web-based supply portion, and finally stop putting off plans to travel with my wife. The entire program was intensive, well-planned—and unforgettable."

BOOT CAMP SUCCESS STORIES



Doubled business volume without needing investors

Soaring Above Expectations

Larry Laba, SOAR Inflatables

- When Larry Laba attended the first Entrepreneurial Boot Camp at Sonoma State University in June, 2002, he was considering a search for investors, managing a difficult key employee, and annually selling about 150 high quality inflatable boats that adventure enthusiasts take on rivers all over the world. The Boot Camp experience gave him the insight he needed to let the employee go, reduce his expenses, and get on track to sell nearly 300 boats just two years later—without the need for investors.



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“The key outcomes from the Boot Camp were that I simply became a better, smarter, more enlightened businessperson, and that the contacts I made there have evolved into a business network that still helps me to this day,” says Larry, who has now owned SOAR (“Somewhere on a River”) Inflatables for 12 years. “I went in with few expectations, but came out with a more focused and profitable business, helped along by a group of highly motivated, energetic entrepreneurs.”