

Woman Turns Hobby Into Commercial Success

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bags, is now a full-scale manufacturing operation headquartered in a building she purchased last year. Carmen Handbags produces nearly 70,000 purses and handbags a year for clients around the world and maintains a popular retail shop in Albuquerque's Old Town district.

It all began when Chavez took some of her hand-sewn purses door-to-door to some Old Town merchants. She managed to convince one store to sell the products and went home to see what would happen. Within a few days, the handbags had been sold and the store was pleading for more. Chavez had to work around the clock to fill the order; and once again the handbags sold quickly.

In the months that followed, Yolanda stepped up her sewing work in response to the growing number of requests. She named her products in honor of her mother, who had passed away recently, and began organizing a supply and production schedule.

Chavez realized that she had all the makings for a full-time business, one that would help finance college educations for her son and daughter.

Because she had no experience with payroll and business taxes, Chavez called the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), which in turn, referred her to Score's Albuquerque Chapter. That turned out to be one of the best calls she ever made.

"I discovered a valuable resource of experienced business professionals," she says. "They not only provide valuable expertise for free, but also the kind of advice and wisdom that usually requires a lifetime to learn."

Among the most important benefits of Score's counseling has been helping Chavez avoid the pitfalls that lead to failure.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

New Neighbors in Business

Wayne Cannon (right), owner of Cannon's Rib Express, welcomes Stanley Jackson and the New Seasons Market crew to the neighborhood. Jackson is the customer services manager at the brand new store on Northeast 33rd Avenue.

Minorities Lead Nation in Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is booming among American minority groups. According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, the number of African-American-owned firms grew by more than 26 percent and Hispanic firms grew

by 30 percent. Meanwhile, total U.S. business grew by only 6 percent. Essential to that growth has been the availability of federal programs, information and resources for minorities—including mentoring.

If you're a minority entrepreneur, your chances of successfully starting and growing your small business are greatly increased when a business mentor plays a role in your business's

development. Score Counseling for Small Businesses help you benefit from small business counseling, mentoring programs and seminars and workshops geared toward helping entrepreneurs start

and run their businesses. The following statistics reflect the growth affecting small, minority-owned businesses.

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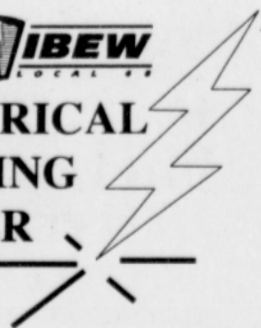
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