

JEDI — Helping Build Prosperity



Nancy Gandrau & Julie Anderson

**Nancy Gandrau
Mt. Shasta, CA.**

Haircuts!

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*JEDI & Cascade SBDC...
Partnership supporting Small Business*

When Nancy Gandrau opened Haircuts! on June 5, 2001, she had done her homework. She offers a toxin-free haircut environment, healthy hair products, haircuts without a prior appointment, and a playroom for kids as unusual benefits her customers appreciate. Her neighbors Trading Places and the Kid’s Connection, provide a fun diversion for those waiting a few moments for their cut.

Even with careful planning, it was impossible for Nancy to anticipate the level of dedication it would take to keep her business going its first year. The first year is often the hardest for start-up businesses. In the case of Haircuts!, Nancy Gandrau has reason to be especially jubilant. She has overcome unusual odds to reach Haircuts! first “birthday celebration,” on June 13, 2002. In addition to all the usual hurdles new business owners must face, Nancy broke her leg and fractured her ankle in mid-winter, and was unable to serve any customers for three entire weeks.

Nancy commented, “I knew if I didn’t work, I wouldn’t make it and my business would fail. While I was down, people had to go elsewhere to get their hair cut. But after three weeks, my leg had healed enough that I figured I could bring in my cutting stool, and work some shorter hours and still be there for people.” Nancy looked thoughtful, “I think people came back because they knew I wasn’t giving up. I couldn’t give up – I had invested too much. When it’s something you really want to do, you do whatever it takes to make it work.”

Nancy sent out mailers to let her customers know she was back on her feet, and it wasn’t the first time they had heard from her. From the very start, Nancy had made a habit of doing some promotion every week to bring someone new in the door.

Because Nancy Gandrau had pre-planned carefully *before* opening her doors, her business was able to stay on target despite setbacks. Nancy used the individual business counseling, available free of charge as a joint service of Cascade Small Business Development Center (CSBDC) and Jefferson Economic Development Institute (JEDI). Nancy Heubeck served as her primary counselor.

In Nancy’s words, Nancy Heubeck became like a guardian angel for Haircuts!, helping with marketing, getting the books in order, morale building and general good common sense. Nancy Heubeck directed Haircuts! toward Superior California Economic Development District (SCEDD) for funding and helped her prepare her application, and put her in touch with the right people – Bob Nash and Tammy Laizure.

Because SCED’s loan program is subsidized by federal funds, the program has more flexibility than commercial lending programs. When Nancy was laid up with her broken leg, Tammy Laizure was able to arrange for a period where she only had to pay interest on her loan. This allowed Nancy to still stay afloat while she recuperated from her accident. Through careful management and planning, Nancy is catching up on the loss she suffered at that time.

Today Haircuts is flourishing, despite the unusual obstacles Nancy Gandrau faced in her first year of business. Her powerful success strategy included a heartfelt determination to make her business work, careful advance planning, and a wise use of the rich and easily affordable community resources available in Siskiyou County for new business owners.