

Brazecom Industries Attends Business Growth Collaborative Program and Grows Their Business

Company Background:

Fresh out of college with a degree in Welding Technology and Metallurgy, Brandon Merron, President of Brazecom Industries, LLC went to work in the metals industry. After working in that industry for 13 years Brandon realized he wanted to do more with welding and be in control of his own situation. So in 2006 he and his wife Kim started Brazecom Industries, LLC and located it in a 1,000 square foot building in Hooksett, New Hampshire.

At the time they had 1 customer and by year's end they had made \$180,000 in revenue. That gave Brandon and Kim enough incentive to know they could make this work. By 2007 Brazecom expanded to 2,400 square feet of space and hired 1 other employee with additional part-time help when needed.

Today Brazecom Industries, LLC is located in a 10,000 square foot facility in Weare, New Hampshire and employs 9 full-time workers. From military, medical and commercial applications, Brazecom offers a wide variety of metal joining technologies and heat treating processes. They specialize in microwave components and assemblies that often require dissimilar metals and have the expertise and knowledge to deliver high quality parts at a competitive cost.

Situation:

From 2006 through 2014 sales increased every year by 10% to 20%. However from 2015 through 2016 sales started to decline by 10%. That is when Brandon began looking in depth at how his entire business was run. "I decided to do my own study," said Merron. "I looked at how the business was being managed or mismanaged. Did I have the right mix of employees? Are the markets changing? Does the business need some kind of restructuring?"

The light bulb went off when he realized, "I was working in my company, but not on my company. I knew about how to create great products for our customers, but not necessarily how to get more customers," said Merron. "Marketing was not my strong point but I knew that's what we needed to remain profitable and grow."

Solution:

In early 2016 Brandon received an e-blast from NH MEP about a free hour-long information session called 5 Steps to Sustain Business Growth. It was designed specifically for small and medium-sized manufacturers. It taught how to accelerate and sustain business growth with cost-effective approaches for customer retention and expansion.

Brandon attended the information session and liked what he learned. From there he and Kim signed up for an in-depth series of business growth and strategic marketing workshops put on by NH MEP called the Business Growth Collaborative Program.

Brazecom along with 5 other companies started the Business Growth Collaborative Program in June of 2016. "We found the workshops interesting and informative, the materials easy to understand, and the instructor was very knowledgeable on the subject," said Merron. "The program gave us the ability to identify the right markets to target, and how to obtain customers in those markets." They also learned how to set smart goals, hone their elevator pitch, create and send out e-Surveys, analyze website metrics, learn the importance of search engine optimization (SEO), create and send out e-Newsletters, develop sales forecasts, create sales and marketing action plans and more.

But the most important aspect to the Business Growth Collaborative Program was the collaboration. "It helped each of the business owners who attended find out about each other's challenges and discuss how they could overcome them," said Merron.

Results:

After finishing the Business Growth Collaborative Program Brandon and Kim made major changes to management and restructured the company. Based on these changes and analysis through surveying customers they learned how to better serve and retain them. "We did an outreach program to expand our customer base. This helped me realize I needed to be more in control of the business," said Merron. "We now have the right people handling the various parts of the business."

"One thing I now understand, there is much more to the whole system of running your business than just the day-to-day operations. Each part has to be nurtured in order to grow the business and this is beyond marketing, said Merron. "I've also learned to get help when you need it and not be ashamed."

The following results for Brazecom Industries, LLC can be credited to having gone through the NH MEP Business Growth Collaborative Program:

- \$100,000 in new sales in 2017
- Retained sales of \$350,000 in 2017 that otherwise would have been lost
- Retained 25 customer orders in 2017
- Added 2 new fulltime employees in 2017
- Increased investment in workforce practices or employee skills at the cost of \$3000 in 2017
- Increased investment in new products or processes at the cost of \$35,000 in 2017
- Increased investment in plant or equipment at the cost of \$10,000 in 2017
- Increased investment in new information systems or software at the cost of \$1,200 in 2017

Testimonial:

"The Business Growth Program helped us realize there were many areas within our company that we should have focused on more closely. Retaining existing customers and helping them grow is a key factor in business growth as well as creating new ones. I would recommend this program to new or established companies who want to grow their business."

- Brandon Merron, President of Brazecom Industries, LLC