



Maxine Lau, Founder & CEO

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From the Home Kitchen to the Co-Packing Facility

Advice from the SBDC helped this entrepreneur identify new markets and grow her profitable business

Lahtt Sauce is an Asian-American hot sauce created from Maxine Lau's family recipe. Lau, Founder and CEO of Lahtt Sauce, began selling the product in 2015. Lau believes the taste of the flavorful hot sauce derived from 18 different American and Asian ingredients is unique; therefore, she positioned Lahtt Sauce as a niche, specialty product.

Challenges

Busy producing and selling the product herself, Lau had little time and resources to strategize the next steps to grow her company. She wanted to create a budget, sell more of her product, and expand her product line, but did not know how. These steps would help grow her business as she envisioned when she brought the product to market; however, Lau did not know how to begin these steps.

INDUSTRY

Food (Specialty Sauces)

CHALLENGES

- Budgeting
- Market Development
- Product Development

SOLUTIONS

- Financial Tracking and Analysis
- Market Research
- Product Research

CLIENT IMPACT

- Identified new markets
- Developing new products
- Realized a profit after six months of operating



“I would encourage any entrepreneurs to work with [a SBDC] advisor. It’s been an immense resource for myself since I have zero background in this business. It’s a vital part of the business to start a business and have the success I have now. If I started any other businesses I would go back to the SBDC. I love it! Everyone there really wants to see me succeed. Having that support has really helped me keep going.”

Maxine Lau, Founder & CEO
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Best Advice

Business Advisor Don Loewel from the Small Business Development Center hosted by Pasadena City College helped Lau learn and implement a growth strategy. In addition to the steps Lau wanted to take, Loewel provided direction on changes that needed to be made for the company to grow. “Maxine Lau is continuously trying to learn more about her business and being a successful entrepreneur,” says Loewel. “It’s the passion of their owner and the hard work of their team that makes Lahtt Sauce a success story.” For Lau, the one-on-one counseling sessions with Loewel were insightful and provided direction on managing finances, market development, and Lahtt Sauce’s share of the market.

Getting Started

The company was launched with a small personal investment of \$6,000. Today, Lahtt Sauce has broke even and anticipates making a profit within six months. Lau learned that in order to build a sustainable business, it was important to understand her market and prime areas to sell. “I learned from Don how to market [Lahtt Sauce], target customers, and...establish profit margins. I learned how numbers are such a huge part of your business. Analyzing sales is so crucial,” explained Lau.

Market Response

Implementing Loewel’s principles for growth, Lahtt Sauce has been well-received in the market and is getting a great response from consumers at trade shows and other lifestyle events. The product always sells out at consumer-driven events.

Moving Forward

Lau is dedicated to perfecting Lahtt Sauce and developing new products that will help expand its market share in the specialty sauce market. Thus, the company is moving from a commercial kitchen to a co-packing facility where it will continue manufacturing.

Client Impact

Since Lau connected with the Los Angeles Regional Small Business Development Center, the company is now able to experiment with new flavors to expand its product line, generating more sales and increasing market share. While maintaining its Asian roots, Lahtt Sauce is currently introducing a new, modern version of its product. Today, the company is realizing a profit after only six months of being on the market. Lahtt Sauce is also expanding its appeal to other markets and changing the face of the Asian grocery aisle.