

Can You *Tone* it around?



Dave Crown
Cartridge World
200 South Spring Garden Street,
Suite D
Carlisle, PA 17013
717-249-8900
Cumberland County
<http://www.cartridgeworld.com/Carlisle-PA/17013-0451/>

“The Small Business Development Center acted as my 30,000 foot view to see things I couldn’t when I wasn’t quite sure what to say or where to go in certain situations.”

- David Crown

Industry: Printers, Computers
Year Purchased: 2012
SBDC Assistance: Negotiation, Financial, Franchising
Additional Partners: Carlisle Chamber of Commerce



Shippensburg University SBDC
Mike Unruh, Director
405 Grove Hall
Shippensburg, PA 17257
(717)477-1935
sbdc@ship.edu
www.ship.edu/sbdc

Ever look back and think, “I did not see myself in this position a couple years ago?” After graduating from the University of Pittsburgh in 2009 with a degree in Media and Professional Communications, David Crown thought he would end up working in public relations or journalism. After working his job at Cartridge World for 2 years and seeing the hole it was falling into, however, David was confident that he could turn the business around.

Unsure of what to do at first, David went to the Carlisle Chamber of Commerce to talk his idea over. The Chamber referred him to the Small Business Development Center where Robin Burtner began helping him take the initial planning steps to purchase the business.

Cartridge World is a franchise that sells toner and ink printer cartridges as well as small printer parts, generally at a cheaper price than their primary competitors, Staples and Office Max. They also recycle, refill, and remanufacture empty cartridges. Working with a franchise can be tough, but David found that was the easy part. His biggest challenge was accessing the required funding. Because of the financial state of the business at the time, no banks would lend to him. He managed to secure funding from generous family members and friends, but could he and the owner, who happened to be his boss at the time, agree on a price?

David had never engaged in business purchase negotiations before. “Robin was great with bouncing around ideas. Negotiating is difficult and when someone puts their heart and soul into a business, they believe it’s worth a lot more than it is.” David commended Robin on her negotiating skills saying it was nice to have advice when going back and forth with the owner because he was unsure of when to accept or what counteroffer to present. In the end, David was successful. At first he held fast on his initial offer, and eventually settled on a fair purchase price.

Since working with the SBDC and reopening the business, David has realized significant changes in the business and business sales. First, by moving to a convenient retail location, pedestrian walk-in traffic has increased. David also expanded the store hours to better accommodate more customers. Before purchasing the business there were also many inventory management issues, including the inability to inform customers when an out-of-stock item would be replenished. David reorganized the inventory management system to minimize inventory gaps and also is now able to let the customer know when an out-of-stock item will be available.

Since opening, David believes the biggest issue has been changing customer’s perceptions of Cartridge World. When you have a bad experience somewhere, you don’t necessarily want to go back there. David has been striving to prove to all his potential customers that Cartridge World has changed, and it’s changed for the better. Once David has fully established the current store, he hopes to open another location in Chambersburg, where there had been a location years ago. He says he will continue to utilize the SBDC for their valuable workshops, seminars and information resources. “The Small Business Development Center acted as my 30,000 foot view to see things I couldn’t when I wasn’t quite sure what to say or where to go in certain situations. They acted as the guard rail to make sure I never strayed too far off course, and for that I am very grateful.”