

Success Story

Labor of Love Yields *Liquid Art*.



Jesse Rotz and Ryan Richards
Roy Pitz Brewing Company
140 North 3rd Street
Chambersburg, PA 17201
Franklin County
www.roypitz.com

Industry: Brewery
Year Founded: 2008
SBDC Assistance: Business Plan revision, financing recommendations.
Additional Partners: CDC, FCADC

“You continue to work with each other throughout the years as the company grows.”
- Jesse Rotz



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

From the time they were in high school, Ryan Richards and Jesse Rotz dreamed of owning a brewery. Quite unlike the dreams of most teenagers, Ryan and Jesse were determined to make their dream into reality no matter how long it took or how difficult the circumstances. They knew that this was a dream that they could achieve if they worked hard, stuck to their plan, and worked together.

Jesse and Ryan focused a lot of their college careers on creating their dream, working together as well as with professors to create a business plan before their graduation from West Chester University. Upon graduation, Jesse and Ryan began apprenticing at various breweries to learn the production side of beer brewing. Eventually, they applied to Siebel Institute of Technology and World Brewing Academy, and spent time studying the finer points of brewing science. After their graduation from Siebel, Jesse and Ryan could finally work on starting their dream business, but not without challenges.

Jesse said that the alcohol industry in general is one of, if not the most, regulated industries in the country. He and Ryan had to make sure that they complied not only with federal and state regulations but also local municipal codes. The two friends had to get multiple licenses to wholesale and distribute because they were dealing with alcohol products. This is what they viewed as one of their biggest challenges.

After dealing with the paperwork issues with the alcohol industry, Jesse and Ryan also faced challenges of renovation and financing. They quickly realized that it would be less expensive to build a new location than to renovate the building they had purchased, which was discouraging to the two friends.

“Out of college we had a business plan, and we kind of knew through schooling the path we had to take. When we first met with the SBDC, it helped us because we found new outlets to try to get funding. When we started, it was the start of the recession and banks were not as tight as they are now, but they were starting to tighten up. In working with the SBDC, we found ways to get funding outside the standard institution.”

After getting help from the Shippensburg SBDC, Jesse and Ryan were able to secure funding to help them with renovations and equipment purchases, and in 2008 Roy Pitz Brewing Company was born. In the beginning Jesse and Ryan were selling only a few kegs each month. That soon doubled in early 2009, and tripled in 2010. Roy Pitz Brewing Company has doubled their sales volume every year since its inception, allowing Jesse and Ryan to turn their hard work and dreams into a successful company.

Over the past few years, Jesse and Ryan have been able to get more financing to grow their brewing company. Recently they were approved for another loan and brought in private investments that will allow them to quadruple in size. Jesse and Ryan have also won a substantial amount of awards for their beer on a national and worldwide level. The pair just won three gold medals from the World Beer Championships, and also won awards in previous years.

Currently, Jesse and Ryan are distributing their beer in close to 15 counties, including Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. The pair will soon be expanding their distribution to include a bottling line. Jesse expresses great appreciation for the SBDC and the assistance provided. He believes the SBDC helping him and Ryan to continually make changes to their business plan and secure funding has been critical to their business start-up and early success. “You continue to work with each other throughout the years as the company grows. That was not something I was aware of when I first heard of the SBDC.”