Success Story

"The Doctor is In."

Project Background

Dr. Jessica Young came to State College following her graduation from The Pennsylvania College of Optometry to practice with the Brande Sadd group, which was owned by two other optometrists who were contemplating retirement in the next three to five years. This was the ideal situation for Dr. Young; she would work with the partners for three years, and then they would discuss selling her the practice.

Sadly, one of the partners died unexpectedly just three months into Dr. Young’s tenure. Suddenly, the future of the practice was in question; the surviving partner came to Dr. Young and expressed his interest in selling the practice sooner than later.

Dr. Young had many questions: What was the valuation of the practice? Could she afford it? What is an SBA loan guarantee? What was involved in the process of buying an existing business?

SBDC Assistance

Dr. Young came to the SBDC for assistance in working through each of her questions. First, her consultant helped her understand the process of valuing a business and interpreting the appraisal she had ordered. Then the consultant helped her evaluate the practice’s past performance by evaluating three years of tax returns and year-to-date financials. The consultant also helped her understand the sales agreement and answered questions throughout the process of obtaining a commercial bank loan and SBA loan guarantee.

The SBDC has also helped Dr. Young with IT and ecommerce issues. Shortly after her website went live, Dr. Young realized that the site was not coming up in web searches. The business consultant quickly made a referral to a sister agency who could provide State College Eye Care with free search engine optimization training and a website analysis. And that same referral yielded another benefit; the SBDC consultant helped Dr. Young write a grant request for funding to cover half of the expense of converting her practice to electronic health records – and the proposal was successful!

Outcome

Dr. Young was able to negotiate a deal and the sale closed on January 1st, 2013. Since purchasing the business, Dr. Young has continued working with the SBDC on marketing the practice, and she hopes to have a ribbon cutting event in August. Her website now has the #1 Google ranking for the search, “State College eye care”.

Business is growing steadily, and although business ownership for this new physician can be hectic at times, Dr. Young is happy with her decision to buy the practice, especially since owning her own business enabled her to create an opportunity for herself in State College, where she most desired to live.