

California Small Business Development Centers

SUCCESS STORY # 235

*Small Business
Success
Is Our Business*

Rok Bistro: Bringing Stone-Age Cooking to the Bay Area

Rok Bistro

Steve Wright & Doug Quist

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BACKGROUND

Rok Bistro is a stone-age fondue and steakhouse that provides middle to upper-middle class individuals, couples, and families with fun environment to celebrate special occasions or simply enjoy a delicious meal. Steve Wright and his partner, Doug Quist, opened the restaurant in September 2008, with the goal of making stone-age cooking one of the most well-known and popular dining-out concepts in the entire Bay Area.

CHALLENGES

Rok had been in business for 11 months when the owners first came to the Silicon Valley Small Business Development Center for assistance. Their sales had not been as brisk as expected due to the down economy and traffic issues due to a nearby mall reconstruction project. Steve had completed a business plan and had spent thousands of dollars in marketing but the investments did not yield the expected. He came to the SV-SBDC to look for cost-effective marketing and help to increase sales.

ACTIONS

SBDC Business Advisor Jenny Huang reviewed the business plan and marketing and made recommendations for a cohesive marketing strategy. Because the restaurant is located in a

crowded marketplace, Jenny also recommended articulation of category ownership, clear positioning and messaging to build awareness and break the clutter. She helped Rok focus on sales-driven activities in the short-term and public relations efforts as well as use of social media. Steve attended search engine marketing and social media classes to understand how to market online.

RESULTS

As a result working with the Silicon Valley Small Business Development Center, Steve has gained clarity, focus and marketing direction for his business. He has developed a clear positioning and a set of relevant marketing messages to articulate Rok's differences. He pared down marketing spending in areas that yielded poor results and focused on ones that worked. He introduced 2 additional nightly specials to attract more patrons in the evening hours. He improved his e-newsletter with a clear objective and call to action to drive traffic and saw a moderate

increase in response rate and closed sales. Their May and June sales were better than expected, with an approximate 30 percent increase over monthly average sales, influenced by seasonal activities as well as focused marketing efforts. They have since added 2 additional part-time employees to their Rok team. To date, Rok Bistro continues to see increasing sales from prior year, with a 20 percent year-on-year growth during high-selling season. Steve believes that the results were largely contributed by the re-opening of Murphy Avenue in downtown Sunnyvale, the minor economic recovery, and implementation of his marketing plan by staging tasting events, participating on key social media sites and using mobile marketing to drive just-in-time foot traffic to his restaurant.



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"WORKING WITH THE SBDC HAS BEEN INFORMATIVE AND BENEFICIAL IN HELPING US BETTER UNDERSTAND OUR MARKETING DIRECTION AND MESSAGES, AND WAYS OF GETTING THOSE MESSAGES OUT TO OUR TARGET MARKET IN A COST-EFFECTIVE MANNER."



*(SBDC Photo/
Tue Nam Ton)*