

HOSTED BY
Utah Valley University,
Orem SBDC



OWNER
Angie Lewis, Jan Sanderson
NATURE OF BUSINESS
Formal Dress Consignment

CITY
Mapleton
COUNTY
Utah

PHONE
801.735.3571

BUSINESS STRUCTURE
Limited Liability Company
BUSINESS BEGAN
September 2010

EMPLOYEES
2 part-time

SBDC CONSULTANT
Camille Pendleton

Elsha Rae's Dress Boutique



Angie Lewis and Jan Sanderson often talked about starting a business together but for years had no idea what kind of business to start. When Jan's daughter, Elsha Rae, started going to high school they noticed how expensive dance dresses were and how many dances are held. They saw many of those pricey, beautiful dresses hung in closets after the dance and the owners didn't know what to do with them. That's when Lewis and Sanderson had the idea for a business they could run together and enjoy.

Elsha Rae's Dress Boutique is a formal dress consignment store. The long racks of formals and four fitting rooms take up most of the basement at Lewis's Mapleton home.

When someone brings in a formal dress, the person gets a part of the rental fee when the dress gets rented.

In the fall of 2010, Jan and Angie advertised for formals that could be consigned and they got many responses – even a dress shipped from Hawaii. The word about renting dance dresses spread quickly through Springville, Mapleton and Spanish Fork High Schools with the help of social media. The word continues to spread throughout Utah Valley by word-of-mouth and Elsha Rae's Dress Boutique's own Facebook page with posts and photos of girls in some of the dresses.

Lewis and Sanderson agree that one of the best parts of their business is seeing the beauty of a girl come shining through because of how she feels wearing a beautiful dress. They also enjoy being able to try an idea without having to wait for approval from someone else. Both women enjoy the challenges of growing their business and they are glad they have each other to rely on. "I wouldn't want to do this by myself," Lewis said.

Secret to Success

"We take a dress someone has hanging in their closet and make them some money while allowing a high school girl an opportunity to go to a dance in her dream dress for a fraction of the price."

Before they got started, they came to the Orem Small Business Development Center with questions. "You want to obey all the laws, but it's hard to know what all the laws are," Sanderson said. After getting answers to their questions and doing some homework on what they needed, they transformed Lewis's basement into a dress shop. "We contacted the SBDC at the very beginning," she said. "We couldn't have done it without them."

As their business continues to grow, they know the Orem SBDC is there to help. "From applying for a business license to figuring out marketing ideas – any questions, we call SBDC." For those thinking about going into business, Jan offers this advice, "Research, research, research! And go to the SBDC and see Camille."

"From applying for a business license to figuring out marketing, if we have any questions, we call the SBDC."

Jan Sanderson, Co-Owner

The Utah SBDC network is comprised of 11 regional centers hosted by Utah colleges and universities. The centers serve entrepreneurs and small businesses across the state. The centers are funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

jobs

revenues

growth

