

MA Small Business Development Center

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MIKEL, Inc.

MIKEL, Inc. was founded in 2000 by Brian Guimond, primarily as a consulting business for the U.S. Department of Defense and Navy. Within two years he brought on his daughter, Kelly Mendell, a former Gillette manufacturing executive, to assume the presidency and help grow the business. Today, MIKEL provides innovative, cost effective design solutions addressing operational gaps in maritime technology, defense and security industries. The company is expert in the development, prototyping and training for underwater technology: specifically submarine combat systems; acoustic detection, tracking and localization/positioning; target motion analysis; and automated performance measurement/analysis systems. Under Mendell's leadership, the business has grown to 15 employees and projected revenue this year of \$3.5 million, up from \$2 million the prior year.

The company received its first SBIR in 2002 and shortly thereafter moved into incubator space at the University of Massachusetts' Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center (ATMC) leveraging its technology capabilities and university resources. Mendell recognized that the company needed to expand the depth and breadth of its business in order to compete successfully for the long haul. She also knew that being a minority – woman owned business could significantly improve MIKEL's ability to win more government based work. Mendell reached out to the local SBDC for help. One of the keys to Mendell's success is her emphasis on collaboration: with the ATMC, with the government and with SBDC.

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The Massachusetts Small Business Development Center (MSBDC) provides free and confidential one-on-one business advisory services to the small business community in Southeastern Massachusetts in the counties of Bristol, Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket, Plymouth and part of Norfolk.

MSBDC assistance is tailored to the needs of individual clients. Our mission is to support the future success of your business.

Management Counseling Services include, but are not limited to:

- Start-up Businesses
- Business Plan Development
- Financial Plan Development
- Marketing & Sales Strategies
- Cash Flow Analysis
- Organizational & Personnel Issues
- Government Procurement Assistance
- Minority Business Assistance
- International Trade Assistance

MSBDC Staff Members

Melinda L. Ailes

Regional Director

Clifford Robbins

Senior Business Advisor

Mark R. Allio

Senior Business Advisor

Daniel Lilly, Jr.

Procurement Specialist

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Mendell has now worked with Dan Lilly, Procurement Specialist at the Southeastern MA Regional SBDC for several years. He has helped the business successfully bid and win major contracts. He has guided her through the intricacies of government contracting and has provided meaningful introductions to state and federal personnel. Yet, both Mendell and Lilly recognized that in order for the company to reach its fullest potential it needed to embark on a full scale strategic planning process.

Melinda Ailes of the Southeastern MA Regional SBDC was brought in to facilitate that process. Although the strategic plan is not yet complete, the planning process itself has enlightened the company about its core strengths and opportunities. It has also caused the owners to grapple with family and personnel issues that might have impeded their progress. To date, they have honed their vision, hired key personnel, restructured their executive responsibilities and created new tactics to improve their marketing penetration.

Kelly Mendell recently stated in a local business journal "While Dan Lilly came at it from the government side, Melinda Ailes helped me with my business plan and strategic vision, and they both were big complements for my business, a good combination. ... The MSBDC has been our biggest cheerleader. Unfortunately many people don't know about this place and they are missing out, especially since it's free and their knowledge is worth so much. We will continue to seek out their knowledge and advice. We're not done yet!"

Spotlight: Businesses Open Their Doors This Summer

Larissa McLaughlin at Blush Beauty Bar opened her doors this summer. Blush Beauty Bar is a cosmetic, skincare and fragrance boutique located in Historic Downtown New Bedford. For more information please visit Blush Beauty Bar's website: www.blushbb.com

Ben Nugent started Nugent Photography located in Yarmouth Port. The essence of Ben's photography is in the story it tells. For more information please visit Nugent Photography's website: www.nugentphotography.com

Kristin Scott & Loraine Carboni launched Somethin's Brewin' Book Cafe this summer, located in Lakeville, offering delicious coffee, smoothies and baked goods surrounded by books and local artisan's crafts. For more information please visit Somethin's Brewin' Book Cafe's website: www.somethinsbrewin.com

"Would you like to have an internet based business?"

Many of our clients ask us how to start a web based business. We think this article written by Michael McGrath at Kiss Computing, www.KissComputing.com, a full service custom software and web site development company on Cape Cod, is one of the best for those interested in web based businesses.

"Unrealistic E-Commerce Expectations" by Michael McGrath at Kiss Computing

During the first Dot Com bubble, some folks became millionaires overnight, and in a couple of instances, became billionaires. Many lost everything. We're in the midst of the second bubble, and, once again, some folks are becoming millionaires. Others are, simply, highly successful. And there are still those who are losing everything. What do the successes have in common, and why are many still losing?

The answer has much to do with unrealistic expectations. People think that a web site is an automatic road to riches, and theirs will make money for them while they sleep. That unreality lulls too many people into laziness, pure and simple, and they lose interest quickly when they don't get rich overnight.

A web site is a living, breathing entity. It needs to be fed regularly and often, or it will die. Online business owners who don't work their site all of the time will fall behind the pack and eventually fail, almost irrespective of their industry or their product. I say almost because there are instances where a product is regionally or seasonally restricted so selling that product is limited in its scope. Otherwise, if the product being sold has universal application without restriction, the site selling it has to be worked all the time.

On-the-ground businesses update their advertising/marketing strategies regularly. Sticks and bricks stores have new product put on the shelves, put up new window displays, bring in the next season's/year's versions. Online stores are no different - - customers have the same needs online as they do offline, and those needs must be met.

So, how does one do that? How does one keep an online store current? The obvious is with new products. The less obvious, though, goes to the heart of the virtual world, and we've written so many times of it before

- * Home page copy refreshing
- * General site content growth
- * Viral marketing with e-newsletters, and archiving past issues
- * New images/photos on the site
- * New site features that add life to it
- * Search engine optimization due diligence research

Regular and frequent steps to keep home page copy fresh and to grow the site's content will be rewarded by search engine robots. Reaching out to customers/clients with a regularly published e-newsletter, whether it's to promote a new product or a product on sale, or simply to say hello and remind them you're still around, keeps your site fresh in people's minds.

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Showing dedication to your online store by keeping it updated and interesting will help your customers stay interested in you.

If you don't understand this about the Internet, you will lose. You're wasting your money if you put up a site and walk away from it. Your online store will fail every bit as much as your on-the-ground store will if it's ignored and untended. Successful online businesses understand these concepts, and they feed their web site regularly. They don't take success for granted, and their expectations are not unrealistic. It's not easy, but it is that simple - hard work is your best bet for success.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEED ENTREPRENEURIAL WORKSHOPS are repeated in a different location once a month. For reservations & directions please contact: Tamarah Barao @ SEED 508-822-1020. Costs for trainings are FREE.

Session I: Learn the fundamentals of planning, preparing for & financing your business.

Session II: Learn to understand financial statements how they help to determine the health of your business.

Session I: Wed. Sept. 19 **Time:** 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Session II: Wed. Sept. 19 **Time:** 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Holiday Inn, 700 Myles Standish Blvd., Taunton MA.

Session I: Tues. Oct. 16 **Time:** 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Session II: Tues. Oct. 16 **Time:** 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: First Citizens' Fed. Credit Union, 200 Mill Rd., Fairhaven MA.

Session I: Thurs. Nov. 15 **Time:** 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Session II: Thurs. Nov. 15 **Time:** 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: TBD

Entrepreneurs Brown Bag Speaker Series is being offered by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Advanced Technology & Manufacturing Center (ATMC) in an effort to promote and enhance the success of entrepreneurial ventures, emerging businesses, and the growth of entrepreneurship in Southeastern Massachusetts. These series are provided as a helpful tool to assist existing and emerging companies with their business challenges by creating an environment to provide access to professional business and technological advice. For more information please visit www.atmc.umassd.edu

"Invention – License or Sell?" Wed. Sept. 19

"Financial Statements that Get Funding" Wed. Oct. 10

"Choice Entity" Wed. Nov. 14

"To Patent or Not to Patent" Wed. Dec. 12

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Location: ATMC, 151 Martine Street, Fall River, MA.

RSVP: 508-910-9867 Or email atmc@umassd.edu

Got a new product idea? If the answer is "yes" and you'd like to do something about it, you won't want to miss this exciting new eight session course. This course is designed for individuals and companies who want to innovate more effectively and on a budget, this is your chance to find the information and the resources you need to move successfully from the drawing board to the marketplace – regardless of prior experience.

Classes will focus on making this multi-step process more accessible and manageable with practical steps, tips, real-world case studies, lessons learned and insights shared by seasoned professionals.

Presented by: Elizabeth Pierotti, inventor, educator, and author of "The Inventing Life" along with guest experts in market and marketing research, engineering, contract and intellectual property law, design development, marketing, prototyping, manufacturing, business planning and more.

Dates: Tuesdays & Thursdays beginning Oct. 2 through Oct. 25

Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Location: ATMC, 151 Martine Street, Fall River, MA.

Cost: \$425.00 per attendee includes "The Inventing Life" book plus class workbook and materials.

RSVP to Colleen Powers at 508-910-9823 or E-Mail: cpowers@umassd.edu

To better serve the Massachusetts small business community, the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional MSBDC has outreach sites in conjunction with chambers of commerce and economic development entities.

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| Attleboro Chamber | North Attleboro Chamber |
| Falmouth Chamber | Cape Cod Community College |
| Plymouth Chamber | Tri Town Chamber |
| Cape Cod Chamber | Metro South Chamber |
| New Bedford Quest Center | Cape Cod Canal Chamber |

For general information, training information or to make an appointment, please contact Tammi A. Jacobsen at extension 104 or please go to our website: www.msbdc.org/semass

"The Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network is a partnership program with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Massachusetts Department of Business and Technology under cooperative agreement 7-603001-Z-0022-21 through the University of Massachusetts Amherst. SBDCs are a program supported by the U. S. Small Business Administration and extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis. SBA cannot endorse any products, opinions or services of any external parties or activities. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made, if requested at least two weeks in advance. For further information, contact the Fall River MSBDC office at (508) 673-9783."



"Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the SBA"